

AMBOSELI LANDSCAPES: MAASAI PASTORALISM, WILDLIFE CONSERVATION,
AND NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT IN KENYA, 1944-PRESENT

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ABSTRACT

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Images of East Africa in the Western mind are often composed of solitary acacia trees on an open plain in photographs or lions hunting zebra in a bloody primal encounter in nature documentaries. Rarely have people been present in the creation of meaning of these landscapes, but they have had a hand in the environmental composition of these images. This dissertation explores the meaning people attached to the Amboseli landscape through the ways they engaged with wildlife, livestock, natural resources, and each other. It is a history of a place, a landscape and all the layers of memory, identities, beliefs, and experiences associated with it. The Ilkisongo Maasai who live there are the primary group that created meaning in Amboseli, but there have been many others, including scientists and conservationists who spent decades in this savanna ecosystem and many others who spent little to no time there but were part of the process of conceptualizing what Amboseli was, is, and should be.

Amboseli is a dry, dusty grassland at the northern foothills of Kilimanjaro. The Ilkisongo subgroup of the Maasai has lived on these plains for over 200 years. Their emergence there is evidence that, despite being persistent pastoralists, the Maasai have a dynamic history and are anything but the static representation of a timeless past as perpetuated by many in conservation, the colonial and independent governments of Kenya, and popular media images. During colonialism and after, the government managed wildlife within and beyond the boundaries of protected areas and many politicians argued this was necessary for Kenya's economic development. Seemingly at odds with this assessment was the argument that Kenya needed to

develop the land to its most productive capacity. The establishment of Amboseli National Park, hunting and poaching, scientific research, the creation of group ranches, and the development of livestock are important elements of understanding of different ways of conceptualizing a place and how this led to the present-day emphasis on community-based conservation.

Conservation and natural resource management in Kenya has long been the domain of scientists and social scientists, and historians have overlooked the role of wildlife and peoples' relationship with it. I also show how pastoralism was central to Kenya's development, particularly in the post-colonial era, even if it was marginalized by a national emphasis on agriculture. In this history of Amboseli, I combine oral and written sources to examine how different approaches to conservation and natural resource management have evolved as Kenya changed, as the Maasai adapted to these changes, and as the international conservation and scientific interests engaged with the local politics and society in the region. The historiographical dynamics of this research blend African history with the history of science and the environment as well as with conservation social science to show that African involvement in wildlife and natural resource management shaped and was shaped by the integration of multiple perspectives in this landscape.

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At one time in my life, my heart knew only one home – the Southern Appalachians – but by the time this project was finished, I found that who I was and am has been shaped by other communities as well. My natal home in East Tennessee is where I draw my identity as a person, the way I speak, and whence I found my moral and intellectual foundation. For this I thank generations of family that came to a foreign land, cultivated it, withstood hardship, and created a community closely connected with the land. I am grateful for this legacy.

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KEY TO ABBREVIATIONS

African Land Development Board	ALDEV
African Livestock Marketing Organization	ALMO
African Conservation Centre	ACC
African Wildlife Foundation	AWF
Amboseli Baboon Project	ABP
Amboseli Conservation Program	ACP
Amboseli Elephant Research Project	AERP
Amboseli National Park	ANP
Common Pool Resources	CPR
Community-based conservation	CBC
Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations	FAO
International Union for the Conservation of Nature	IUCN
Kajiado African District Council	KADC
Kajiado County Council	KCC
Kenya Meat Commission	KMC
Kenya National Parks	KNP
Kenya National Archives	KNA
Kenya Wildlife Service	KWS
Malignant Catarrhal Fever	MCF
Ministry of Information, Broadcasting, and Tourism	MIBT

Ministry of Tourism and Wildlife	MTW
New York Zoological Society	NYZS
Protected area	PA
Public Works Department	PWD
Range Management Division	RMD
United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization	UNESCO
Wildlife Conservation and Management Department	WCMD
Wildlife and natural resource management	WRNM
Wildlife Management Project	WMP

Introduction: Methods and Memory

Landscapes have many histories. As an archaeologist might dig for artifacts at different layers of the substrate, so too can historians examine a landscape to understand how stories fit together to create meaning over time and space. The Amboseli region in southern Kenya has a multilayered history, textured with meaning. This is a history of an ecosystem, encompassing both the environmental and human aspects of its past, revealing a history of the ways the Ilkisongo Maasai, conservationists, and scientists created meaning out of this savanna landscape.

On one of my first days conducting field research in Amboseli, my interviewee took me to a site within Amboseli National Park (ANP) not visited by tourists. The place was a mass grave for the wildlife of the 2009 drought. The deceaseds' bodies gathered by the Kenya Wildlife Service (KWS) were buried together on the concealed side of a slight rise in the otherwise flat landscape. The bodies of wildebeests, zebra, buffalo, and other ungulates were so abundant at the height of the drought that the air had a permanent stench. By the time I arrived in 2013, the ecosystem showed little evidence of the drought, save a few scattered skulls not buried in the grave. The Maasai said they still felt the effects, their herds not fully recovered to what they were before 2009.¹

It was during this drought that I first considered Amboseli as a research site. I wanted a place to examine human-wildlife conflict in a historical context, and Amboseli had a fascinating

¹ David Clarke, "Feeding Zebras to the Lions: Kenya Moves to Protect Livestock from Hungry Predators," *Edmonton Journal*, February 14, 2010; Tristan McConnell, "Carcasses Litter A Parched and Barren Wilderness; Picture-Book Park Is Transformed By Famine," *The Times (London)*, October 22, 2009; David Western, "A Profile of What Could Become the Country's Irreversible Tragedy," *Daily Nation*, September 30, 2009. I discussed the matter of the 2009 with many people in Amboseli. Each one commented on the drought's severity and how long it has taken to recover. Lingering effects include diminished herds, financial stress, and psychological trauma.

past in need of a narrative history. The region also allowed me to explore the idea of 'wilderness' and human relationship to it. A vision of “unspoiled” Africa dominated both colonial and post-colonial African literature on wildlife conservation, but I wanted to examine this concept further.² Amboseli confirmed my presupposition that universal notions of what 'nature,' 'wild,' or 'domesticated' means is much more complex when examined as multiple histories layered on the landscape.

