

The New Shepherd: A Paradigm Shift in an Age-Old Tradition

By: Claire Poelking

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Science (Natural Resources and Environment) at the University of Michigan.

April 2017

Faculty Advisors

Professor Bilal Butt

Professor Rebecca Hardin

Abstract

Across sub-Saharan Africa pastoralists live alongside large densities and distributions of wildlife. Today, the relationships between pastoralists and spaces dedicated to wildlife are changing. Pastoralists are losing communal land due to changes in land tenure and an increase in wildlife-based tourism. This has led to shifts in land access and use, as well as in the political economy of labor for livestock production. The objective of this research is to understand how new land tenure arrangements and shifts in the tourism economy are affecting access to grazing resources and restructuring herd management. This case study from southwest Kenya employs qualitative methods including semi-structured interviews, informal conversations, and ethnographic observations gathered from accompanying individuals on their daily routines. In the first chapter, I argue that there are both positive and negative effects to the shifts in land tenure with respect to livestock production strategies for pastoralists who reside on the borders of protected areas. Some of the effects explored in this chapter include changes in social capital, increased fences, and private wildlife conservancies. The second chapter answers the question of how Maasai women's identities have changed to become livestock managers. I explore how women are engendered, occasionally by default, to care for cattle herds and hired herders, and in successfully doing so, they gain trust in themselves and from their male family members as capable and competent contributors to their families' predominant livelihood. This research seeks to provide a comprehensive understanding of how changes on these shared landscapes are affecting relationships within pastoralist societies; it is also an effort to produce useful studies on women in marginalized and underrepresented societies in order to provide place-based and societally appropriate explanations of and recommendations for increasing women's roles and responsibilities towards a goal of gender equality.

Keywords: pastoralism, Maasai, land use, women, cultural ecology

Table of Contents

Abstract.....	ii
Acknowledgements.....	iv
Introduction.....	1
Chapter 1: Land Privatization and its Effects on Social Nature and Land Use.....	2
Introduction.....	2
Literature Review.....	2
A Brief History of Land Use in Dryland Kenya.....	2
Political-Economic Motivations for Land Subdivision.....	3
Socio-Ecological Motivations for Land Subdivision.....	4
Reactions to Subdivision.....	4
Methods.....	6
Study Area.....	6
Qualitative Research Methodology.....	7
Results and Discussion.....	8
Settlement.....	8
Diversification in Livestock Production.....	9
Social Capital and Land Use Strategies.....	9
Political Economy of Livestock Production.....	12
Resource Access and Use.....	13
Fences and Restricted Access to Resources.....	13
Fences and Ecosystem Health.....	14
Private Wildlife Conservancies: Managed Grazing.....	15
Private Wildlife Conservancies: Community Collaboration.....	17
Conclusion.....	18
Transition.....	20
Chapter 2: Women and Identity in Livestock Production.....	21
Introduction.....	21
Objectives.....	22
A Feminist Take on Political Ecology’s Environmental Subjects and Identities Thesis.....	23
Methods.....	24
Study Area and the Political Economy of Tourism.....	24
Evolving Identities: Relationships.....	25
Removal of Familial Male Labor.....	25
Addition of Hired Herders.....	27
Monogamous Relationships.....	30
Evolving Identities: Opportunities.....	32
Education.....	33
Income-Earning Opportunities.....	34
Changes in Infrastructure.....	35
Conceptualizing Women’s Evolving Identities.....	36
Conclusion.....	37
Conclusion.....	39
Works Cited.....	40

Acknowledgements

This paper was supported by an International Institute Fellowship. Additional funding for this research came from the Rackham Graduate School, the School of Natural Resources and Environment, and the South African Initiative Office housed in the Department of AfroAmerican and African Studies.

First, I am extremely grateful to my thesis advisor, Dr. Bilal Butt, for his steadfast support and encouragement during my time at SNRE. Without his expertise and guidance, this study would not have been possible. Dr. Butt helped make me the scholar and social scientist that I am today and I am forever grateful for having the opportunity to work with him. I want to also thank Dr. Rebecca Hardin for her support during this process.

Two invaluable research assistants helped me with field research, translation, and logistics while I was in Kenya. I am indebted to both Sein Maatany and Jecinta Naurori for their instrumental support during the field season in Kenya. Ashe oleng.

Introduction

Pastoralism is a livelihood practice that spans all inhabited continents and over ten thousand years (Dong, Liu, & Wen, 2011). The subsistence-based strategy is dependent on livestock husbandry and takes advantage of seasonably variable forage and water resources (Hunter, 2011). Livestock, comprising cattle, sheep, and goats, are crucial to rural existence in the fickle and heterogeneous environments of the global drylands (Butt & Turner, 2012). There are still roughly 200 million pastoralists worldwide (Dong *et al.*, 2011), many of whom find themselves living in the company of wildlife.

This is particularly evident in the drylands of East Africa, which are home to some of the highest densities and distributions of ungulate and mammalian species left in the world (Butt & Turner, 2012). This has led to significant wildlife conservation efforts in the region. Kenya and Tanzania contain a large number of protected areas including Maasai Mara, Amboseli, Serengeti, and Ngorongoro Conservation Area, of which the latter two are UNESCO World Heritage Sites for their 'outstanding universal value' (Honey, 2008).

Pastoralists are the most commonly found peoples in and around protected areas in East Africa (Hodgson, 2011). Yet, pastoralists – many of whom most rely on the land and its resources for their subsistence livelihoods (Hodgson, 2011) – are unable to access the resources that are today enclosed within protected areas (Brockington, Duffy, & Igoe, 2010; Homewood, Rodger, & Mascarenhas, 1989).

The relationships between East African pastoralist peoples, wildlife, and protected areas has been thoroughly studied and documented as an environmental justice issue (see Brockington *et al.*, 2010; Butt, 2011; Goldman, 2011; Hodgson, 2011). But there is room in the literature for a more comprehensive understanding of how these shared landscapes, in addition to new land tenure structures, the tourism economy, and conservation efforts are affecting relationships within pastoralist societies. This research focusses on a community of Maasai pastoralists living on the edge of a major protected area and the ways in which the community has adapted to changes in land access and use, as well as the effects of tourism in regard to livestock production.

This thesis is divided into two chapters, each with its own literature review, methodology, results and discussion section, and conclusion. The thesis as whole engages with the shifting dynamics facing the Maasai pastoralist practice through the shared analytical framework of political ecology. Political ecology allows for an interdisciplinary approach to understanding complex relationships between people and their environment, specifically in studies of access and control over resources and the implications on sustainable livelihoods (Watts, 2000).

Within this general framework, the first chapter explores the effects of changing land tenure on livestock production strategies and resource access. The second investigates how Maasai women, partially because of the tourism economy, have become livestock managers, and the ways in which the changes in women's roles are influencing their sense of identity. While each chapter can be read as a stand-alone paper, the goal of combining them in this thesis is to demonstrate changes at both the landscape and household scale.

Chapter 1: Land Privatization and its Effects on Social Nature and Land Use

Introduction

Our mid-morning shadows fall onto four small stones, the largest with the initials W.K.¹ unevenly carved onto it. ‘So, this is the beginning of William’s land,’ Cindy, my research assistant and translator, tells me referring to a neighbor. ‘Every man has his own land now.’ The two of us have been walking for half an hour in the open grasslands just outside Maasai Mara National Reserve in southwest Kenya, without passing much of anything – be that homes, fences, people, or livestock – but still Cindy can tell me every property boundary we cross, where it ends, even details about how or from whom it was acquired. Yet, many of land demarcations in this area are less than ten years old due to widespread mobility practiced by pastoralists in East Africa.

Given this anecdote, the goal of this chapter is to explore how land privatization affects the social nature of and land use by Maasai communities. I argue that there are both positive and negative effects of the current land tenure structure on livestock production strategies and resource access and use for pastoralists who reside on the borders of protected areas. This chapter seeks to demonstrate some of the social and physical adaptations to changes in land tenure through a case study on a Maasai community adjacent to the distinct and ecologically significant drylands of Maasai Mara National Reserve. To do this, I provide a literature review including a brief history of land use and control in dryland Kenya. Then, I situate Kenyan land privatization within the political-economic and socio-ecological contexts that led to private land holdings. Lastly, I relay reactions to land subdivision found by other researchers in the region.

Literature Review

A Brief History of Land Use in Dryland Kenya

Pastoralists rely on mobility between seasonably variable environments for available forage and water, as well as to avoid disease outbreaks. These movements have been occurring since livestock herders² first entered the region along the present-day Kenya-Tanzania border in the 1600s (Homewood *et al.*, 1989). As environmental historians have noted, even then grasslands in the area had been shaped by human use for thousands of years (Shetler, 2007).

Before the 1990s, land access and use were not based on individual titles, so much as customary tenure systems of group belonging and nested governance like that of section, locality, neighborhood, and at the smallest scale, household (Mwangi & Ostrom, 2009). This robust socio-ecological system linked resource users by providing a general system in which rules and social norms for resource access and use were broadly accepted and ‘considered

¹ NOTE: All names and identities have been changed to comply with human subjects’ clearance.

² Questions about the history of the Maasai as an ethnic group have had an evolving understanding, so although the pastoralists of the 1600s may have been Maasai this has not been confirmed.

legitimate' but could be tailored at different scales to fit the specific location (Mwangi & Ostrom, 2009, p. 38). Grasslands and water were treated as common pool resources, managed both by custom and community elders (Seno & Shaw, 2002; Sundstrom, Tynon, & Western, 2012).

By 1895, present day Kenya was an East African Protectorate of the British government, and large areas of land that were seasonally used by pastoralist groups were sold cheaply to British settlers, thus evicting native populations (Rutten, 1992). In 1904, the first northern and southern Maasai reserves were created (Rutten, 1992). Through 1965, both colonial settlements and protected areas displaced the Maasai, relocating them to such native reservations – many of which lacked necessary resources like that of dry season pasture and salt licks (Kituyi, 1990). These reserves were defined by colonial administrators' insistence that Maasai overgraze, degrade land, and spread diseases to non-native reserve areas (Kjekshus, 1977). The Maasai suffered greatly during this time period because of the lack of the social systems controlling access to and control over resources by the British colonizers (Mwangi & Ostrom, 2009).

In 1963 Kenya gained independence, and soon after the state reformed native reserves into group ranches, where a group of people jointly owned the title to land and agreed upon rules of how to use it (Galvin, 2009). This too proved ineffective due to elitist entitlement and corruption (Thompson & Homewood, 2002), and most group ranches have since been subdivided into private land holdings (Galaty, 1992). Additionally, there was a high population of landless Kenyans that brought agriculturalists in direct conflict with pastoralists as the two groups competed for land and resources (Rutten, 1992). The Kenyan government determined that the private sector was underutilized and could be used as an apparatus with which to end land use conflicts (Rutten, 1992).

Yet, there were reasons beyond ineffective land management and land use conflicts that encouraged subdivision. Political-economic factors favored land privatization as a tool to control movement of pastoral populations and promote more easily taxable livelihoods (Hodgson, 2011; Waller, 2012).

Political-Economic Motivations for Land Subdivision

Efforts to include nomadic people in market-based economies have been ongoing since the colonial era. The colonial economy discouraged 'unproductive' pastoralism in favor of permanent, easily taxable cultivation (Waller, 2012, p. 6). The fundamental *fixed* borderlessness of nomadic people, especially with respect to those borders imposed by colonial legacies, posed a problem that was addressed by limiting access to widespread mobility. Land privatization was thought to be an essential means to transforming subsistence based livestock production into a commercialized and profitable enterprise (Rutten, 1992).

Beyond, providing a location of taxable capital for the state, land privatization is supposed to benefit individuals as a way to facilitate diversified livelihood options (Hobbs *et al.*, 2008), as well as establish more permanent settlements with amenities such as schools and hospitals.

Neoliberal techniques purportedly promote the acquisition of public land to private holdings with such improvements in mind, but as Galaty (2013) notes this is not always appropriate for maintaining the state of a society or economy; for example, land privatization could greatly alter both the dynamics of the Maasai community and its livelihood should land be sold to non-Maasai individuals who may hold different beliefs about land access and use. The land tenure system has become privatized, but many of the socio-ecological practices that governed land access and use for generations are still used in the region.

Socio-Ecological Motivations for Land Subdivision

In addition to political-economic interests for sub-division, were socio-ecological considerations. Firstly, private land holdings were thought of as a way to end communal land use practices and protect the ecological health of the drylands (Homewood *et al.*, 1989). Maasai in particular have been singled out as overstocking their cattle herds (Butt & Turner, 2012), which both colonial and post-colonial officials erroneously presumed was the cause of degradation on the landscape (Mwangi & Ostrom, 2009). The communal land tenure that persisted in the region for generations, in tandem with individual herd ownership, seemed to many government and development organizations a case of Hardin's Tragedy of the Commons (Hardin, 1968; Homewood *et al.*, 1989). Hardin recommended socialism or privatism over communal management (Hardin, 1968); while both proposed modes of governance have since proven to lead to further land degradation (Homewood, 2008; Ostrom *et al.*, 1999), the theory persists. In rangelands specifically, private land holdings are meant to help to control the number and movement of livestock, which should theoretically not only promote better livestock management, but also the health and productivity of the landscape (Sandford, 1994).