This is a history of a landscape and the people who live there. There are local, national, and global exchanges of power and knowledge. The Amboseli ecosystem provides a case study for the complex matrix of how a pastoralist society, wildlife conservation, natural resource management, and scientific research converge to create a dynamic history of a tiny place in Africa. I argue that by encompassing entire landscape, in this case the Amboseli ecosystem, a narrative history can provide a more nuanced vision of the causes and effects of wildlife and natural resource management. At the same time, this perspective shows that the community of people in this landscape exerted their own influence on the course of policy development and implementation.

If viewed from a distance, Amboseli does not appear to have a much different history from other protected areas in Africa, such as the Ngorongoro Crater and Serengeti in Tanzania, the Matopos Hills in Zimbabwe, or even American parks like the Great Smokey Mountains and Rocky Mountain National Parks where people were permanently displaced to make way for conservation management.³ In those places the state controlled management policies and

² Mary L. Jobe Akeley, “Africa’s First National Park,” *Scientific American* 5 (November 1931): 295–98.

³ Roderick P. Neumann, *Imposing Wilderness : Struggles over Livelihood and Nature Preservation in Africa*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002); Jan Bender Shetler,

collected revenue to perpetuate the maintenance of the parks. This "fortress conservation" approach, as explained by Dan Brockington, is most certainly present in Amboseli's history, but it is not quite as profound as in other places.⁴ However, by taking a step closer, the multiplicity of perspectives reveals a complex interaction of "fortress conservation" and different approaches to community-oriented conservation and management. Even during the height of the preservationist approach to conservation, management in Amboseli represented the tension between the state and local interests. While some believed a portion of the ecosystem should be set aside, apart from human habitation, others, including prominent conservationists, believed the Ilkisongo Maasai had an important role to fill, both ecologically as socially, in the landscape.

By connecting the diversity of experiences of those associated with this landscape, we see the texture created by the meaning of the land, memory, events, identity, ecology, and knowledge production. A deeper understanding of the history of a place can help shape approaches to conservation today. Policy development should take into account the history and identity of the local people and the relationship between people and the land. William Beinart and Joann McGregor argue that despite the fear of some historians of Africa to frame their work around the idea of "landscape," afraid that it points to Western notions of nature, private property, or aesthetic images of primitiveness, "by defining landscape, broadly, as an imaginative construction of the environment, new areas of investigation have opened up for

Imagining Serengeti : A History of Landscape Memory in Tanzania From Earliest Times to the Present (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2007); T. O Ranger, *Voices from the Rocks: Nature, Culture & History in the Matopos Hills of Zimbabwe* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1999); Michael Frome, *Strangers in High Places: The Story of the Great Smoky Mountains* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1994); Jerry J. Frank, *Making Rocky Mountain National Park: The Environmental History of an American Treasure* (Lawrence, Kansas: University Press of Kansas, 2013).

⁴ Dan Brockington, *Fortress Conservation : The Preservation of the Mkomazi Game Reserve, Tanzania* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2002).

Africanists. The notion of landscape has provided a valuable means of bringing together discussion of material changes in the environment, with imaginative interpretations – a combination that should stand at the heart of environmental history.”⁵ In Amboseli, this definition encompasses wildlife and natural resource utilization and changes brought about in the land through human and nonhuman usage. My “imaginative interpretation” expands the definition of landscape to include intellectual conceptualizations associated with the land, how people rearticulated the past and their identities as part of the place, and how forces within and outside the physical landscape shaped the meaning of the land.

This research is an important addition to the historical literature on African protected areas because it expands current understandings on how the engagement between the state and local people on both local and international stages. It also brings the history of wildlife and natural resource management (WNRM) to Kenya, where popular images of “wild” Africa developed powerful discourses. Here, I challenge assumptions about the degrees to which Africans were marginalized in conservation. I also highlight their engagement in scientific inquiry in Amboseli. This history is the first to bring local Amboseli politics to the forefront, examining its effects on national and international political economies of development and conservation.

The following chapters are organized in thematic and chronological order. The first chapter is a history of the protected area itself, through each of its phases as a Maasai Reserve, Game Reserve, and National Park. The creation of Amboseli National Park was a turning point in the history of the ecosystem because of its importance to both the local Ilkisongo community, to science, and biodiversity. I trace the transformation of the landscape from a vast expanse of

⁵ William Beinart and JoAnn MacGregor, *Social History & African Environments*, 1st ed. (Ohio University Press, 2003), 4.

savanna, not untouched by humans, rather quite the opposite, prior to British colonization through various conceptualizations of political and social boundaries to its present gazettement as a national park.

I then turn to a broader history of the ecosystem in the second chapter where I focus on approaches to WNRM up to the 1962 Arusha Conference. Amboseli is contextualized in the history of conservation in both the British Empire and Africa because the landscape was a conduit of global conservation ideals, being shaped by and shaping how PAs and their surrounding environments were managed. The third chapter looks at one particular aspect of wildlife management - the killing of animals. By examining the killing of animals, both wild and domestic, the meaning of non-human animals reveals how people saw themselves in relation to the natural world and how they were used as instruments of power and exerted a degree of power themselves on human societies. The legal killing of animals, consumptive hunting for sport or sustenance, is contrasted with the illegal killing of wildlife, or poaching. Hunting and poaching shaped wildlife management over the course of Amboseli's history, which was often a top-down approach, but in later times, involved the Maasai to combat poaching and benefit from legal hunting.

The history of science in Amboseli is the subject of the fourth chapter. Field science has a unique place in the history of Amboseli and helped shape the researchers' respective fields. This history also spans the colonial era and independence transition, but is predominantly situated after Jomo Kenyatta's election as president of Kenya. In an analysis of the major research projects, it becomes apparent that Amboseli's wildlife and ecology has contributed to large bodies of scientific knowledge, particularly animal behavior and conservation biology. I contrast the involvement of Western scientists with the eventual inclusion of Maasai and other Kenyans

in the research. Science in Amboseli is a product of the hybridization of knowledge and development of education in the region.

Finally, I give an overview of WNNRM after the 1962 Arusha Conference. The interaction between fortress conservation and community-based conservation (CBC) continues to the present in this chapter, but the difference is that Amboseli is a leading example of integrating the community in conservation, although it is by no means perfect. There are many examples of both failures and successes, which shows that each project, place, and policy must be approached with the specific community in mind, who must also be involved. By placing Amboseli in the global effort to conserve wildlife and wild space, I show that knowledge transfer is a two way street. External ideas shaped policies and practices, but the trial and error process and inclusion of local Maasai has transformed how later conservation and development organizations approach CBC broadly. I discuss how national politics made Amboseli a unique case study for conservation, particularly as it related to the creation of group ranches.

Through these multiple angles on a single landscape, Amboseli stands out as an example for understanding the importance a historical view of the influence of knowledge and place. Benefits of conservation were never applied evenly, as can be seen in the Ilkisongo Maasai community. Other forces shaped the distribution of benefits, including education, access to land, and locations in the landscape. Those who came to Amboseli for science and conservation brought new ideas and perspectives, but they were also shaped by the landscape.

Themes in the History of the Amboseli Landscape

Four themes emerge from these chapters that help explain why Amboseli is a unique example of conservation and why it is also has universal importance for understanding the

impact of WNRM on communities and vice versa. These themes connect the interdisciplinarity of the project by linking historical frameworks with conservation social science. First, the importance of place and space is apparent in both the development of science in Amboseli as well as how the identity of Ilkisongo Maasai, a subgroup of the larger ethnic group in Kenya and Tanzania, developed and changed over time. Amboseli was created as a distinct place over the course of the twentieth century, first as untamed wilderness by the European explorers and eventually as a national park surrounded by distinct group ranches by the government. Beyond these distinctions, the Maasai and scientists conceptualized this space in their own ways. Its geographical importance was the framework for this evolution of meaning among the different groups I examined.

Amboseli's history can be divided into three planes of influence: local, national, and international, each connected these through social, environmental, political, and economic interactions and relationships. International entities had to deal with local politics, but national dynamics also shaped the course of conservation policies. The gazettement of ANP is a clear example of this. Hunting and poaching of wildlife was a supply and demand system contingent on local engagement, national and international middlemen, and global and local demand for animal products. Science in Amboseli is a product of a matrix of knowledge systems, which cannot be simplistically explained as a dichotomy between Western and 'indigenous' knowledges. Development of colonial and post-colonial WNRM policies was an amalgamation of the local and global.

The third theme unifying these chapters is the relationship between people and the natural world, or in the conservation social science field, the human dimensions of conservation. Conceptualization of human dimensions of nature is specific to space and time principally

considering the Western Enlightenment's dichotomization of the human world and natural world. This is a problematic paradigm to bring to the Kenyan context, and especially Maasailand, where the division between people and non-human animals is not so distinct.

Finally, one of the most important pieces of the Amboseli story is the cultural transformation of the Ilkisongo. Interviewees often pointed to three causes of change in identity – the introduction of formal education, adoption of Christianity, and technology. Many frame the particular change as a "loss of respect of respect." It is possible to point to several events in Amboseli that serve as catalysts for a changing identity. One is the restriction of access to Ol Tukai, which led to the establishment of permanent water. Having established watering points altered grazing patterns and encouraged sedentarization, but this allowed greater access to education for families. Decreasing mobility changed dynamics in differing ways. One part of Maasai identity that has not changed in essence is their relationship with cattle. Ownership of cattle is still important for managing social relationships, wealth, and as a source of sustenance. I argue that although conservation and agriculture have altered their relationship with the land, their connection still endures through a strong cattle culture.

Methods

I conducted about eighty interviews; a few were with the same person more than once. Each of these oral histories represented the unique experience of the individual, as I interviewed a varied group of people. Maasai interviews were primarily with men, but I was able to conduct interviews with many women of Kimana Group Ranch. I had an age range of about 20 to 114 years old. The second group was comprised of wildlife managers and conservationists. Third, I interviewed scientists who conducted research in the Amboseli ecosystem. There is overlap

between these groups, as some Maasai were also wildlife managers, conservationists, and scientists.

Generally, these interviews were conducted at the participant's home or place of work. Despite efforts to minimize external influences and keep the interview group to me, the participant, and my research assistant when needed as a translator, often other people came by to observe what was taking place. This only happened with participants in the Maasai group. As Maasai homes have little privacy, people often came by to listen and sometimes contribute. Generally, I tried to keep the dialog between me and the person I interviewed, but there were occasions when others supplemented information. This often provided texture to the story and did not seem inappropriate. As memory of each age set, family, and gender grouping has a layer of collectivity, these multiple perspectives illuminate the production and performance of memory. Identity can be formed through memories of the past.⁶ This was particularly apparent with how the Maasai I interviewed used stories of generations before. It connected them to a way of life they still saw as their own even if their present lifestyle did not reflect the memory.

On the use of oral history as historical evidence, Paul Thompson states that, “History, in short, is not just about events, or structures, or patterns of behavior, but also about how these are experienced and remembered in the imagination.”⁷ This calls into question the reliability of oral history, but this has been worked through in the historiography of Africa by historians who sought

⁶ Jan Bender Shetler, “Historical Memory as a Foundation for Peace: Network Formation and Ethnic Identity in North Mara, Tanzania,” *Journal of Peace Research* 47, no. 5 (September 1, 2010): 639–50.