Secondly, land privatization allowed for the creation of more protected areas used for wildlife conservation and tourism – a considerable source of income for the Kenyan state (Anderson & Grove, 1988). Reasons both ecological and capitalistic have expelled livestock herders from protected areas in this region; they are seen as an unnatural, if not unwanted, inclusion on the environmentally conserved landscape, especially in the eyes of tourists (Brockington *et al.*, 2010; Butt, 2014). Pastoralism continues to be threatened as spaces available for mobility decrease due to land set aside for conservation (Butt, 2011). The migratory livelihood is still viewed as a threat to modernization and postcolonial agendas of control and containment (Hodgson, 2011). It was this belief, in part, that encouraged the establishment of protected areas (Brockington & Homewood, 2001). As such, land access and use remains a contentious and challenging obstacle to grazing domestic animals, especially in areas shared with wildlife.

Reactions to Subdivision

Both political-economic and socio-ecological reasons for land privatization are affecting Maasai pastoral livelihoods, community structure, and land use. Seno & Shaw (2002) studying land tenure in the Maasai Mara region, found that 82% of Maasai adults interviewed were in favor of subdivision because it would secure ownership, and 62% thought it would facilitate development of their land. In contrast, 40% feared it would reduce grazing areas,

and 29% did not believe there would be enough land for individuals (note that in this study multiple responses per question were possible). A separate study by Sundstrom *et al.* (2012), found that the predominant concern regarding land privatization was that landowners might sell their land to non-Maasai who hold different values towards land access and use.

There are a number of changes to social structure and land access and use that have resulted from privatization in the area including: livestock production practices, increased use of fencing, and the growth of private wildlife conservancies. Each of these topics is briefly examined below.

Most Maasai still keep livestock and believe it is an integral part of the Maasai identity and way of life (Wangui, 2014), but many have changed the way in which they keep livestock, buying and selling animals more frequently. Once treated as wealth – the larger the herd, the wealthier the man – livestock are now used to pay for school fees or health clinic visits (Galaty, 2013). Livestock can also be sold to purchase things that will help diversify one's income, like a motorbike or car to become a driver or a plot of land to rent. As livestock husbandry becomes more complex due to climate change and land tenure change, pastoralists of all socioeconomic statuses are expanding and diversifying their income-earning opportunities (BurnSilver, 2016).

Land privatization has also resulted in the increased use of fencing by Maasai, creating social permissions for resource access, changing livestock production strategies, and affecting ecological health. Fences are viewed as a breaking away from the communal grazing system and traditional resource management (Sundstrom *et al.*, 2012). Some Maasai families only partially fence their land, by erecting *olokeris*³ – a fence surrounding a traditional family-owned pasture (Seno & Shaw, 2002) for sick, weak, or pregnant cattle. The olokeri is not a particularly new feature on the landscape, however where it used to be small and created with brush or without any physical boundary, it is now often much larger and built with poles and barbed wire or electric fencing. Another study noted that some families have decided to fence all their land and trade in traditional breeds of cattle for a fewer number of a larger, newer breed that earn a higher market price and produce more milk (Galvin, 2009). Ecologically, any fencing on the landscape can cause significant fragmentation (Hobbs *et al.*, 2008; Løvschal *et al.*, 2017), which has raised concerns about mobility and sustainability of both migratory livestock and wildlife (Sundstrom *et al.*, 2012).

Perhaps the most significant change resulting from land privatization is the rise of private wildlife conservancies that rent land that has been subdivided from communal holdings from individual Maasai landholders. These leases average between five and 15 years (Sørli, 2008) on which landholders cannot settle, fence, or often use the land in any unregulated capacity. Private wildlife conservancies mimic state protected areas (Newmark & Hough, 2000), and still ban local people from the land and unmanaged use of its resources despite trying to be more community-oriented.

The establishment of protected areas (both public and private) throughout the world has often resulted in the exclusion of local people from within their boundaries and has denied many of

³ Olokeri is not a term used by all Maasai, but is used in this chapter to refer to a family-owned, reserved grazing pasture.

the rights of indigenous people to land and the resources found on it (Brockington, 2002; Butt, 2016; Goodwin, 1996; West, Igoe, & Brockington, 2006). Conservation practices, historically, have been largely unconcerned with the needs of the local people now deprived of their ancestral lands and often livelihoods (Dowie, 2011; Honey, 2008). For these reasons, indigenous groups, unsurprisingly, have a contentious relationship with protected areas. Much of the hostility for the Maasai lies in the belief that the land on which they are provisionally banned from grazing, was once their land and was taken without permission, or at least without full understanding of the consequences of agreements made with conservation organizations (Goldman, 2011).

Despite the presence of private land holdings, land use by individuals does not exist exclusively within their privately-owned parcel. Some scholars, such as Galaty, have argued for a more dynamic understanding of ‘property-as-use’ that moves between common, private, and public (Galaty, 2016, p. 715). This chapter will illustrate the social relationships and land use strategies that evolve out of this more fluid understanding of land ownership, access, and use. I seek to answer the following question: What are the effects of changing land tenure on livestock production strategies and resource access and use for pastoralists who reside on the borders of protected areas?

To bring such critical insights to bear on lived experiences of change within this context, I studied a community of Maasai adjacent to Maasai Mara National Reserve who are responding to changes in land tenure. Below, I will detail my methods and study area, and then present my results drawing on empirical fieldwork to examine and discuss effects of changes in land tenure in three ways. The first section documents the settlement history of the area. The second section examines diversification in livestock production practices through social capital and land use strategies, and the shifting political economy of livestock production. The third section focuses on resource access through fencing and engagement with private wildlife conservancies. Finally, I conclude the chapter by considering the implications of this study for wider debates on land privatization around protected areas in Africa’s arid ecosystems.

Methods

Study Area

The study area is located in Narok County, Kenya, and was selected to understand how land privatization and land use is affected by its location in an area of distinct importance to environmental conservation. Within the county, I conducted research around Olare Orok, which borders Maasai Mara National Reserve (MMNR) to the south and two of eight private wildlife conservancies to the north (Fig. 1).

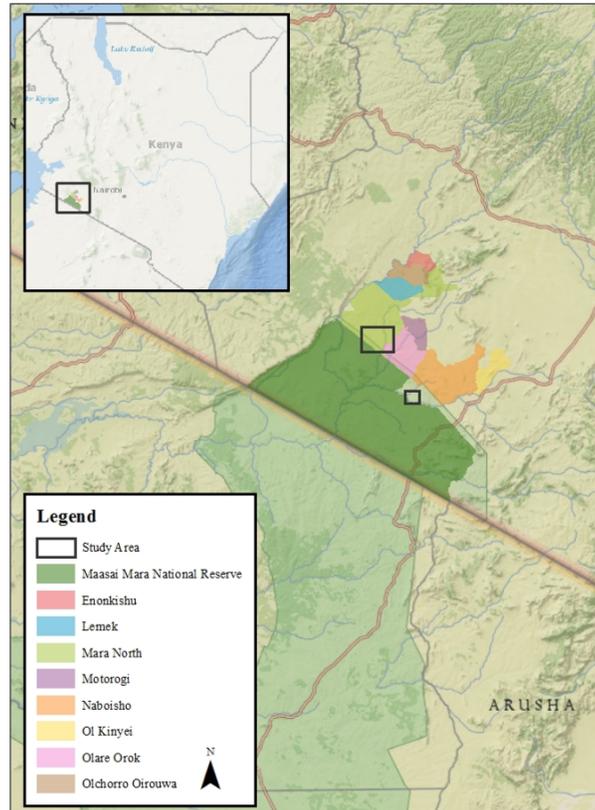


Fig. 1. Location of study area shown in black outlined boxes (Olare Orok is northwest; Talek – a nearby center – is southeast), National Reserve/Park shown in green (Maasai Mara National Reserve is north of the border in Kenya and Serengeti National Park is south of the border in Tanzania), and the eight private conservancies shown in various colors.

It is a community composed of dispersed settlements and livestock enclosures. It also has a primary school, a health clinic, and a small shopping center. The people residing here regularly move between Olare Orok and Talek, about 25 kilometers to the southeast, a more well-developed town with many permanent houses and rental plots. Talek's proximity to the Talek Gate (an entrance to MMNR) has increased its population due to the tourism industry. The area is mainly arid and semiarid with a mix of grasslands and shrublands. Livestock husbandry and tourism remain the predominant livelihoods in both locations.

Qualitative Research Methodology

Semi-structured interviews, informal conversations, and participant observation formed the pillars of my ethnographic observations gathered from accompanying individuals on their daily routines. Interview participants were found using snowball sampling methodology and selected based on meeting three criteria: residence within the communities, actively practicing livestock husbandry, and a willingness to participate in the research. Respondents were men, women, and hired herders, all comprising a range of social classes, in order to provide a broad sample of adult community members; I collected demographic information on all respondents. In total, 56 individuals from 22 households were interviewed. These 56 interviews are by no means a representative sample in a statistical sense, but their testimonies provide valuable insight to the changing social and physical landscape of the area given the sensitivities associated with the criminalization of some land use strategies.

All interviews were conducted in English or translated between English and Maa with the help of two female Maasai research assistants; these women were members of the community and integral to the research as translators, key informants, and liaisons. I chose to work with women because this enabled me to reach both women and men, young and old with the most ease and comfort for respondents. I recorded all interviews and transcribed the English translations for further analysis. I manually coded interview data using recurring concepts for an inductive analysis (see Rubin & Rubin, 1995). Quotes used in the following sections were taken directly from interviews, and in some cases may have been minimally altered to make translations more fluent.

Results and Discussion

The following sections attend to issues of settlement, diversification in livestock production, and reduced land for resource access through illustrations and examinations of social and physical adaptations to changes in land tenure. Many of the results presented lend support to the assertion for a more dynamic understanding of land use between common, private, and public.

Settlement

Subdivision of the historically communal land elicited a variety of responses, but the most prevalent were concerns over possible land sales to non-Maasai and a desire to leave land available for grazing. One Maasai elder told me:

[...] for my age group, we don't like the subdivision of land. Each person has got his own parcel of land, but that land is not enough to sustain individual owners. Some people are selling their land and they sell to people far, far away. Our cattle cannot travel in the ways they used to, even the wildlife cannot. [...] It is not good. I don't like anything that touches either wildlife or livestock.

In the past, cattle and their herders could roam widely without encountering anything but natural physical barriers. The individual quoted above is reminiscent of a land without boundaries, settlements, or even many people. Young adults in the community do not have the same memories of the land, yet they share many of the same concerns as their elders – but not all. Young adults seem more open to the idea of privatized land tenure because it allows for land ownership in more desirable places regardless of familial ties.

Sub-division, to young adults, is seen as an opportunity to develop themselves and secure economic independence (Sørli, 2008). A cattle owner and local-businessman shared his reasons for buying a plot of land:

When the land was divided – each man can get his own land. We decided to come and live on our own land, here. [...] This place is very good for sheep and cows; they grow fast. [...] If you have sheep and cattle, you can develop yourself like

good houses or buying a shop.

This same man was building a second permanent structure on his land – an indication of personal development among the community. Private land holdings have allowed people to build permanent settlements on their own land, and houses made with more durable materials like concrete, steel, and sheet iron. Permanent housing settlements have subsequently led to more development for the community as whole in the form of schools, health clinics, and shops. Nearly every one of the 56 interviews noted the importance of schools and education for the Maasai youth. Moreover, shops and clinics help to bring necessary foodstuffs, medicine, and vaccinations for both people and livestock.

Of the 22 households interviewed: 10 had received land as part of the subdivision, nine had purchased land parcels from other Maasai, and three were currently borrowing land from family or friends. The nine families that purchased land, have lived on the property for less than 10 years. Subdivision occurred in Olare Orok in 2005 (Butt, 2016), and was relatively unoccupied until then. The low population, open space, and free movement of livestock are what drew these families to the area. Land privatization is influencing the social and physical structures associated with livestock production; the next two sections will discuss these changes through analysis of diversification in livestock production strategies and resource access and use, particularly as it pertains to fences and private wildlife conservancies.

Diversification in Livestock Production

Social Capital and Land Use Strategies

Social capital is becoming an invaluable currency in livestock production post-privatization. Familial relationships are especially sensitive to changes in land use. Three examples best illustrate how privatization has increased the importance of personal relationships.

Box 1: Livestock production strategies for cost sharing.

I met a pair of brothers who kept their cattle as one herd, while their third brother who lives in the same *manyatta* – a family settlement – kept his separately. The brothers who kept a herd together did so because they were able to split the costs of medicine, building materials and maintenance of the *boma* – a livestock enclosure, a hired herder, and any fees incurred from illegal grazing. The third brother was not included because he refused to share the cost of medicine, believing his cows needed fewer vaccinations than his brothers' did.

Box 2: Land use change resulting from familial tensions.

A nuclear family I interviewed lived on their extended family's land. The land was sold out from under them without any warning by the landowner. The land user's uncle, the landowner, decided to rent his land to a conservancy, which required the land be unoccupied by the family. When I later asked the uncle why he had rented the land, he told me that he wanted the monthly lease payments from the conservancy, and that he did not care about his nephew who had recently upset him by not taking a second wife offered by the uncle.