⁷ Paul Thompson, *The Voice of the Past: Oral History*, 3rd ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 162.

sources other than written European documents.⁸ Alessandro Portelli calls this the “peculiarities of oral history” because despite, or perhaps because of, the subjectivity of memory, oral histories are not less valuable. Rather, oral histories have a “different credibility.”⁹ It is the varied perspectives that are valuable for historians to understand layers of meaning in the past. What was remembered may have not actually happened, but that is not what is important. What matters is why someone remembered the way they did.¹⁰ Sometimes people have telescoping memories, where they remember events, but in a later time, transferring meaning from one experience to another.¹¹ An example of this is the Maasai’s memory of drought. For those who were old enough to have experienced both the 1961-62 and 2009 droughts, these two events often intertwined in their memory. Many I spoke with were children during the earlier drought, and this experience stayed with them. This is not surprising as both droughts were more severe than other droughts.

When I interviewed women not employed in conservation, I worked with a female research assistant. I wanted to avoid any intimidation they might feel with a male research assistant translating their ideas and experiences. Most prefaced their interviews by stating they did not know much, but they always had more to say than they initially believed. I kept in mind

⁸ For a discussion of the historiography of African oral history and examples of its use see Luise White, Stephan F. Miescher, and David William Cohen, eds., *African Words, African Voices: Critical Practices in Oral History* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2001).

⁹ Alessandro Portelli, “The Peculiarities of Oral History,” *History Workshop Journal* 12, no. 1 (1981): 96–107, doi:10.1093/hwj/12.1.96.

¹⁰ Alessandro Portelli, *The Order Has Been Carried Out History, Memory, and Meaning of a Nazi Massacre in Rome*, 1st Palgrave Macmillan ed (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003). Portelli uses the a 1944 Nazi massacre of Roman partisans, where he examines how different groups remembered the event, depending on their politics, class, or desired outcome.

¹¹ Thompson, *The Voice of the Past*, 156-159.

what was said and what was unsaid, whether this was because of my own failure to ask the question or the participant's obfuscation of the topic. Sometimes these silences were out of politeness to me or the person of whom we spoke, but at other times, I felt they were reluctant to speculate or voice their opinion. The gendered dynamic of these silences is only one aspect of why people do not speak of some memories. Fear can be a power silencer, but the interview itself may create silences.¹² The interview is a performance with its own power dynamic. In my interviews, this performance changed with each individual. Interviews with uneducated Maasai women had a vastly different tone than with local leaders or scientists. Portelli argues this relationship is a conduit for conveying ideas, with the informant using the historian to speak and for the historian to use the words of the informant to move the narrative.¹³ This may be a useful image for groups that have few other outlets for sharing their experiences, but for many of my informants, they had their own means of expression, whether through their political position or in publications.¹⁴

Textual sources come from archives and scientific writings of scientists. I used the Kenya National Archives, Kenya National Archives held at Michigan State University, and African Wildlife Foundation archives. Most scientific and conservations sources about Amboseli are

¹² Paul Thompson, "Community and Individual Memory: An Introduction," *Oral History Review* 36, no. 2 (2009): i – v; Sandra E. Greene, "Whispers and Silences: Explorations in African Oral History," *Africa Today* 50, no. 2 (2003): 41–53; Donald Moore and Richard Roberts, "Listening for Silences," *History in Africa* 17 (1990): 319–25. Sherna Berger Gluck and Daphne Patai, eds., *Women's Words: The Feminist Practice of Oral History* (New York: Routledge, 1991).

¹³ Portelli, "The Peculiarities of Oral History."

¹⁴ For discussion on the role of oral history in understanding the power dynamics in history see Virginia Berridge, "'Hidden From History'?: Oral History and the History of Health Policy," *Oral History* 38, no. 1 (2010): 91–100.

from peer reviewed journals or gray materials from universities and conservation organizations.

I conducted participant observations throughout my time in Amboseli. This included living with a local family, visiting with families throughout the ecosystem, and accompanying some researchers in the field.¹⁵ This was only a small window into the lives of the Ilkisongo Maasai, but it helped me formulate questions to ask. My ethnographic observations only touched the surface of what is there, but what was apparent to me and to the people I interviewed, was that they were going through great cultural change unlike ever before. I used these sources to create a multi-layered narrative history of the Amboseli ecosystem, covering the cultural transformation of the Ilkisongo as it relates to conservation and wildlife management. My own experience of conducting this field work is closely connected to my understanding of events, meaning, and the framing of this narrative. My choice of participants and perspectives shaped my arguments. These choices were most often the result of my own positionality as a white female researcher.

Amboseli in Context

Roderick Neumann describes national parks as, "historically and culturally contingent representations of a particular nature aesthetic. Parks are landscapes of consumption, upon which are projected ideas of culture and nature and of where (literally) to draw the boundary line between them. There needs to be a geographically and historically specified concept of landed moral economy as a key analytical tool for understanding the character of local responses to the loss of customary property rights to the state in the name of nature preservation."¹⁶ The history

¹⁵ Robert Emerson, Rachel Fretz, and Linda Shaw, *Writing Ethnographic Fieldnotes* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995).

¹⁶ Neumann, *Imposing Wilderness*, 11.

of Amboseli supports this description of why national parks were created and continue to be established based on long-held Western ideas of wilderness despite the vastly different context in which they are situated. Amboseli's Ilkisongo Maasai provide the moral economy context to which Neumann refers, through a principally pastoralist lifestyle. This way of life changed in response to differing ideas of how the core PA, now the National Park, should be managed. Continued pressure on livestock grazing in the Amboseli Reserve during colonialism shifted Maasai migration patterns. The colonial government dealt with the resistance of the Ilkisongo differently than it did other groups being displaced for PAs.

The creation of national parks and reserves in colonial Africa was a response to several factors, but essentially these places were intended to protect a dwindling wildlife population. These populations declined most often because of over hunting by white hunters, but the blame typically fell on African hunters.¹⁷ Beinart and McGregor point out that there was a post-World War II agenda to implement conservation programs, with funding from international organizations. This coincided with easier global travel by airplane. Thus, the benefits of tourism drove the creation of these PAs.¹⁸ Tourism and fortress conservation worked well together, but community involvement disrupted this happy amalgamation, as studies of community-based conservation and the history of conservation in Amboseli have shown. This tension, though familiar to most PAs in Africa, has unique contexts in each location. Looking at this

¹⁷ John M. MacKenzie, *The Empire of Nature: Hunting, Conservation, and British Imperialism* (Manchester University Press, 1988); John M MacKenzie, ed., *Imperialism and the Natural World*, Studies in Imperialism (New York: Manchester University Press, 1990).

¹⁸ Beinart and MacGregor, *Social History & African Environments*. For other sources on mid-twentieth century British conservation see William Mark Adams, *Against Extinction: The Story of Conservation* (London: Earthscan, 2004) and Roderick P. Neumann, "Dukes, Earls, and Ersatz Edens: Aristocratic Nature Preservationists in Colonial Africa," *Environment and Planning: Society and Space* 14, no. 1 (1996): 79–98.

phenomenon historically is beneficial for present-day management of PAs, conservation generally, and community-based projects specifically.

Protected areas in Africa have come under intense scrutiny of late from a wide range of disciplines. No longer are national parks, reserves, or other forms of PAs the sole domain of scientists. Now even historians have begun to examine these areas with greater consideration toward the past of protecting wildlife and the local residents displaced or otherwise affected by the presence of a PA. Beyond Brockington's analysis of the Mkomazi Game Reserve in Tanzania, which serves as the case study for the fortress conservation framework, other historical works on PAs in Africa have revealed the complex dynamics of WNRM, the role of local people, and the ways knowledge and memory are interwoven throughout the landscape. Each place has a unique story, but they have common threads of meaning.

One of the books that most influenced my interest in doing a history of Amboseli was Jan Bender Shetler's *Imagining Serengeti: A History of Landscape Memory in Tanzania from Earliest Times to the Present*. She traces the history of Serengeti landscape through the experiences of the agropastoralists who lived there. Through oral histories, she rendered a reading of the landscape through memory, making connections between connections people have with the land at present with generational memories that continue to form a people's identity. *Imagining Serengeti* reveals that even those who called the region their homeland were heterogeneous in their visions of the landscape. Shetler weaves together oral histories of the western Serengeti people, archival sources, and a variety of disciplines' research on the region to explain how the landscape changed over time, at the hands of people, and in their minds. This was a deeply ethnographic approach that involved a thorough understanding of the people and the place itself. One of the strengths of *Imagining Serengeti* is her explanation of how people

derived their identity from the environment in which they live. At the same time, Shetler's examination of the layers of memory on the landscape reveal understanding of why colonial visions of a certain nature aesthetic were entirely misplaced. She shows why this was such a detrimental process to local people.¹⁹

Although one critique of Shetler's work might be that not all people derive such deep cultural meaning from the landscape, it is a valuable framework from which to understand how the Ilkisongo situated themselves in the land. I would argue that there is a broader matrix of interactions between people and the land that shape how the land is imagined and how people derive a sense of themselves and their past. For those who have lived and worked in Amboseli, I would extend this analysis to those who have shaped the meaning of Amboseli through scientific knowledge and the management of natural resources. Meanings of nature and wilderness outsiders projected onto the landscape were dominant discourses in both the Serengeti and Amboseli, and these shaped the future of management policies. However, it was not the only entity that shaped meaning. This can be seen in other histories of landscapes with PAs.

Similarly, Terrence Ranger's history of the Matopos Hills in Zimbabwe examined the power of symbolic meaning associated with the land. In *Voices From the Rocks*, Ranger discussed the creation of the landscape through the eyes of both white and black inhabitants as well as how ideas of nature, conservation, identity, and land use changed according to the ways land was appropriated for certain uses. Cecil Rhodes was a strong force behind creating a certain nature aesthetic. Eventually, he was buried in the Matopos Hills near a sacred site for local inhabitants, thus making the site sacred for both black and white Rhodesians. Ranger argued that white definition of the landscape involved more than a symbolic importance, but used science to

¹⁹ Shetler, *Imagining Serengeti*.

emphasize the importance of the landscape. Like Amboseli, the history of the Matopos Hills, is more than a story of a local place, it is a history of many layers of interpretation, invention, and identity. Local people's conceptualization of the land interacted with white visions of the contested landscape. Africans saw a landscape with spiritual significance through the god Mwali. Pre-historic people used the land in a way that did not alter the landscape like the modern inhabitants did, thus giving weight to the colonial argument to control or remove those Africans who were “destructive”. Then the land could be conserved from destructive land use practices through the formation of a PA and in scientific management of forests and agricultural practices. In this way, white interpretation of nature helped "re-invent" what the landscape meant, what it should look like, and who should have access. Over time, these visions changed in relation to national politics and international trends in science and conservation. Local agendas also exerted influence, as people resisted change from the outside, but this was met with a variety of efforts to change how Africans interacted with the place. Missionaries moved in to confront the Mwali "cult," and white farmers took spaces that had previously belonged to Africans. Colonial policies regarding agriculture and conservation pushed out previous practices of land use. Local inhabitants were eventually, after much opposition, forced out of what would become a national park.²⁰

Jane Carruthers, who focuses on wildlife conservation in Kruger National Park in South Africa, made one of the earliest contributions to the historiography of African national parks. In this social history of wildlife management and the creation of the national park, Afrikaner nationalism represents the foundational reasons for wildlife protection in South Africa. White South Africans drew distinct boundaries between themselves and black South Africans, and one

²⁰ Ranger, *Voices from the Rocks*.

way to differentiate was through the conceptualization of a wilderness paradigm reflective of Afrikaner power. There were strict regulations on access to wildlife and hunting. Even the location of Kruger National Park and other South African PAs situated on land deemed unsuitable for agriculture or marginal by the state reveals different associations people had with the land. These “marginal” lands were part of the historical memory of many Africans who live there and utilized its resources.²¹