Box 3: Livestock production and land use strategies for neighborly goodwill.

One man I spoke with is tourist driver in MMNR and a landowner just outside it. He had fenced all of his land. Social norms dictate that he is not permitted to graze his cattle in the communally used land because no neighboring cattle are able to graze within his land holdings. However, he avoids this rule because of relationships he has built with MMNR rangers, as a driver, and with his neighbors. The rangers tell him where and when they intend to patrol on any given day and his cattle can graze undisturbed in those areas during the prescribed time. The driver shares this information with his neighbors so that they can enter MMNR without fear of rangers and so that neighbors will allow his cattle to graze on the privately owned, but communally used grazing areas, when he is unable to enter the reserve.

Individuals have more control over resource use, thus influencing the ways that they share resource access with family and neighbors. As evidenced by the first two examples, familial relationships are changing in addition to communal relationships.

Galaty (2013) found that in Kajiado County (the county directly to the east of Narok County) men tended to divide their land among their wives so that women with more sons were given more land; my research in Narok County concurs with these findings. This not only provokes familial discord, but more troubling to the Maasai is that intergenerational inheritance leads to smaller land holdings for each son, especially in large families: a landowner of one of the largest families I met had fourteen sons. The younger brother of this man was educated through secondary school, is a teacher at the primary school, and chose to marry only one wife because he explained:

We are telling them to control the polygamy because life is becoming hard. [...] This is because land has become divided. People only have few acres and you know Maasai are polygamous, and they are having many children. So, there are more children but the land cannot expand. The land remains the same, same place.

Throughout this and subsequent conversations with this man I learned that ‘hard’ referred to difficulties that are relatively new to the area, like that of adapting to smaller land parcels and being denied from lands set aside for conservation, finding money with which to pay school fees – made more challenging with a greater number of children – and to purchase medicine for livestock (topics of land for conservation and ‘finding money’ are addressed later in the chapter).

Smaller land parcels are being met with new approaches to keeping livestock, namely a reduced number of a different livestock breed⁴ that fetches a higher market price. Nearly two-thirds of respondents answered that they *intend* to try this method:

If you want to buy land, the only way you can get those moneys are by selling cattle. So, yes, I will keep cattle. [...] But I think I will like to keep small number of sheep and cattle because cattle, they are very – they don’t have value. Like

⁴ The ‘different’ breeds of cattle were often Boran and Sahiwal.

example, if your child is starting secondary school, you have to sell six of them. But now I think people are changing, like they want to change the cows to bring another type of cows that if you sell one, it can make all those needs for the kids.

Despite the refrain of ‘smaller, better herds’ I rarely encountered families practicing it. One family initially kept fewer than 10 ‘better’ cattle, because after purchasing the more expensive animals and building a fence for them, the family could not afford a herder. However, they ultimately decided to keep fewer than 10 cows because they found the cows are able to produce enough milk for the family and that they can sell male calves for a decent income.

By maintaining a small herd that remains within the large, fenced private pasture, the family continues to save money as the cattle do not require grazing outside the pasture in MMNR or private wildlife conservancies where they may incur fees from illegal grazing, nor does the family need someone to take cattle out to graze (in this community, it is common to hire a herder). Additionally, the cows are in less immediate danger of predation by lions because they do not enter areas with dense wildlife populations, like the reserve or conservancies. Still, the cows are not able to stay in the fenced pasture year-round. The husband in this instance, has three wives in three different locations of nearby and moves the cows from one boma to another:

We are three [wives] and we have three lands, so every woman has her own land and fences. So, these cows are just migrating. When here be dry, they move to that land and leave this one here to grow. [...] And then when that one be dry, they move the cows to this one again and left that one to grow again.

‘Smaller, better herds’ are one coping mechanism to emerge as a result of land privatization, but many families have found other ways to adapt that does not require the initial investment associated with purchasing a new breed of cows and fencing a substantial amount of land. With land privatization comes new land use strategies.

One strategy is to ‘trade’ livestock responsibilities with extended family or friends in different regions, so that when grass is abundant in one place both herds of cattle migrate and are looked after there, and when grass becomes limited there both herds migrate back. The cattle are separately owned, but co-managed to some degree. This benefits families because they are only responsible for the cattle half the year; the other half with which they can work and earn an income outside of livestock husbandry. This strategy was employed by three of the families I met.

Sundstrom *et al.* (2012) found that pasture sharing and swapping is not uncommon, but is usually based on preexisting relationships with family and friends. Thus, it may be difficult for newcomers in the area to form this type of reciprocal relationship, especially if they are from a different community in which case tradition dictates that permission must be granted even to graze on the communally used land (Seno & Shaw, 2002).

Another land use strategy based on seasonal rotation is explained below:

First, when it's raining we put our cows here [she points to the area within view of her house]. Then, when cows finish land for people, then we go to MMNR. When again we go to the MMNR and they remove us, the conservancy opens up for us. So, we change like that: home, MMNR, conservancy. When all the grass is finished like now, everyone can put his this cows in olokeri. The cows that cannot walk for migrate, you can put there.

'Land for people' in this quotation refers to the privately owned, but communally used grazing areas. Many people without fenced land continue to use grazing land as a common pool resource. All of the people using the land are land owners within the community and may graze their cows on anyone else's land with the understanding that anyone else can graze their cattle on their land as well. Olokeris, as previously noted, are small fenced areas for a single household, but not meant for continuous grazing. The cows in this example still migrate in the worst of the dry season, but for a shorter period of time. Lastly, parks and conservancies are protected wildlife areas that cattle and herders are denied access, but use regardless, and allowed in under managed grazing, respectively. This strategy of combining common, private, and public land use was the most commonly used among the families interviewed. Accompanying changes in land use strategies for livestock production, are shifts the political economy of livestock production.

Political Economy of Livestock Production

Livestock are playing a greater part in the political economy of the culture, illustrated by the common metaphor that cattle are 'our bank.' Livestock have historically been a sign of wealth; a larger number denotes greater prosperity: a savings account others can see. This is changing as livestock in the 'bank' are now more of a checking account used to purchase land, items with which to diversify one's livelihood, permanent building materials, food, clothes, or pay school and health care fees. Many of these features were not commonplace before land privatization because all require some form of permanence, even food which is often purchased from shops in the Olare Orok center or nearby Talek.

Wealth, to younger generations, is not the number of cattle but what one decides to do with them. For example, the quote below speaks to the common theme that livestock are now being used 'properly':

If you have a lot of cows you are wealthy, yes. But what are they for? Then, drought comes and kills a hundred of them. You haven't educated your child with it; you haven't put a good house with it; you haven't done well. And the drought has killed them, so that becomes a loss.

In fact, many Maasai people I spoke with who have careers outside of pastoralism such as doctors, shop owners, or teachers, are those most interested in purchasing more livestock as a business investment. A doctor told me:

I can say [livestock] are one of our major investments. We don't have any investment except keeping these cows. And probably it's a security fall for us. In

case you need money, you just get it through them. Though we may be employed, salaries and such we buy these as an investment.

Land privatization has not discouraged livestock keeping, but has in some cases influenced the number of livestock and more clearly dictated their movements – consistent with the assumptions associated with benefits of land privatization. However, resource access and use have become a more pressing issue for the community because it is more circumstantial and often based on social capital.

Resource Access and Use

Fences and Restricted Access to Resources

Distance to water was a particular concern for people living in Olare Orok. Although men and women alike shared this grievance, due to traditional gender roles their uses of water are different. Men noted the distance they have to travel with livestock to find adequate drinking water for the animals, and women commented on the distance to water used for household purposes. Women collect water used for drinking, cooking, cleaning, and sometimes bathing from rivers or springs and carry the water back to the house for use there. A grey literature report by Base Camp Foundation – a conservancy-run organization for community development in the Maasai Mara region – found that women usually collect water twice a day and may have to walk nearly an hour and a half to collect water in the dry season (Base Camp Foundation, 2016). This is both a substantial time and health expenditure, as women often carry more than 20 liters at a time.

Beyond distance to water, new concerns in the community have arisen over access and permission to water. Relationships are increasingly built on land ownership and access (e.g. Sultana, 2011). While many of the people I met treat the land and its resources communally despite its privatization, landholders still control resources on their land, some of whom are resorting to the use of fences to better control resources. I believe fences are a reaction to land privatization without proper consideration of long-term consequences of a socially and ecologically fragmented landscape.

For example, a natural spring on the landscape now has a legal owner, and although the owner will likely allow anyone to use the water for drinking, cooking, or washing, the owner is not required to. There are informal social permissions that allow someone to use another's water source; something that did not exist before land privatization. In a unique, but illustrative, instance one family I interviewed fenced the entirety of their land, including a pond. This physical barrier is a comfort to the landowner and especially his wife who does not have to walk more than 200 meters for water that she knows is clean and safe because of her exclusive use of it (additionally, this includes assurance that wild animals that may have diseases have not used the water).

We like here to live because near we have this spring. This spring is ours and we don't have any problems for water. Even in drought season, we don't have problem.

However, this also removes the family from any communal reciprocity regarding other water sources if their water is no longer viable for whatever reason.⁵ Pretty and Ward (2001) report that reciprocity, as well as trust, common rules, norms and sanctions, and connectedness are the pillars of social capital that govern shared resource use. Privatization changes the customary rules of these Maasai communities for resource access and use.

Privatization is also changing the built environment of Maasai communities as evidenced by the use of fences, like in the previous example. Fencing is an increasing issue both for the movement of livestock as well as wildlife as it affects mobility and resource access. A 2017 report by Løvschal *et al.* found that fencing in the Greater MMNR region increased from 41,469 hectares in 1995 to 73,335 hectares in 2015. Of the 22 families who participated in this study, 12 had fences and another five would like to have one but are not able to build one due to limited availability of space or funds. A landowner who fenced his land explained the increase:

Nowadays things are becoming different. Let's say the person with land next to you will tell you, 'Don't bring your animals here.' So, that is why you see us, everyone, putting their land into olokeri. Because everyone says, 'Don't come on my land. Don't come on my land!' So, it is a good thing to put olokeri, so that when there is no grass outside, you can put all your animals inside.

Fencing is not used solely to protect oneself from neighbors' hostility, but is also a precaution against drought and wildlife, particularly wildebeest and zebra that move en masse and can overly graze an area in a short period of time. There are mixed opinions on the use of fences. Some find fences advantageous for the above reasons, but simultaneously fear the sustainability of the practice. A separate landowner told me about his choice not to fence:

I don't put a fence because my neighbor has a fence. So, if I put mine, the other one is so near to me and does not allow me to move. It will be very congested.

It should be mentioned that nearly everyone interviewed commented on fences impacts on the social and ecological landscape of the area. They also noted the limiting of available space for mobility and migration as a problem for both domestic and wild animals.

Fences and Ecosystem Health

The health and well-being of wildlife, as well as the income-earning opportunities resulting from wildlife tourism, are never far from the minds of people when thinking of land access and use.

Several respondents remarked that livestock are an important part of ecosystem health and the presence of wildlife in the area. Cattle have been a feature of the ecosystem for over 2,000 years (Charnley, 2005) and have helped to create the iconic grasslands of MMNR

⁵ Due to the arid nature of the landscape water for *drinking* would likely never actually be denied because of a Maasai maxim that no one can ever be turned away from needed water; this does not carry over to use of water for cooking or household chores.

(Shetler, 2007). Those respondents expressed fear that an increased number of fences will alter the relationship between livestock and wildlife:

Cows eat the long grass and that is good, because gazelles, warthogs – those animals like the short grass so they can see the big animals. In the long grasses cheetahs and lions can follow them and they feel unsafe, so they move to areas with short grass.

If cattle are fenced, respondents believe grasses outside of fenced areas will grow long, encouraging some species of wildlife to move towards areas with more livestock and outside of protected areas in order to feel safe. This ecological concept, known as the ‘landscape of fear,’ is when prey species favor areas with higher visibility over areas of abundant forage with a predation risk (Riginos, 2014). Fencing impacts where and how both livestock and wildlife are able to move.

One strategy employed to manage movement of livestock and wildlife is the private wildlife conservancy, which allows for managed grazing, thus regulating where and when livestock are allowed to graze. The following section addresses the ways in which private wildlife conservancies control access and use of grazing lands for Maasai conservancy members.

Private Wildlife Conservancies: Managed Grazing

Private wildlife conservancies do not physically separate land and resources like fences, but they do have property boundaries that change the lawful access to and use of the land and resources within such boundaries.

These conservancies rent land that has been subdivided from communal holdings from individual Maasai landholders for between five and 15 years per lease (Sørli, 2008) on which landholders cannot settle, fence, or often use the land in any unregulated capacity. These conservancies are a contentious subject within Maasai communities. To some, conservancies are seen as beneficial since they allow managed grazing rights within conservancy boundaries. This allows members – individuals who rent their land to respective conservancies – to graze in certain parts of the conservancy at specified times determined by a grazing committee and conservancy staff. Managed grazing is enforced by conservancy rangers.

Personal communication with a conservancy director informed that 96% of men over 35 years of age in Maasai Mara region are conservancy members. If non-members are caught grazing in the conservancy, they are fined and escorted out of the conservancy by rangers. However, it was not uncommon to have a herder of a conservancy member’s cattle enter with that herd as well as the herd of a neighbor who is not a member of the conservancy; this is a risk and another example of social capital exchanged. Many cattle owners lease land to only one of the eight conservancies around MMNR, and by allowing a neighbor’s cattle to join his herd during his conservancy’s managed grazing period, the neighbor will likely reciprocate should managed grazing in another conservancy of which the neighbor is member opens for grazing.

For the most part respondents shared positive feedback about the conservancies grazing policies. The hired grazing manager of Olare Orok Conservancy told me that there are a variety of reasons the conservancies have allowed grazing; such as how herders will bring their cattle regardless of permission. However, if the conservancy allows it they can better manage the impact of grazing and reduce the risk to herders and cattle of dangerous encounters with wildlife at night (when illegal grazing generally occurs).

Herders are allowed to enter the private wildlife conservancies so long as they are dressed in traditional Maasai attire. The reasons for this are twofold: it works like a uniform, if one is dressed appropriately it can be assumed that he is there to work as a herder and not as a poacher or for any other reason; secondly, is tourism value. In addition to wildlife conservation, the aim of the private conservancies is tourism revenue.

Tourists commonly complain about domestic animals and humans on the landscape they imagined to be replete with wildlife and devoid all else (Butt, 2012), but selling the Maasai as part of the landscape plays into a narrative of age-old tradition that tourists accept. Maasai, specifically, have become icons for ‘traditional Africa’ and a highly valuable commodified cultural (Igoe, 2010, p. 388). Tourists see Maasai men in *shukas* – Maasai fabric worn like a throw – herding cattle and it fits more closely with the idealized image of East African drylands, and later in the day tourists can visit the gift shop to purchase their own shuka in addition to a myriad of Maasai handicrafts. One Maasai herder I spoke with was indeed flattered by this dress code requirement and without any prompting told me:

I like that the conservancy likes our dressing – the way Maasai people dress. It is one of the reasons I like the conservancy.

A conservancy manager told me that in the past year since this conservancy decided to include Maasai history in the stories drivers share with tourists on game drives, there have been no complaints about seeing domestic animals and humans on the landscape. The manager explained that guests did not know the difference between ‘pastoralist community-owned conservancies’ – as he called it – parks, and reserves; so, the conservancy administration thought it was important to communicate the goal of the conservancy as a place that conserves wildlife, but also allows for managed use by the community.

This all stands in contrast to MMNR where cattle are almost categorically expelled. Others, who do not have land in the conservancies, say that they prefer the reserve because the grass is long like in the conservancies, but it is ‘equal opportunity’ in that anyone can be caught and fined, not just non-members. Many people, regardless of their legal right to graze, enjoy living so close to MMNR because they are able to bring their cattle to graze on the ‘still-long grasses’ that result from less grazing in these areas due to the risks associated with it, namely being caught by rangers and dangerous animals. Rangers catch on an ad-hoc basis in the wet season and arrest herders and seize cattle more regularly in the dry season when grass is less abundant and tourists are present. Thus, it is common for several cattle herds and herders to enter MMNR together at night for grazing when rangers are less likely to catch them, however dangerous animals, particularly lions, are a greater hazard.

MMNR falls in line with the practices of many protected areas as a conservation effort that excludes local people from within its boundaries and provides few benefits to neighboring communities. Private wildlife conservancies mimic state protected areas, but aim to be more community-oriented, partially out of necessity. In the case of the conservancies surrounding MMNR, the land is owned by Maasai individuals and rented to the conservancies – a relationship explored in the following section.

Private Wildlife Conservancies: Community Collaboration

There is no doubt that the conservancies are directly aiding the surrounding communities more than the government-run MMNR. Conservancies provide a number of resources for the community, like monthly lease payments, school bursaries for students, and opportunities for women to sell beaded handicrafts. Yet, many of the people interviewed with land in the conservancies mentioned that they would like to be more included or at least more informed in behind-the-scenes of conservancy workings.

Each community has a representative for the conservancies who sits on the grazing committee; this person is informed when and where grazing is allowed and they subsequently inform the community. Often the representative will tell a few neighbors and word of mouth spreads the information throughout the community. On a number of occasions, I would meet the herder I was accompanying that day and we would walk to the conservancy because he had heard it was open, but without any details about where he would be allowed to graze. The interpersonal relationships often seem insubstantial in the commitment to include the community in terms of dispersal of information and in management of the conservancies.

Thus, the relationship seems no more than nominal to many respondents, often due to a lack of communication. One woman said she trusted the conservancies and believed they were beneficial to the development of the community, but had some specific ideas for how to better them. First, she wanted a more open form of communication. ‘Make us understand, don’t just tell us’:

If you expel us from the conservancy – fine. But, they should call and tell us, ‘We are expelling you because of A, B, C, D.’ We are expelling you because you are risking the life of some wildlife or something like that. Just telling us you can’t get into the conservancy, we become rebellious. [...] We know we need these animals because the country needs the tourism sector. So, make us change our mind, make us sit down and explain, we will understand if you just explain.

She also believed that the lease payments should fluctuate with the economy. In 2006, when the first conservancy leases were signed, the landowners were offered 1500 Kenyan shillings per hectare per year (Sørli, 2008). The amount paid per hectare has changed over the past decade, but not as a result of economic inflation, as this interviewee suggests:

When we were signing contracts maybe the lifestyle was different than it is today. Maybe we could say that the value of money was high, because with 100 shillings you could afford to buy a lot of things, but now with 100 shillings you can only

by a 2-kilogram bag of maize. [...] If I am to sign again, I would like an option that with time this contract changes with the lifestyle.

The conservancy does, however, guarantee lease payments regardless of tourism revenue, which is to the detriment of the landowners in profitable years, but correspondingly a benefit to landholders in years without many visitors. For example, in 2008 there was very little revenue from tourism as tourist numbers dropped due to post-election violence in Kenya, yet landholders still received their full monthly payments (Sørliie, 2008). Moreover, the conservancies offer the opportunity for ordinary landowners to profit from leasing their land, which stands in contrast to community elites solely reaping benefits of tourism, as was the case in the era of group ranches (Sørliie, 2008).

The connectedness, networks, and groups resulting from conservancies should serve to empower the community, and increased two-way communication between the community and the conservancy – as proposed in the quotes above – should promote a more collaborative relationship that fosters success (Pretty & Ward, 2001).

The relationship between communities and conservancies, like the relationships within communities are based on connectedness and reciprocity. The community must continue to benefit from the conservancies or they will cease to lease their land to the conservancies – a fact oft mentioned by interview respondents. There is room for improvement, which is understood on both sides, and communication that supports new ideas, reasoning, and understanding is an important step moving forward.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I asked the question: What are the effects of changing land tenure on livestock production strategies and resources access and use for pastoralists who reside on the borders of protected areas? I argued that there are both positive and negative effects of the resulting social and physical adaptations to land tenure changes.

Land privatization has allowed for people to secure land ownership and build permanent settlements that have facilitated development in the form of more structurally sound houses, schools, health clinics, and shops. Moreover, the presence of infrastructural services and the option to purchase land has changed the political economy of livestock and provided a reason to treat livestock as part of an economy, rather than in idle ownership.

Socio-ecologically, land privatization has increased the value of social capital regarding livestock production. Families with strong relationships within the community are benefitting from the dynamic land use system that moves livestock between common, private, and public lands, concurrent with findings from Galaty (2016). Yet, this can be a difficult arrangement to come into as a new land owner in the area without those personal relationships.

Fences, however, are a shift away from the ‘property-as-use’ method. Fences allow people more control over their land and its resources, yet it has the potential to fragment the social

and physical landscape of the region. Moreover, fences are useful to families with large land holdings that can accommodate continued grazing, but have few advantages for those who own small land parcels without the same capability. This is a growing concern as land holdings become subsequently smaller because of intergenerational inheritance.

Lastly, the agreement to allow formally managed grazing in the private wildlife conservancies is currently acceptable to conservancy members and conservancy administration, but is based on relatively short leases that can shift away from the present land use practices in the area, if landowners choose not to resign.

There seem to be positive and negative aspects to nearly all livestock production strategies and resource access and use changes resulting from privatized land tenure. Yet, the positive social and physical adaptations to land tenure could be easily upset should land be purchased by individuals with different land values, increased use of fences, or a shift away from grazing access in conservancies.

Transition

Chapter one explored landscape level adaptations to land privatization with respect to livestock production strategies. The relationships observed in chapter one were still predominantly male-dominated, yet at the household level I found that women are taking on greater roles and responsibilities in livestock production as men are called away to join the tourism industry (Butt, 2015). There are increasing understandings about how pastoralist livelihood systems are highly gendered, and new research is revealing how women play crucial roles in the production and maintenance of livestock. In fact, women now contribute more labor to livestock production than men (Wangui, 2008). Chapter two, therefore, investigates the ways in which women in this same community are serving as livestock managers and how that development is affecting their identities.

Chapter 2: Women and Identity in Livestock Production

Introduction

‘Supa,’ Baba⁶ says, as he touches the top of my head – a traditional greeting from elders unto younger generations. He slowly sits down, adjusting his tan overcoat to cover the red *shuka* – a Maasai fabric worn like a throw – underneath. I find a seat next to my research assistant and translator, Sara. She is Baba’s granddaughter-in-law; a young woman with hair tied back in a ponytail, wearing a tailored dress displaying the bold geometric patterns found on many African textiles.

On a warm evening, the three of us sit together trying to decide whether my initial research question regarding female cattle herders in this pastoralist Maasai community will work. ‘No, because they can’t go herding alone,’ Baba says trying to hide his amusement to my question. ‘A woman can fear wild animals. She can’t face them.’ Baba and Sara live in Talek, a small town in southwest Kenya, and a mere ten-minute walk from the border of the Maasai Mara National Reserve. Over the next two hours I conclude from Baba that Maasai men are warriors, taught how to carry spears and fight lions, and women are taught how to keep a household.

Traditionally, the actions, behaviors, and rules for women in Maasai culture are distinctly separate from those of men (Bailey, 2012; Chieni & Spencer, 1993; Talle, 1988). Chieni & Spencer (1993) affirm women’s vital importance in domestic work: to fetch water and firewood, clean, prepare food, give birth to children, care for children, and milk livestock (Chieni & Spencer, 1993). Today, however, many women have taken on greater responsibilities beyond the household, often because men are called away to more lucrative and reliable jobs in the tourism industry or in urban areas (Butt, 2014).

Baba smirks when I suggest that a woman might hold such a historically male position as livestock manager. ‘That is men’s work. Women cannot do that work.’ He leans down to hug Sara’s three-year-old, his great-grandson. I take this opportunity to glance at Sara hoping for clarification. ‘In our culture,’ she says, ‘men don’t see women like...’ She looks down then quickly up again to meet my eyes, ‘Like equals? I don’t, even not equals. I don’t know how to tell you like...like people. They just see us like slaves...’ she trails off.

Maasai cultural systems are predominantly thought of as a highly patriarchal and polygamous society with traditional gender roles ascribed to males and females, many of which relate to livestock production (Bailey, 2012; Talle, 1998). It is widely acknowledged that males ‘own’ and control the livestock (Hodgson, 2000; Talle, 1988; Wangui, 2008). Hodgson draws on work by Schneider, who argues that in East African pastoralist societies women are dependent upon men due largely to the fact that men control livestock (Hodgson, 2000). Others suggest that male dominance and control of resources is an artifact of colonialism, and was not previously found in Maasai culture, as the male colonizers chose to conduct business solely with the local Maasai men (Hodgson, 2000; Talle, 1988).

⁶ NOTE: All names and identities have been changed to comply with human subjects’ clearance.

Beyond losing control over resources, women were also removed from decision-making processes in the colonial era, which extended from the political landscape into the home to include decisions such as livestock production (e.g. where to graze cattle or how many cattle to migrate in the dry season) and livestock sales (Archambault, 2016; Njuki & Sanginga, 2013). Despite women's increased roles in livestock production – discussed in the results section of the chapter – the literature suggests that they remain excluded from both decision-making processes (Karmebäck, Wairore, Jirström, & Nyberg, 2015; Wangui, 2008) and rights regarding resource access, use, and control within the home and community (Hodgson, 2011).

When I ask Baba about women's roles in livestock production and inclusion in decision-making processes, he opines that a woman's only value lies in her ability to give birth. Sara, a mother of one, nods in ostensible agreement. The three of us talk for a while longer, meandering into topics of wildlife, conservation, and land use changes. When I stand up to leave, I again lower my head to Baba. 'Ashe,' I say, thank you. Sara walks me out the door, and I apologize for keeping her so late; I know she still has to make dinner for her family. I notice a small grin as she looks back to the house, 'John [her husband], has been in the kitchen cooking this whole time. He is so quiet, right?' My eyes widen in astonishment that the grandson of Baba has furtively been preparing maize meal and spinach while this conversation about static gender roles was occurring just one room away.