Across the border from Amboseli in Tanzania, another small national park is situated in the midst of contested land, transformed into a national park based on colonial policy toward wilderness conservation and a Western vision of what nature should be. Roderick Neumann set out to, "conceptualize national parks not simply as threatened by social, political, and economic forces beyond their control, but as active socio-political forces in their own right. Parks and protected areas are historically implicated in the conditions of poverty and under-development that surround them."²² Neumann uses Arusha National Park to show how state imposed conservation strategies had large scale implications for local communities, in this case the Maasai. Arusha National Park was based upon the Yellowstone Model, as were so many other national parks in Africa during colonialism. *Imposing Wilderness: Struggles Over Livelihood and Nature Preservation in Africa* provides a framework for understanding the history behind national parks and PAs because Neumann's theoretical framework goes beyond colonial policy and practice in East Africa firmly rooting ideas of wilderness in Anglo-American values of Romanticism, duality of nature and civilization, as well as what a landscape is supposed to

²¹ Jane Carruthers, *The Kruger National Park : A Social and Political History* (Pietermaritzburg: University of Natal Press, 1995); Jane Carruthers, “Creating a National Park, 1910 to 1926,” *Journal of Southern African Studies* 15, no. 2 (1989): 188–216.

²² Neumann, *Imposing Wilderness*, 9.

produce. In the case of Arusha National Park, the product was a preserved nature landscape, separated from human, i.e. uncontrolled African use of the land for farming or pasture.

On the other side of Kilimanjaro, south from Amboseli, are the Usambara Mountains in Tanzania. It is here that Christopher Conte explores the layers of history of agriculture, forestry, and the people lived and governed there. Conte discusses the land use practices of the Usambara Mountains from the pre-colonial time through the twentieth century. He breaks down the environmental history of the land into two interpretations of the land – an African perspective of utilization and social meaning and a Western point of view, requiring management and a bureaucracy to carry out agricultural and forestry planning. As with Amboseli, whose landscape is a mosaic of diverse experiences, Conte contends, “The Western and African views are largely incompatible and their clash has led to a series of conflicts that reshaped the Usambaras’ mosaic of ecological communities. That conflicted past is vitally important to the current debates raging over conservation in the Usambaras and the rest of East Africa’s highlands.”²³ His work in the Usambara region is a companion to Steven Feierman’s *Peasant Intellectuals*, an examination of public discourse as a mechanism of power among the Shambaa leadership.²⁴ Conte argues that the focus should be more on how people adapted to rapid and drastic environmental change. He also discusses the relationship of his work to Fairhead and Leach. He praises their unique understanding and breakthrough information on deforestation in West Africa, but he does not believe this is a framework that is widely applicable.²⁵ Reforestation was not a result of increased

²³ Conte, *Highland Sanctuary*, 4.

²⁴ Steven M. Feierman, *Peasant Intellectuals: Anthropology and History in Tanzania* (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 1990).

²⁵ James Fairhead and Melissa Leach, *Reframing Deforestation : Global Analyses and Local Realities with Studies in West Africa* (New York: Routledge, 1998).

land use; deforestation was a severe issue affecting people who lived there. Both work show adaptation on the part of people under colonial authority in the face of poverty and strange and strict rules over agriculture and land use. As with Amboseli, colonial officials used the argument of African overpopulation and misuse of the land as justification to impose scientific management.

In all these histories of PAs and wilderness areas, the landscape is a primary character in the story. Each author approaches with a different framework for understanding how humans interacted with the land and the role it played in their traditions, politics, and everyday life. But the landscapes changed too, reflecting how they were used, the policies governments imposed upon them, and the meaning its Maasai residents drew from it. This history of Amboseli extends the historiography of land in Africa to look at the role of livestock management. Most histories of land use and conflict in Kenya have focused on colonial agricultural development particularly as it related to Mau Mau, but I point out that livestock development was also a national goal for economic development.²⁶ However, in Amboseli, often characterized as marginal land, political for supporting pastoralists' economic development will was low. Post-colonial efforts at rangeland development came largely from external international institutions, and I argue that livestock management is an important part of Amboseli's environmental history.

²⁶ Bruce Berman, *Control & Crisis in Colonial Kenya the Dialectic of Domination* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 1990); Bruce Berman and John Lonsdale, *Unhappy Valley : Conflict in Kenya and Africa: Book One: State and Class*, 1st ed. (Athens: Ohio University Press, 1992). Fiona Mackenzie, *Land, Ecology and Resistance in Kenya, 1880-1952* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press for the International African Institute, 1998); Tabitha Kanogo, *Squatters & the Roots of Mau Mau: 1905-63*, 1st ed. (Athens: Ohio University Press, 1987). David Throup, *Economic & Social Origins of Mau Mau, 1945 - 1953* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 1987). An exception to this is David M. Anderson, *Eroding The Commons: Politics Of Ecology In Kenya* (Ohio University Press, 2003).

Place and Meaning in the Amboseli Landscape

There are many spatial layers of orientation to Amboseli and Amboseli has been reconceptualized as a place in different ways to different people. Margaret Rodman describes this as a place's multilocality. By examining a place in terms of a decentered formulation of a place's meaning and the spaces within it, one should understand a place from "others" perspective, recognizing that no one has a monopoly on defining a place, including researchers. A multilocal focus provides comparison for how systems develop in a space according to the interaction of various agents. Examples include markets, formal and informal government structures, and towns or villages. In Amboseli, this can be extended to conservation strategies. Permanent in certain regions away from the swamps were often over used after group ranch subdivision, making them murky with low water levels. Several groups, both local and international worked together to build troughs, fences, and agreements to protect the water and make it more sustainable.

Reflexive relationships are part of this understanding of a place's multilocality. Residents have one conceptualization of their place and outsiders develop their own as well. Both situate meaning on a place, but with different references. This is particularly apparent when comparing the different perspectives of scientists and locals. The landscape itself gives meaning to different agents. Maasai identity is deeply connected to the places they live and utilize, and oral histories reflect the long term relationship of what it means to be Maasai and Kisongo. Scientists also brought their own dimension to Amboseli's multilocality through their engagement with the land and how they understood it. In the modern era, the changing landscape reflects the shift in generational land use and identity in Amboseli as new ideas and technology impact their lives. Rodman points to an understanding of space that is socially constructed. She states that, "All

these dimensions of multilocality are predicated on connections, on the interacting presences of different places and different voices in various geographical, anthropological (cultural), and historical contexts.²⁷

When these places become protected areas (PA), tensions between multilocalities becomes apparent. Attempts at fortressing conservation in an area highlights the local politics of a place, tension between local and national governance, and the ways in which individuals understand their relationship to the landscape. When asking Maasai participants about Amboseli's past, they become very nostalgic. The landscape's hold is part of their identity and their livelihood. Stories they heard as children are set in the grassland and with the wildlife and livestock around them. The land's importance to the Maasai is centered on their connection with cattle and the mobility it once allowed them. For the Maasai, Amboseli was the place of sustenance during the dry season. The name *Embosel* in Maa refers to the saltiness of the area. During the rainy season, it smells like the ocean, with salty water filling the swamps and Lake Amboseli. The salt itself was important for the health of the livestock. The livestock take in the necessary salt by drinking the water from the swamps and eating the grass, which took up the salt from the soil. I was told you can taste the salt by chewing on a blade of grass. The grasslands and swamps were a reservoir of food and water when resources were gone in other areas of the Amboseli ecosystem.²⁸

As with cattle, Amboseli's resources are vital to wildlife. The same salt, grass, and water draw herds of wildebeest, zebra, and elephants. The cultural meaning of Amboseli can be seen

²⁷ Margaret C. Rodman, "Empowering Place: Multilocality and Multivocality," in *The Anthropology of Space and Place: Locating Culture* (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2003), 204–223: 212.

²⁸ Olorroushi Leyian, interview.

by looking at the types of grasses. Once, driving through the park with Ole Kumpau and Parashino Ole Pareselu, I learned of how *inkang'itie*, Maasai homesteads or *bomas*, locations can be identified. There are different types of grasses growing near these sites. Some sites where so large, the dung mounds are still apparent where livestock were kept at night. They also recalled *boma* sites under groves of acacia trees. Now these groves have just a few standing trees, but used to provide protection against elephants.²⁹ Ol Tukai Orok, a grove of palms near the center of the national park, served as an *orpul*, a site where men ate meat together. It was a place to get away from the *bomas* and the listening ears of women. Even individual trees are places of memory, where important meetings took place or *ilmurran* came together to braid their hair.³⁰

Communities of Amboseli attached meaning and memory to the landscape, both within the Amboseli plains and in the larger ecosystem, as did conservationists. Wildlife conservationists and scientists have attached meaning to this area in the form of a place that must be protected and studied. Amboseli has provided a case study for understanding the ecology of a multi-use savanna, individual species behavior, and human-wildlife interactions. The Kenyan state, both colonial and independent, viewed Amboseli as a source of tourism revenue, a cultural heritage for the nation, and a site for scientific research. Much effort was spent on convincing the Maasai to see the wildlife as their natural resource to be paid to them through tourism and hunting. The Kenyan state pursued scientific management of natural resource, focusing on either the aesthetic of wilderness or of economic efficiency of natural resource use. Not only did Amboseli have a location suitable for a national park, but the vast grasslands beyond its boundaries promised an improved livestock market in Kajiado, Amboseli's district.

²⁹ Ole Kumpau, interview.

³⁰ Ole Kumpau, interview.

With these multi-layered understandings of Amboseli, both of the national park and the broader ecosystem, I will discuss how this core area of Amboseli became the focus of so much attention from the local, national, and international levels. Throughout the process of making Amboseli a PA, from the time it was part of the Maasai Southern Reserve, to the status of a Game Reserve, up to its current status as a national park, I explore the politics, the changes in approaches to conservation, both fortress and community-oriented conservation, and the altered livelihoods of the Maasai who lived in and around Amboseli. Even with this multiplicity of meanings in one place, it is still only one physical geographic location. Along with different associations through memory or identity, came different conceptualizations on how to use natural resources. Internationally, the meaning attached to Amboseli reflects a Western notion of wildlife protection through a PA, and an example of human encroachment on wildlife habitat. This vision evolved over time, and is a much more complex understanding of landscapes. For Amboseli, this is most apparent in the emergence of community-based conservation.

Visions of Africa

Philip Curtin describes the images of Africa that developed as Europeans exploited slaves and set up formalized empires throughout the continent. In *The Image of Africa*, he discussed where the ideas about Africa that were dominant in the mid- 1960s came from and how they became such an ingrained part of Western thought. One way he discussed the origin of European conceptualizations of Africans' inferiority was through the science of the 19th century, which organized life on earth in a hierarchy. Curtin argued that racism toward Africans was more fully developed and solidified in the 19th century science. This scientific racism was used to justify treatment of Africans during colonialism. Science was rational and orderly, therefore, right and

legitimate. Once could "see" the order of people in the Great Chain of Being and within the human species. There was a rational order, putting Africans at the bottom. All this ordering worked toward building an orderly empire, with organized places fit for different people.³¹

The image of African wilderness is multifaceted and complex in its formation and how these ideas are turned into practice. The "myth of wild Africa," the idea that the wilderness of Africa needed protecting from Africans and Westerners who would exploit it, fueled the efforts of those who wanted to see Amboseli set aside as core protected area within the larger ecosystem. Adams and McShane explore this notion in-depth by showing that wildlife cannot be protected without the help of local people, but this is not an easy or straightforward task. But a vision of Africa with freely roaming wildlife with little or no contact with humans is the natural state of things on the continent.³² Neumann used the myth to explain why the state in Tanganyika/Tanzania felt justified in establishing Ngorongoro Crater as a PA, and Roderick Nash also explored the origins of the nature myth in American history, particularly as the west was developed. This American version of wilderness protection spread throughout Africa, influencing colonial and post-colonial governments to set up national parks.³³

But to only understand the "nature" side of the dichotomy between wilderness and civilization is to ignore a vitally important component. Colonial perceptions of Africans' relationship to wilderness and civilization often equated them with "primitiveness" and in need

³¹ Philip D. Curtin, *The Image of Africa: British Ideas and Action, 1780-1850* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1973), 28-57.