Objectives

Given this short anecdote on traditional livestock production practices, the purpose of this chapter is to investigate the effects of evolving identities of Maasai women in southwest Kenya residing on the borders of protected areas. I argue that women are transitioning from traditional household caretakers to significant contributors in livestock production, and in some instances even assuming the role of livestock managers. This chapter seeks to identify and explain the transforming gendered nature of livestock production and environmental identities in two Maasai communities adjacent to the distinct and ecologically significant drylands of Maasai Mara National Reserve. Although there is extensive research on the Maasai, few inquiries have explored some of the recent changes in women's roles and rights within livestock production (work by Dorothy Hodgson and Elizabeth Edna Wangui are notable exceptions). This is true of many pastoralist communities worldwide, especially when compared to the considerable research on women's roles in small-scale agriculture (Njuki & Sanginga, 2013).

I seek to answer the following questions: 1) How have Maasai women become livestock managers?, and 2) In what way do changes in women's roles influence their sense of identity?

Through the lens of feminist political ecology, this chapter explores the ways in which Maasai women are forming new identities as stewards of production, through increased participation in livestock management due to contemporary relationships and opportunities. The next portion of the chapter discusses the framework provided by feminist political

ecology to assess the thesis of environmental subjects and identities. I then detail my methods and study area, and present my results drawing on empirical fieldwork to examine and discuss women's evolving identities in two ways. The first section of results examines identity through relationships, particularly the removal of familial male labor, addition of hired male labor, and monogamous relationships. The second section focuses on opportunities that impact the role of women as stewards of production, specifically that of education, income-earning, and how changes in infrastructure affect time allocation. Following that, is a section conceptualizing women's evolving identities, and finally I conclude the chapter by considering the implications of this study for women's and community development.

A Feminist Take on Political Ecology's Environmental Subjects and Identities Thesis

Political ecology, as a conceptual framework, seeks to contest apolitical perspectives of human-environment relations (Le Billon, 2001), and to acknowledge the power relationships that exist. Feminist political ecology seeks to reject essentialism and superficial, linear-causal analyses of these relationships, and to acknowledge the agency and identities of individuals (Sundberg, 2004). Responsibility for, knowledge of, and experience with the environment is often distinctly different for women than for men (Rocheleau, Thomas-Slayter, & Wangari, 1996).

Feminist ecology investigates an individual's intersectional subjectivities when striving to understand evolving identities (Elmhirst, 2015; for further explanation see Carr, 2013; Lykke, 2010; Sundberg, 2004). Identity is often looked at as the complex fusion of one's biological, social, and cultural attributes including, but by no means limited to: gender, race, class, culture, religion, livelihood, and lived experience (Rocheleau *et al.*, 1996; Sundberg, 2004).

Along with feminist ecology, the environmental subjects and identities thesis – as articulated by Robbins (2012) – connects an individual's identity to their livelihood, and the ways in which the essence of a person is grounded in natural, physical things and places. For example, most Maasai still keep livestock and believe it is an integral part of the Maasai identity and way of life (Wangui, 2014), which requires an intimate knowledge of livestock production and dryland ecosystems. Moreover, the environmental subjects and identities thesis addresses how identities are tied to resource access, use, and control, including that of labor – the primary resource examined in this chapter.

A feminist political ecology perspective, tied with the environmental subjects and identities thesis allows for a clearer understanding of how more equitable outcomes for women can be achieved. This structure provides a platform for commonly marginalized voices to be heard and taken seriously (Elmhirst, 2015; Rocheleau, 1996) and offers an opportunity to interrogate the power structures that maintain a status quo of disempowered peoples. In the often male-dominated and subsistence-based Maasai culture, it is essential to understand gendered resource access and how that may affect gender-specific vulnerabilities. Moreover, resources do not need to be physical objects, they can be relational and even acquired and/or

recognized knowledge; women's access, use, and control of livestock production can be viewed as empowerment through agency – especially considering Maasai women have historically not been empowered with individual agency (Goldman & Little, 2015).

This dual framework presents the opportunity for research that positions the researcher to reflect on how individual identity, power structures, and non-human actors may influence one's relationship with the environment. This chapter acknowledges the findings as a single interpretation of the causes for the evolving identities of Maasai women, whilst open to the idea that there is more than one explanation for the shifting scale regarding access, use, and control of resources among individuals, families, and communities in the study.

This chapter provides a clearer understanding of the evolving identities of Maasai women in southwest Kenya, as it pertains to livestock production through contemporary relationships and opportunities.

Methods

The data in this chapter was obtained through qualitative case study methods (see Rubin & Rubin, 2005), including semi-structured interviews, informal conversations, and ethnographic observations gathered from accompanying individuals on their daily routines. Interview participants were found using snowball sampling methodology and selected based on meeting three criteria: residence within the communities, actively practicing livestock husbandry, and a willingness to participate in the research. Respondents were men, women, and hired herders, all comprising a range of social classes, in order to provide a broad sample of adult community members; I collected demographic information on all respondents. In total, 56 individuals from 22 households were interviewed.

All interviews were conducted in English or translated between English and Maa with the help of two female Maasai research assistants; these women were members of the community and integral to the research as translators, key informants, and liaisons. I chose to work with women because this enabled me to reach both women and men, young and old with the most ease and comfort for respondents. I recorded all interviews and transcribed the English translations for further analysis. I manually coded interview data using recurring concepts for an inductive analysis (see Rubin & Rubin, 1995). Quotes used in the following sections were taken directly from interviews, and in some cases have been minimally altered to make translations more fluent.

Study Area and the Political Economy of Tourism

The study area is within the Serengeti-Mara ecosystem, and includes Maasai Mara National Reserve (MMNR) and its immediate surroundings. Serengeti National Park lies to the south and eight private wildlife conservancies⁷ to the north (Fig. 2). There is a thriving tourism

⁷ Private wildlife conservancies are privately managed protected areas that, in this particular context, lease land from Maasai people to promote environmental conservation through tourism and community development.

industry which draws visitors hoping to view wildlife, affording local men employment opportunities such as watchmen, cooks, guides, and drivers.

The study area was selected because male employment in the tourism sector has resulted in a higher male absence in the area and because livestock husbandry remains the predominant livelihood. Nearly all of the 56 interviews conducted in this study mentioned men working in the tourism industry in some capacity, although not every household had a family member directly employed in tourism. As men find jobs, they are absent for days or even weeks at a time, leaving many of their former household responsibilities to their wives and hired herders.

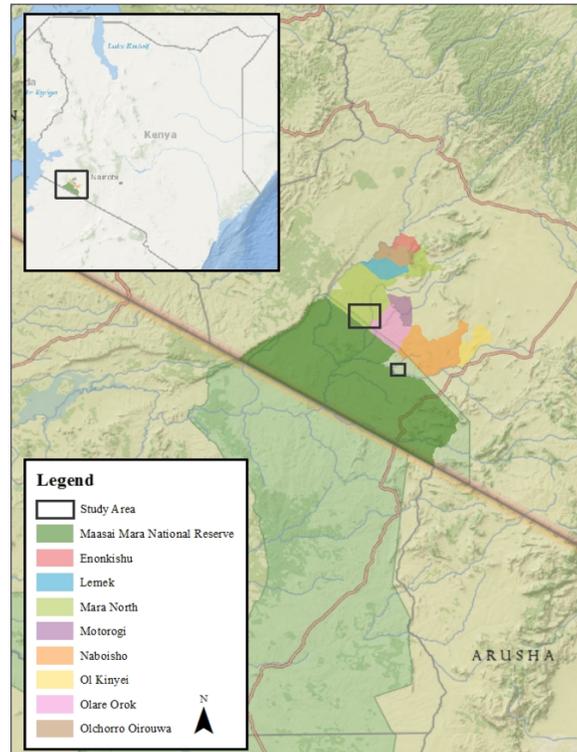


Fig. 2. Location of study area shown in black outline boxes, National Reserve/Park shown in green (Maasai Mara National Reserve is north of the border in Kenya, and Serengeti National Park is south of the border in Tanzania), and the eight private conservancies shown in various colors.

Evolving Identities: Relationships

This section examines identity through relationships, particularly the removal of familial male labor, addition of hired male labor, and monogamous relationships.

Removal of Familial Male Labor

When I began this investigation into women's roles in livestock production I thought I would find women taking on more herding responsibilities themselves.⁸ Instead, I found very few

⁸ Maasai men historically worked in small herding units based on age sets, with young boys responsible for herding the cattle and men protecting them (Spear & Waller, 1993). In addition to the absence of male labor, Kenyan children have also been removed from former duties in livestock production as they are now legally required to attend school.

female cattle herders. Those I did meet had taken up cattle herding because their husbands were deceased or drunkards, or financial constraints did not permit them to hire a herder. For example, one woman stated:

We don't have the herders and also, we are not able to pay the herders every end month. [My] husband is a drunk, so he is not providing anything for us. We are the ones providing for the kids and the cows.

Three women who had formerly herded their family's cattle told me they stopped due to incidences involving beatings by rangers and encounters with dangerous animals, while herding inside MMNR. It is a taboo in Maasai culture for a woman to carry weapons, and as a result it is considered unsafe for a woman to enter MMNR or conservancies due to the higher concentrations of wildlife. In the case of wild animals like jackals or hyenas, women commented that they can usually scare them off by shouting and throwing stones, but with larger predators like lions, they have no way to protect themselves or the livestock.

Complicating these statements and observations, I found that: 1) women not being culturally permitted to carry weapons is a gendered response to danger, and 2) owners with an income can hire a herder, which constrains their wives to their traditional roles; consequently, it removes women from situational violence at the hand of rangers, yet husbands still threaten and/or use violence on their wives themselves.

The first explanation of weapon use as a gendered response to dangerous wildlife designates men as protectors, and women in need of protection. None of the women interviewed stated that fear of wildlife had any role in their ability to herd livestock. In fact, I was commonly told of a Maasai folklore that a lion would never hurt a woman, but rather escort her to safety. The only fear women expressed regarding herding was the threat of beatings by her husband if she were to lose any livestock. The threat of domestic abuse is well-established and in some cases normalized among Maasai (Goldman & Little, 2015; Talle, 1988) and is another method used to keep women subordinate (Wangui, 2014). However, interviews exposed that violence is deemed inappropriate if enacted on a woman outside the family – for example, by a ranger. Baba, who was introduced in the open anecdote, told me:

So, women are not allowed to enter in the park, because the rangers can find somebody and beat, beat so much. [...] So, that's why the changes came [for women to stop herding]. Women are not allowed to herd because of rangers, because rangers can beat her. [...] The husband don't want the woman to go and herd. They prefer themselves to be beaten than her.

Similarly, the second explanation can be viewed as a way to maintain familial male power and the status quo by keeping women at home and within the physical and social female sphere of the home. Female smallstock (i.e. sheep, goats, and calves) herders were more common because sheep and goats do not roam far for forage. However, smallstock herding was not the primary task of any of the women interviewed, and many families also employ herders for smallstock or engage children. In larger families – either multiple wives or extended families living together – women take turns herding, so that each woman is

responsible for the smallstock one or two days a week for three to five hours per day; when children return from school in the afternoon, they relieve the women of herding duties.

While I expected the presence of female cattle herders, I instead found hired herders in 19 of the 22 households studied. In these communities, women have not assumed the role of herder, partially due to the reasons explained above, but also because many have taken on greater responsibility akin to that formerly of the cattle owner. Women, in general, have not fallen into a vacancy, rather they have stepped up into management position often supervising both the cattle herd and the hired herder. The relationship between women and hired herders is examined in the following section.

Addition of Hired Herders

Herders are employed to carry out many of the responsibilities associated with the day-to-day maintenance of livestock herds, namely taking livestock to available forage and helping administer vaccinations and medications. Herding was traditionally the responsibility of children, but Kenya now requires all children to attend school removing them from weekday herding activities. Livestock health was attended to by adult men, but as stated, tourism and income-earning opportunities have pulled men away from duties at home. These familial absences have resulted in hiring herders to help with livestock production.

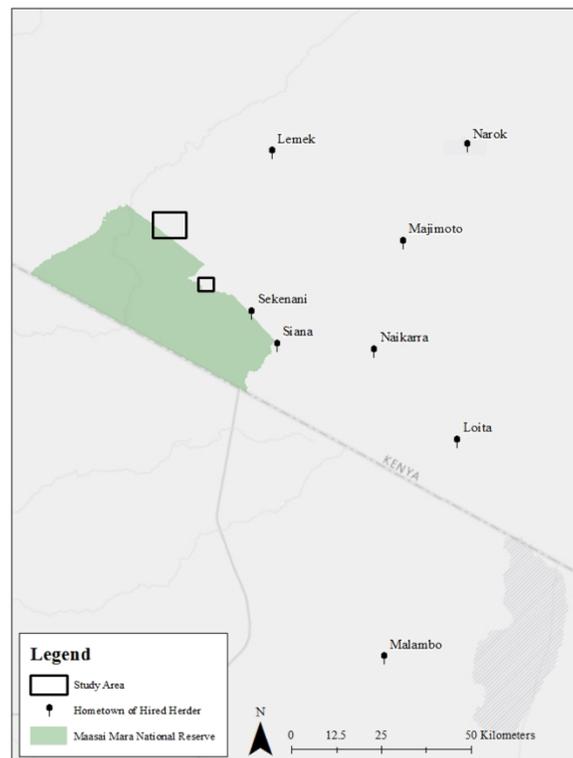


Fig. 3. Pins represent hometowns of hired herders migrating to work within the study area shown in black outline boxes.

All hired herders interviewed were male between the ages of 15 and 50; none were from the villages in which they are employed (Fig. 3). Many of the men are from communities where tourism was largely absent, and they sought employment in livestock herding – ‘the only

work we know.’

In 12 of the families that employ herders, the herders arrived looking for work and were previously unknown to the family; in two cases the men were in-laws or family friends; and in another five instances the men were known hired herders in the area that the hiring family recruited to work for them. The hired herders work for varying amounts of time: some staying only for a few months, while others moved their families with them, working for the same family for nearly a decade. If the hired herder has family elsewhere, he likely returns home to visit when children are on school leave and the hiring family’s sons can assume herding duties.

The relationship between the hiring families and hired herders (and their wives and children if present) is often almost familial. For example, one hired herder stated that:

The owner is treating me well. I’m happy. Even the livestock I am treating like they are my own livestock. The owner employing me for these cows has become very good friend of mine. You find me here, and I am so happy because of this work because the owner is treating me like his brother.

Herders, like the one quoted above, mentioned that they treat their employer’s cattle as well or better than they treat their own because ultimately the goal is the same – to provide for their families. The high quality of care for both the employer to the hired herder and the hired herder to the cattle is one of the reasons for the good working relationships found throughout the study area. One woman I spoke with explained how her family came to employ their herder:

[My sister-in-law] knew him when he was taking care of somebody else’s sheep. And unfortunately, he was not comfortable. The family was not taking care of him. He was doing a lot of work, but nobody was taking care of him. With such challenges, my sister-in-law told us to speak to him. And that’s when we took him in.

Women are often close with the hired herders, because they have more contact with both the hired herders and the livestock than do their absent working husbands. Hired herders, much like women, are viewed as having a lower standing within a familial context, subordinate to all adult men in the family. Yet, employing a hired herder shifts the ranking order of a family so that an adult man is, to some extent, supervised by an adult woman. The relationship between women and hired herders is more complex than that as I will demonstrate, but this aspect certainly alters the perceived identity women have of themselves.

As shown in Fig. 4, women were frequently the primary contact for hired herders in livestock production interactions and in accommodating for their living situations. Cattle owners answered that their principal responsibility in livestock production was to pay the salary of the hired herder and to purchase vaccines and medication for the livestock. This separation from daily interactions essentially removed the owners from active livestock production.

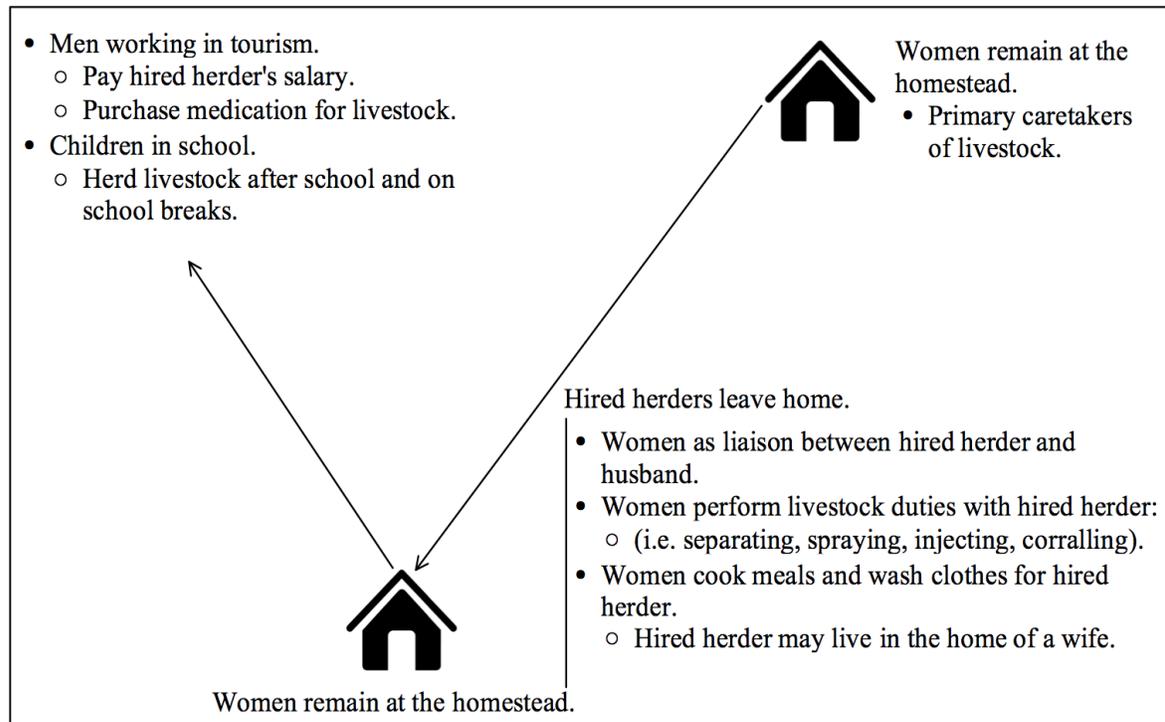


Fig. 4. Visual depiction of each member of a family and their role in livestock production.

Livestock owners usually check-in with their hired herders at least once a week, either in person or by phone, to inquire about the health of the livestock. Some hired herders mentioned that the livestock owners do not visit the animals for months at a time if employment prevents him from returning. However, they interact with the women everyday: often working together to release the livestock and separate calves from cows in morning, then check on and count the animals, vaccinate them, and corral them in the evening. Maasai women are both visibly and actively engaged in livestock production, well beyond their historical duties – mainly milking (Talle, 1988).

In one instance an owner explained how his wife was principally responsible for the welfare of the family's livestock, as he worked and had little time during the week to devote to the animals:

The hired herder and my wife are very close. They are sharing concerns about the livestock. If the cows are sick, or sheep, he is giving information to the lady and my wife is giving me the information. I have not seen the sheep, I have not seen the shepherd, but I will see my wife.

The same man explained that his wife's duties also include checking on the animals and 'making sure the shepherd eats well.' Cooking and washing clothing for the hired herder are common tasks for women. In some instances, I found the hired herder even lives in the same house as a wife of the owner and typically eats meals with her and her children. Such daily interactions demonstrate some of the 'new' ways in which the alliances between hired herders and women contribute to women's new identities as livestock managers.

In speaking with hired herders, I also learned that their wives and mothers – who remained at home – may play the role of livestock manager (Fig. 4). Interviews with hired herders revealed that of the 12 hired herders who own livestock themselves: five have their wives or mothers managing livestock, four have their brothers or fathers managing their livestock, and three have their own hired herders. In cases where the hired herder's wife or mother cares for the livestock, she is also making all other managerial decisions on a daily basis. For example, one hired herder noted that:

The wife is the one making her own decision because I am not near now. I live very far. So, she is the one who makes decisions. She says, 'Today I will take my sheep and my cows somewhere to graze and to take water.' Because I am not near, and we don't get each other on the phone because there is no good network. She is the one making decisions.

Female livestock managers are not limited to scenarios where the livestock-owning husbands live far away from their wives and cattle. For example, when I encountered hired herders who had moved with their families, the women are either: the livestock managers of her family's livestock while the husband cares for the employer's livestock or the wife and husband practice joint herd management. The women and men in these instances are in monogamous relationships, which may have contributed to more equal contributions and responsibilities in livestock production. It appeared as though monogamous marriages result in more balanced relationships with complementary roles like those suggested to exist pre-colonization; Hodgson's (2011) research argues that before colonial influence (as examined earlier in the chapter), men and women each had distinct roles and responsibilities towards livestock production, but women shared access and use rights to the livestock. I believe monogamous relationships are prompting a return to complementary roles and shared access and use to family herds.

Monogamous Relationships

The women I met who consider themselves livestock managers, and whose husbands recognize them as significant contributors to livestock production, are either in monogamous relationships or in marriages with at most two co-wives. These relationships appear to have more equitable production practices and shared responsibilities between wives and husbands. I found that there was a discernable partnership, as opposed to families with three to seven co-wives in which women were viewed more as laborers. In these large polygamous families, I observed differing levels of affection, attention, and material property – such as food and clothing – devoted to each wife by the husband; this was corroborated in interviews as well.

For women to serve as livestock production managers, a high level of trust in the women's knowledge and skill is necessary (Turner, 2009). The recognition of women as livestock managers can also vastly alter how women see themselves and how men perceive women. For example, a female herder from one of the three households that does not have a hired herder, is proud of her role as a woman in livestock production. Her husband works as a watchman at a nearby camp and is often absent during the tourism season, typically June through December. She explained:

I do everything when [my husband] is not around. I inject them, give medicines, look after them, and also take them to drink water. [...] I don't want a herder, because I like to herd. They are my cows, it's my land, and I'm only the wife. I like here because it's only me.

In another illustration, a woman brings her husband – a hired herder – lunch each day while he is herding sheep, then spends the rest of the afternoon with him before working together to bring the sheep back in the evening. When I asked her husband how he feels about her inclusion in this task, he said:

I feel well when I am herding with my wife. Because we can get time to share stories. I like that so much.

Lastly, we visited a family the morning after a long rain and found the husband helping his wife clean out the smallstock pen – a duty firmly within the female sphere. When I interviewed the husband later in the afternoon he told me:

You see the way I love my wife. I was helping her. I went to help her because I don't want her to want. [...] And sometimes when I go herding on the day when the hired herder is gone, she will come with me because she wants to go. Because we are happy when we are together.

Many individuals said that 'love,' 'laughter,' and 'togetherness' has entered their homes in the last three to five years partially as a result of churches and conservancies in the area urging men to treat their wives well. Many of the men with one or two wives recounted how they have come to realize the importance of their wives and began to 'recognize them as people, not just slaves.'

Churches and conservancies encourage monogamy for a variety of reasons, although arguably the most prevalent is to control population growth. This is based on a neo-Malthusian fear that population growth will lead to destruction of the environment; an idea treated as fact by some pastoral scholars (i.e. Sandford, 2006; Spencer, 1998), but oft critiqued (Peluso & Watts, 2001; Derman, Odgaard, & Sjaastad, 2007). In the same line of thinking, fewer children should discourage smaller and smaller land holdings that result from men dividing their land among many sons.

Perhaps due to the influence of these institutions, monogamy is becoming more common in younger, educated generations. The local primary school director, a young man with one wife and three children, told me:

We are telling them to control the polygamy because life is becoming hard. [...] This is because the land has become divided. People only have few acres and you know Maasai are polygamous, and they are having many children. So, there are more children but the land cannot expand. [...] Secondly, we have the schools. Nowadays if you take all children to school it is very expensive. Very expensive.

Several young men I spoke with, the majority of whom are educated and employed in tourism, expressed how unappealing polygamy seems to them because it ‘sounds stressful’ or ‘is too expensive.’ Additionally, many of them chose to marry women they met in school – as opposed to arranged marriages. As such they had very little interest in marrying another wife for whom they may not have the same level of affection. The freedom to choose one’s marital partner represents a distinct break from cultural norms which serves to empower both women and men (Goldman & Little, 2015), but also inspires trust that both spouses are capable and competent partners in livestock management.

Table 1. Summary table of observed changes in relationships resulting in women as stewards of production.

Observed Changes in Relationships	Women as Stewards of Production
Removal of male labor	Women have become the de facto head of household including manager of livestock production while husbands are away for work.
Relationship with hired herder	<p>Women serve as the liaison between hired herders and husbands, controlling the labor resource as the de facto employer.</p> <p>Women responsible for caring for the hired herder’s basic needs (e.g. food, clean clothes, housing conditions).</p> <p>Women are responsible for checking the health and well-being of livestock; intimate knowledge of particular milking cows.</p>
Monogamy	Women in monogamous relationships view themselves and are viewed by their husbands more as partners in livestock production than as laborers.

As relationships are shifting away from the traditional dynamics within households, women are taking on greater responsibilities in livestock production. This is because, as discussed earlier, the husband is absent, the women work closely alongside the hired herder, the husband trusts his wife to take on more of role, or some combination of these (Table 1).

Evolving Identities: Opportunities

Transformations in labor relationships are not the only changes affecting women’s roles as stewards of production. In this section, I discuss how education, income-earning opportunities, and changes in infrastructure available to women – that were not present in the past – are helping women become empowered to take on roles as livestock managers as well as through a variety of development opportunities.

Education

Access to education is a large contributor to the changes in female identities. All children in Kenya are legally required to attend to school. Some families are less in favor of this regulation than others, as one man who works as a livestock trader told me:

A girl child has to be in school. We don't like to put girls in school. We just like them to grow up and give them the husbands. We have to put them school, because if you refuse you will be arrested.

However, later in the interview the same man, prodded a bit by Sara – my educated, female, Maasai research assistant – acquiesced that educated women can be important to their families because they can then work the same jobs as men ‘in offices, schools, and shops,’ thereby helping with an additional income. This man shared that he was stubborn about educating girls because he is concerned that grown, educated women will not produce as many children. A large number of children is still considered a form of wealth and status, thus fewer children would result in a perceived lower social position for this man.

On the other hand, another father told me, to the cheers of both my research assistants, that:

We came to realize the importance of a girl child. Because even girls now, they are going to school, they are reading. They have degrees and they have good jobs, and that's good for Maasai people to realize that girls are a very important person in the culture. They used to say a girl is like a slave – just doing what and eating food. But now, they come to realize that even a girl can be an important person in society.

The growing awareness surrounding the value of women in general, and educated women specifically is creating a certain kind of vicarious empowerment for adult females in the area who were not able to attend school. It encourages adult women to believe in their abilities and take on non-traditional roles, like that of livestock manager, and push back against traditional female roles such as those outlined earlier (i.e. fetching firewood and water, cleaning, preparing food, caring for children, and milking livestock).

Education also provides opportunity and optimism for a different future for young Maasai girls and boys. Many women and men alike said they want their children to be better than them, which to many women implies their daughters will be able to find employment and purpose outside the home. Parents and older siblings praised their school-aged girls for being top of their class and speaking English well.

While trying to find my way home one day, an eleven-year old girl in her school uniform, called to me in English, ‘Are you lost? Tell me who you are looking for and I will take you where to go.’ She brought me to her grandmother's house. I sat with the grandmother as she described how education is impacting Maasai women:

Education, that's very good, because a man will never mistreat you again because

he knows if he chases you away you have your own; you can get your own salary to defend yourself. Even now if you are not married you can go and stand for yourself because you have your own money, your own job. I like the changes of today because of education. A woman can say something and be listened to. Also, a girl will get a good job. So, us as parents, we like our kids to be in school so that they'll come and help us, but also, they can help themselves so that they will not live in poverty.

She also told me how she knows a little English because she used to sell handmade jewelry to tourists at the Talek Gate, one of the entrances to MMNR. She explained that she did not earn much money, but what she did make she kept to help herself and her children. She told me of a dream she has where her granddaughter will go on to run camps and lodges, rather than sit outside of them selling bracelets. She also imagined a world where she was given the same opportunities as girls today, 'I wish I could be very young now, I could be very far.' This woman made the best of the opportunities presented to her like selling jewelry, which is still a common income-earning venture for women. As I discuss in the next section, these income-earning opportunities are fundamental to transforming traditional gender issues.

Income-Earning Opportunities

Many Maasai women have sold handmade jewelry to tourists over the past few decades. Originally, women would sell these items outside MMNR gates or at cultural bomas, but recently some non-profits and conservancies have worked with Maasai women to provide necessary materials to create the jewelry and an expanded market in which to sell it. I encountered two different organizations that took orders for crafted custom beadwork from around the world. Women were often invited to a conservancy or a local school to bead and socialize. Most women, in either monogamous or polygamous relationships, would often not tell their husbands when or how much they were paid so that they could keep at least some of the money for themselves.

For example, one craftswoman I met, the fifth of five wives in her family, told me that she was primarily responsible for the wellbeing of herself and her children because she was the least cared for of her co-wives and that beadwork gave her an opportunity to better herself:

We've found our own resources. Now, us we'll go and sell this beadwork. We find them to sell in camps and then we'll get our money. After getting our money, we'll just call a small meeting of twenty women, and then we'll come and discuss how can we do so that we develop ourselves. We can contribute at least 100 [Kenyan shillings] for one person, and then we can give one person. And then, that one person can raise up. The other day, we'll give to another. Even us now, we are developing because we get our own resources. No one is controlling us now. Because Maasai men, they don't believe to give women money. Nowadays, we get our own money. When we get this money for our beadwork, we can help each other and we can develop.

As mentioned in this quote, women may work together, however usually outside of their

families because of friction among co-wives due to aspects explained previously in the chapter (i.e. differing levels of affection, attention, and material property – such as food and clothing). In working together, women can buy items for themselves, reducing their dependency on men. The perceived and actual lack of ownership and control of resources make women fully reliant upon their husbands (Goldman & Little, 2015), thus it is logical that the women I interviewed who had access to and control of monetary resources found this to be, arguably, the most empowering aspect of all the elements evaluated in this chapter. Spending power allows women to make decisions that directly benefit themselves and can considerably improve their lives on a day-to-day basis.

Changes in Infrastructure

Some of the items women buy for themselves reduce or eliminate traditional women’s work such as: water tanks, *jikos* – charcoal stoves – and iron sheet used for housing, thus removing the need for women to collect water, firewood, and wood/mud for construction as regularly. One man I spoke with stated that ‘women do not have much to do anymore,’ because of these modern conveniences, which has allowed women to allocate their time differently and take on a more active role in livestock production. Women’s saved time resulting from use of modern conveniences has had beneficial impacts around the developing world (see Ahmed, Mustafa, & Khalid, 2011; Baguma, Loiskandl, & Jung, 2010; Ilahi & Grimard, 2000.)

Table 2. Summary table of observed changes in opportunities resulting in women as stewards of production.

Observed Changes in Opportunities	Women as Stewards of Production
Education	Children, both girls and boys, are required to attend school, providing a vicarious empowerment to adult females who see a different future for their children. Thus, women are more willing to take on livestock production roles historically carried out by children.
Income-earning	Women, through formal employment and selling beadwork, have income-earning opportunities that allow them to access and control monetary resources, which is outside the traditional female sphere.
Changes in Infrastructure (e.g. water tanks, charcoal stoves, iron sheet for house construction) á la time allocation	Women are more easily and safely able to access necessary resources; thus, they have more time to allocate to livestock production, personal development, income-earning opportunities – like beadwork, and leisure.

Opportunities such as education, income-earning, and changes in infrastructure (Table 2) are also encouraging and aiding women to have a greater presence and engagement outside the home and expanding their influence beyond traditional boundaries. The female identity is

less intrinsically tied to a physical place where caregiving occurs because they are able to provide care for themselves through education and decisions regarding time allocation, and they can provide for their families in a way similar, if not the same, as men.

Given all these changes: removal of familial male labor, the addition of hired herders, increasing monogamous relationships, education, income-earning opportunities for women, and time allocation resulting from changes in infrastructure, there has been a growing recognition of the women's considerable worth.

Conceptualizing Women's Evolving Identities

Increasingly, women have the opportunity and time to become more active members of their families and communities, beyond the scope of household chores. The home has been the domain of women for generations, but women's involvement with livestock managing, as well as walking to and from beading and social gatherings or school have made women more visible, thus more accepted features on the landscape.

As men begin to view women as valuable, be it as capable livestock managers or breadwinners, they seem to warm to new forms of female independence (Karmebäck *et al.*, 2015; Wangui, 2014). Moreover, the acquired and recognized knowledge and value that women obtain as livestock managers, income-earners, and educated persons strengthens women's perceptions of themselves.

This newfound acknowledgement also impacts men's willingness to include their wives in decision-making processes. In 12 of the 22 households interviewed, women responded that they were part of household-level decision-making processes. This was subsequently confirmed by men in the families. It is likely that in some of these instances being 'part' of the decision-making process meant that the woman was merely informed of the decision⁹, but even this was viewed as an improvement.

One man told me that every December he sits down with his two wives and they create a budget for the year deciding how best to spend the family's earnings:

I have to budget all things for a year, but I have to have a discussion with my wives. I have to discuss with them because I can't do alone. And that's how we discuss and the women agree like, 'You first build for this one, the first [wife] a house. And then next December you'll build one for me.' I'm struggling all the best I can that each of them will have a stable life.

Another woman explained that she is educated and her husband and younger co-wife are not, so it is necessary that she be a part of the decision-making process because she knows how to balance the family's income and expenses:

⁹ It was not uncommon for women to be completely uninformed and unaware of decisions made by their father's and husband's that directly influence them and/or their children's lives.

He respects me. You know if there is no cooperation in a family, it's not good. It's not going to run smoothly. We sit together, talk, and cooperate together. Because my husband and co-wife have not been learned, so they don't understand anything. I'm also understanding how the money is being managed in the family. We have to sit down and manage together so that we can be able to help ourselves.

Many Maasai scholars interested in gender studies have stated that women, despite their increased participation in work roles and responsibilities, are still excluded from decision-making at the family and community scale (Goldman & Little, 2015; Hodgson, 2011; Karmebäck *et al.*, 2015). Yet, this study finds that women and men alike are beginning to recognize the benefits of making decisions together – imparting empowerment through agency.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I asked the questions: 1) How have Maasai women become livestock managers?, and 2) In what way do changes in women's roles influence their sense of identity? I argued that Maasai women in southwest Kenya, as evidenced by this case study, are transitioning from traditional household caretakers to significant contributors in livestock production due primarily to the fact that men are being called away to participate in the tourism economy, leaving women at home to care for the livestock. Women are engendered, occasionally by default, to care for the cattle herds and hired herders, and in successfully doing so, they gain trust in themselves and from their male family members as capable and competent contributors to their families' predominant livelihood.

This is leading to women developing identities in which they see themselves as and are recognized as valuable members of their families and communities. Through both relationships and opportunities, women are finding new, empowering ways to contribute to the development of themselves and their families. Women are still participating in traditional roles, but have assumed greater responsibility outside of those as well, which has influenced their perceived worth, and in nearly half of the families interviewed led to women's inclusion in decision-making processes.

In addition to women's increased roles and responsibilities in their families, they have more occasions to better themselves individually through education and income-earning opportunities. Moreover, due to infrastructural changes many of women's traditional duties are less time intensive, which can allow for personal development and leisure time.

The goal of this research is to provide at a possible explanation for and interpretation of the gendered roles, rights, and responsibilities of female Maasai pastoralists who reside on the borders of protected areas. The transition from women as laborers to managers in livestock production is individual to each family, but overall there appears to be at least an incremental change in women's roles as it relates to physical and abstract resource access, use, and control within the pastoralist livelihood system. These changes have led to female identities

as stewards of production, instilling in women a sense of agency, trust, and self-reliance.

Box 4: Recommendations for project research and design regarding pastoralist women, extracted from an IFAD document (Rota, 2009, p. 4).

- Understanding the basic needs of pastoral women, the threats they face, their roles in pastoral societies and how these roles are changing;
- Supporting women's empowerment, looking not only at how to enable pastoralists to become more market-oriented, but in particular at how to ensure that women capture the benefits of economic empowerment;
- Supporting women's access to productive resources and main assets (water, land, fuelwood, markets, knowledge), promoting their participation in small-scale dairying and strengthening their role in decision-making processes;
- Understanding how women influence decisions and what resources they have greater control over;
- Incorporating the concerns of pastoralist women in project design and ensuring women's active participation and involvement in the different project phases and activities; and
- Supporting income-generating activities (for instance, processing and selling of livestock, forage, aromatic and medicinal plants, and wildlife products) as a way to enhance pastoralist women's socio-economic position in the household and empower them to take a greater role in the community. At the same time, it is important to recognize that, because of their extremely heavy workloads, women have fewer opportunities to diversify or maximize their livelihoods. Time-saving opportunities, therefore, merit special attention.

This research can be used to inform development programs like that of the United Nations' International Fund for Agriculture (IFAD). IFAD emphasizes the importance of researching and addressing both women and men when creating programs for development and poverty alleviation (see Box 4). As Wangui (2008) states, making incorrect assumptions about women and their responsibilities within society can distort important information and narratives that jeopardize the success of new program implementations. A clearer understanding of the gendered aspects of livestock production can inform appropriate development and conservation strategies for the betterment of women and communities.

Conclusion

This thesis provides a deeper understanding of how land use strategies and familial relationships are changing as a result of new land tenure structures, the tourism economy, and conservation efforts in southwest Kenya. Specifically, this research focused on a community of Maasai pastoralists living on the edge of a major protected area. This thesis identifies the ways in which the community has adapted to changes in land access and use, as well as the effects of tourism and conservation with respect to livestock production.

The theoretical framework of political ecology guided the research from a landscape level analysis of land access and use (Chapter 1) down to the evolving identity of female livestock managers (Chapter 2). I relied on this framework to give direction to the explanation for, and interpretation of, the adaptations observed on the landscape, and does not assume to speak for the community. The motivation for this research was to interrogate the relationships and power structures that influence pastoralist people residing on the borders of protected areas.

In chapter one, I argued that land privatization should not be understood as a dichotomy of solely good or bad outcomes for landowners, land users, conservation efforts, or migratory domestic and wild animals. Broadly, land privatization has allowed for more individual human agency, but how that agency manifests socially and physically on the landscape differs depending on relationships within the community and access to resources (be that financial resources to build a fence or natural resource access to land within private wildlife conservancies, for example).

The discourse surrounding land access and use, especially around protected areas are complex and could not possibly be fully analyzed, understood, or remedied without significant research, advocacy, and perseverance by scholars, policy makers, conservationists, and local communities. This chapter contributes to the wider literature of shared landscapes with pastoralist peoples, wildlife, and protected areas.

In the second chapter, I contend that women are taking on greater responsibilities in livestock production practices. Through this they are benefitting by developing a greater sense of worth, and occasional acknowledgement of their value from familial men. Thus, women are beginning to be treated with more trust and respect. Income-earning opportunities and inclusion in decision-making processes appear to be the most influential changes in women's lives, both of which are affected to some degree by the empowerment women gain from increased roles and responsibilities within the family's predominant livelihood.

Gender studies can be difficult to research due to inherent sensitivities and the personal nature of the topic. This thesis is also an effort to produce useful studies on women in marginalized and underrepresented societies in order to provide place-based and societally appropriate explanations of and recommendations for increasing women's roles and responsibilities towards a goal of gender equality.

Works Cited

- Ahmed, A., Mustafa, U., & Khalid, M. (2011). Rooftop rainwater harvesting technology and women time allocation in district Bagh and Battagram Pakistan. *Pakistan Development Review*.
- Anderson, D., & Grove, R. (1988). *Conservation in Africa peoples, policies and practice*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Archambault, C. S. (2016). Re-creating the Commons and Re-configuring Maasai Women's Roles on the Rangelands in the Face of Fragmentation. *International Journal of the Commons*, 10(2).
- Baguma, D., Loiskandl, W., & Jung, H. (2010). Water Management, Rainwater Harvesting and Predictive Variables in Rural Households. *Water Resources Management*, 24(13).
- Bailey, J. (2012). Gender Dimensions of Drought and Pastoral Mobility among the Maasai. *Africa Portal*, (22).
- Base Camp Foundation. (2016). *Population increase and settlement management*.
- Brockington, D., & Homewood, K. (2001). Degradation Debates and Data Deficiencies: The Mkomazi Game Reserve, Tanzania. *Africa*, 71(3), 449-480.
- Brockington, D. (2002). *Fortress conservation: The preservation of the Mkomazi Game Reserve, Tanzania*. Bloomington: University of Indiana Press.
- Brockington, D., Duffy, R., & Igoe, J. (2010). *Nature unbound: Conservation, capitalism and the future of protected areas*. London: Earthscan.
- BurnSilver, S. (2016). Representing Wealth in a Changing Pastoral Economy: A Comparison of Traditional and New Metrics in Maasailand, Kenya. *Nomadic Peoples*, 20(1), 8-34.
- Butt, B. (2011). Coping with Uncertainty and Variability: The Influence of Protected Areas on Pastoral Herding Strategies in East Africa. *Human Ecology*, 39(3), 289-307.
- Butt, B. (2012). Commoditizing the Safari and Making Space for Conflict: Place, Identity and Parks in East Africa. *Political Geography*, 31(2), 104-113.
- Butt, B., & Turner, M. D. (2012). Clarifying Competition: The Case of Wildlife and Pastoral Livestock in East Africa. *Pastoralism: Research, Policy and Practice*, 2(1), 9.
- Butt, B. (2014). The Political Ecology of 'Incursions': Livestock, Protected Areas and Socio-Ecological Dynamics in the Mara Region of Kenya. *Africa*, 84(4), 614-637.

- Butt, B. (2015). Herding by Mobile Phone: Technology, Social Networks and the “Transformation” of Pastoral Herding in East Africa. *Human Ecology*, 43(1), 1–14.
- Butt, B. (2016). Conservation, Neoliberalism, and Human Rights in Kenya’s Arid Lands. *Humanity: An International Journal of Human Rights, Humanitarianism, and Development*, 7(1), 91-110.
- Carr, E.R. (2013). Livelihoods as Intimate Government: Reframing the Logic of Livelihoods for Development. *Third World Quarterly* 34(1), 77–108.
- Charnley, S. (2005). From Nature Tourism to Ecotourism? The Case of the Ngorongoro Conservation Area, Tanzania. *Human Organization*, 64(1), 75–88.
- Chieni, T. & Spencer, P. (1993) The World of Telelia: Reflections of a Maasai Woman in Matapato. In Spear, T., & Waller, R. *Being Maasai: Ethnicity and identity in East Africa*. Athens, OH: Ohio University Press.
- Derman, W., Odgaard R., & Sjaastad E. (2007) *Conflicts over land and water in Africa*. Oxford: James Currey.
- Dong, S., Liu, S., & Wen, L. (2016). Vulnerability and Resilience of Human-Natural Systems of Pastoralism Worldwide. In Dong, S., Liu, S., & Wen, L. *Building resilience of human-natural systems of pastoralism in the developing world*, 39-92.
- Dowie, M. (2011). *Conservation refugees: The hundred-year conflict between global conservation and native peoples*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
- Elmhirst, R. (2015). Feminist Political Ecology. In Elmhirst, R. *The Routledge handbook of political ecology*. Routledge.
- Galaty, J.G. (1992). The Land Is Yours: Social and Economic Factors in the Privatization, Subdivision and Sale of Maasai Ranches. *Nomadic Peoples* 30, 26–40.
- Galaty, J. G. (2013). The Collapsing Platform for Pastoralism: Land Sale and Land Loss in Kajiado County, Kenya. *Nomadic Peoples*, 17(2), 20–39.
- Galaty, J. G. (2016). Reasserting the Commons: Pastoral Contestations of Private and State Lands in East Africa. *International Journal of the Commons*, 10(2), 709.
- Galvin, K. (2009). Transitions: Pastoralists Living with Change. *Annual Review of Anthropology*, 38(1), 185–198.
- Goldman, M. (2011). Strangers in Their Own Land: Maasai and Wildlife Conservation in Northern Tanzania. *Conservation and Society*, 9(1), 65.

- Goldman, M. J. & Little, J. S. (2015). Innovative Grassroots NGOs and the Complex Processes of Women's Empowerment: An Empirical Investigation from Northern Tanzania. *World Development*, (66), 762–777.
- Goodwin, H. (1996). In Pursuit of Ecotourism. *Biodiversity and Conservation*, 5, 277–291.
- Hardin, G. (1968). The Tragedy of the Commons. *Science*, 162(3859), 1243-1248.
- Hobbs, N. T., Galvin, K. A., Stokes, C. J., Lockett, J. M., Ash, A. J., Boone, R. B., ... Thornton, P. K. (2008). Fragmentation of Rangelands: Implications for Humans, Animals, and Landscapes. *Global Environmental Change*, 18(4), 776–785.
- Hodgson, D. (2000). *Rethinking pastoralism in Africa: Pastoralism, patriarchy, and history among Maasai in Tanganyika*. Oxford: James Currey.
- Hodgson, D. (2011). Becoming Indigenous in Africa. In *Being Maasai, becoming indigenous postcolonial politics in a neoliberal world*. Bloomington, IN.: Indiana University Press.
- Homewood, K., Rodger, W.A., Mascarenhas, A. (1989). Conservation in Africa People, Policies and Practice. *Land Use Policy*, 6(1), 88–90.
- Homewood, K. (2008). *Ecology of African pastoralist societies*. Oxford: James Currey.
- Honey, M. (2008). *Ecotourism and sustainable development who owns paradise?* (2nd ed.). Washington, D.C.: Island Press.
- Hunter, R. (2011). Pastoralism. In Brosnan, K.A. *Encyclopedia of American Environmental History* (Vol. 3, 1033-1034). New York: Facts on File.
- Igoe, J. (2010). The Spectacle of Nature in the Global Economy of Appearances: Anthropological Engagements with the Spectacular Mediations of Transnational Conservation. *Critique of Anthropology*, 30(4), 375–397.
- Ilahi, N., & Grimard, F. (2000). Private Costs: Water Supply and Time Allocation of Women in Rural Pakistan. *Economic Development and Cultural Change*, 49(1), 45–75.
- Karmebäck, V. N., Wairore, J. N., Jirström, M., & Nyberg, G. (2015). Assessing Gender Roles in a Changing Landscape: Diversified Agro-pastoralism in Drylands of West Pokot, Kenya. *Pastoralism*, 5(1), 21.
- Kituyi, M. (1990) *Becoming Kenyans: Socio-economic transformation of the pastoral Maasai*. Nairobi, Kenya: African Center for Technology Studies Press.
- Kjekshus, H. (1977). *Ecology control & economic development in East African history: The case of Tanganyika, 1850-1950*. London: Heinemann.

- Le Billon, P. (2001). The Political Ecology of War: Natural Resources and Armed Conflicts. *Political Geography*, 20(5), 561–584.
- Løvschal, M., Bøcher, K., Pilgaard, J., Amoke, I., Odingo, A., Thuo, A., & Svenning, J.C. (2017). Fencing Bodes a Rapid Collapse of the Unique Greater Mara Ecosystem. *Nature Publishing Group*.
- Lykke, N. (2010) *Feminist studies: A guide to intersectional theory, methodology and writing*. New York: Routledge.
- Mwangi, E., & Ostrom, E. (2009). Top-Down Solutions: Looking Up from East Africa's Rangelands. *Environment: Science and Policy for Sustainable Development*, 51(1), 34-45.
- Newmark, W. D., & Hough, J. L. (2000). Conserving Wildlife in Africa: Integrated Conservation and Development Projects and Beyond. *BioScience*, 50(7), 585.
- Njuki, J., & Sanginga, P. C. (2013). *Women, livestock ownership, and markets: Bridging the gender gap in Eastern and Southern Africa*. Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge.
- Ostrom, E., Burger, J., Field, C. B., Norgaard, R. B., & Policansky, D. (1999). Revisiting the Commons: Local Lessons, Global Challenges. *Science*, 284, 278-282.
- Peluso, N. L., & M. Watts (2001) *Violent environments*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.
- Pretty, J., & Ward, H. (2001). Social Capital and the Environment. *World Development*, 29(2), 209–227.
- Riginos, C. (2014). Climate and the Landscape of Fear in an African Savanna. *Journal of Animal Ecology*, 84(1), 124-133.
- Robbins, P. (2012). *Political ecology: A critical introduction*. Malden, MA: Blackwell Pub.
- Rocheleau, D., Thomas-Slayter, B. & Wangari, E. (1996). *Feminist political ecology: Global issues and local experiences*. London: Routledge.
- Rota, A. (2009, November). Livestock and Pastoralists. Retrieved from <http://www.ifad.org/lrkm/factsheet/pastoralists.pdf>
- Rubin, H. J., & Rubin, I. S. (1995). *Qualitative interviewing: the art of hearing data*. London: Sage Publication.
- Rutten, M. M. E. M. (1992). *Selling wealth to buy poverty: The process of individualization of landownership among the Maasai pastoralists of Kajiado district, Kenya, 1890-1990*. Saarbrücken: Breitenbach.

- Sandford, S. (1994). *Management of pastoral development in the third world*. London: John Wiley & Sons.
- Sandford, S. (2006). Forward. In McPeack, J.G., & Little, P.D. *Pastoral livestock marketing in eastern Africa: Research and policy changes*. London: IT Publications.
- Seno, S. K., & Shaw, W. W. (2002). Land Tenure Policies, Maasai Traditions, and Wildlife Conservation in Kenya. *Society & Natural Resources*, 15(1), 79–88.
- Shetler, J. B. (2007). *Imagining Serengeti: A history of landscape memory in Tanzania from earliest times to the present*. Athens, OH: Ohio University Press.
- Spear, T., & Waller, R. (1993). *Being Maasai: Ethnicity and identity in East Africa*. Athens, OH: Ohio University Press.
- Spencer, P. (1998). *The pastoral continuum: the marginalization of tradition in East Africa*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Sørli, E. B. (2008). The Establishment of Wildlife Conservancies in the Mara: The Case of Olare Orok Conservancy. MA thesis, Department of Political Science, University of Oslo.
- Sultana, F. (2011). Suffering for Water, Suffering from Water: Emotional Geographies of Resource Access, Control and Conflict. *Geoforum*, 42(2), 163-172.
- Sundberg, J. (2004) Identities-in-the-Making: Conservation, Gender, and Race in the Maya Biosphere Reserve, Guatemala. *Gender, Place and Culture: A Journal of Feminist Geography*, 11(1), 44–66.
- Sundstrom, S., Tynon, J. F., & Western, D. (2012). Rangeland Privatization and the Maasai Experience: Social Capital and the Implications for Traditional Resource Management in Southern Kenya. *Society & Natural Resources*, 25(5), 483–498.
- Talle, A. (1988). Women at a Loss: Changes in Maasai Pastoralism and Their Effects on Gender Relations, Thesis/dissertation (deg). Dept. of Social Anthropology, University of Stockholm, Stockholm.
- Turner, M. D. (2009). Capital on the Move: The Changing Relation between Livestock and Labor in Mali, West Africa. *Geoforum*, 40(5), 746–755.
- Thompson, M., & Homewood K. (2002) Entrepreneurs, Elites, and Exclusion in Maasailand: Trends in Wildlife Conservation and Pastoralist Development. *Human Ecology* 30(1): 107–38.
- Waller, R. (2012). Pastoral Production in Colonial Kenya: Lessons from the Past? *African Studies Review*, 55(23).

- Wangui, E. E. (2008). Development Interventions, Changing Livelihoods, and the Making of Female Maasai Pastoralists. *Agriculture and Human Values*, 25(3), 365–378.
- Wangui, E. E. (2014). Livelihood Shifts and Gender Performances: Space and the Negotiation for Labor among East Africa's Pastoralists. *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, 104(5), 1068–1081.
- Watts, M. (2000). Political Ecology. In Sheppard, E., & Barnes, T.J. eds., *A companion to economic geography*. Blackwell.
- West, P., Igoe, J., & Brockington, D. (2006). Parks and Peoples: The Social Impact of Protected Areas. *Annual Review of Anthropology*, 35(1), 251-277.