³² Jonathan Adams and Thomas O. McShane, *The Myth of Wild Africa: Conservation Without Illusion* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1992).

³³ Roderick Nash, *Wilderness and the American Mind*, Revised ed. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1973); Neumann, *Imposing Wilderness*.

of civilizing. This was central to the colonizing process and is a theme that often emerged in approaches to conservation until the present. Not only did the British want to create order from the milieu of ethnicities in Kenya and their other African colonies, but they attempted to structure society, scientific and anthropological knowledge, and politics according to a hierarchy reflecting how they saw themselves and their subjects.³⁴ In Amboseli, conservation required organization of boundaries, and these new environmental, political, and scientific boundaries reflected the power structure of the state over the Maasai. However, as I show, the Maasai saw these boundaries as permeable, non-existent, or unworkable. They exerted power through resistance to policies that restricted their access to water, pushed back politically through local government, or simply did not comply with rules. After independence, the new government tried to establish their own order with similar results, but the difference was the involvement of conservationists and local people who believed that colonial science and governance was not conducive to a sustainable environment and livelihood. Dichotomies of wilderness and civilization or fortress conservation and community-based conservation do not accurately describe the history of Amboseli.

Dan Brockington focuses on fortress conservation in Tanzania's Mkomazi Game Reserve, showing that long held beliefs about wilderness preservation and separation from humans is still a prevalent theme in PA management.³⁵ Amboseli has never fit into this model clearly, though it has clear boundaries since gazettement and no locals officially utilize the enclosure. Even once it was gazetted, the strict boundaries were rather permeable. Not only did herders continue to graze

³⁴ Helen Tilley and Robert J Gordon, eds., *Ordering Africa: Anthropology, European Imperialism and the Politics of Knowledge*, Studies in Imperialism (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2007).

³⁵ Brockington, *Fortress Conservation*.

on a minimal level, but even the scientists were not bound by the borders. Part of this is due to its small size. Wildlife crossed the border on a daily basis. Zebra and wildebeest came in during the day to take water and graze, but by late afternoon, they began filing out of the park to nighttime areas. It is apparent to those who spend much time in the area that because of Amboseli National Park's small size, it is impossible to protect it from what happens outside the boundaries of the park. This will become apparent in subsequent chapters examining the different ways land has been used around the park.

The colonial government did not approach setting the area apart of the Ol Tukai sanctuary in Amboseli with the intention of making it a complete fortress against human encroachment. Even in the 1940s, the warden worked with local elders to try to come to agreements about the use of the Ol Tukai area. This is not to say that attitudes of the white authorities did not favor a fortress-style approach to protecting Amboseli, but often chose to try to work within the local social structure to keep the peace.

After independence, there were many other issues at stake in Amboseli and Kenya as a whole that necessitated a more integrated approach to the PA. Rangeland for livestock was the priority form of land use, although the government was increasingly interested in developing the tourist industry. The land was held in common by the Maasai as Trust Land during colonialism and adjudicated into group ranches after independence. Much of this story is about competing perspectives on how to best utilize the land, but determining who had the authority and right to decide led to decades of disputes, trials of different approaches to wildlife and natural resource management, and transformed traditions.

The Tragedy of the Amboseli Commons

Garrett Hardin's 1968 article warning of the 'tragedy of the commons,' might, on first glance, have been playing out in Amboseli, as overgrazing and tree death in Ol Tukai alarmed officials who pushed the decision to make Amboseli a national park. Ol Tukai, as will be explained in more detail in later chapters, was an important site within the Amboseli Reserve/National Park.³⁶ The Maasai saw outsiders entering and taking what best suited their needs - wild game and a tourist experience. With so many meanings attached to the landscape, a power struggle over who could govern this commons ensued, taking up much of the twentieth century. The state saw a tragedy in the overuse of certain grazing sites, but locals saw powerful forces pushing them to give up their commons.

Harding argued that people will exploit a common resource to their own benefit, leading to resource depletion or ruin unless some external force imposes governance or restriction. The two common forms of management are through government or private property division. He used an obvious analogy of herders using common grazing land. Each herder adds one more cow and one more until the carrying capacity is over-run by everyone's "one more". No one can fault the herder for wanting to have one more animal representing more capital for food for their family, but if each family does this, sharing the commons pasture, the commons becomes a tragedy. Ultimately, all suffer in the end. Hardin did not think human nature allowed for any self-governance at the local level. The government of Kenya believed the Maasai fell into this tragic cycle. The colonial government did not see order in the migration patterns or stocking levels of the Maasai.

Travel to Amboseli became so popular for tourists that this became its own tragedy. Tour

³⁶ Garrett Hardin, "The Tragedy of the Commons," *Science*, New Series, 162, no. 3859 (December 13, 1968): 1243–48.

vehicles drove where they pleased, ignoring established roads, in order to get closer to wildlife. Overuse of the tourist area of Ol Tukai led to sewage and water problems. Safari vehicles caused soil erosion, vegetation loss, and congestion around the diminishing predator population. A single cheetah could attract a swarm of vehicles to one location.³⁷ Hardin's own explanation extended to this issue. He remarked on the overuse of Yosemite by wilderness-loving Americans. The same was playing out in Amboseli - A lovely little spot in East Africa, at the foot of Kilimanjaro, with elephants and herds of zebra grazing in primordial wilderness.

Except that it wasn't. Those who wanted Amboseli set apart for the exclusive use of tourists and wildlife wanted a singular source to blame. The Maasai were destroying the Amboseli commons through misuse of the rangelands. Elinor Ostrom argued that Hardin's rendering of how a commons worked was too fixed. There was not flexibility in how people responded to unique situations around the world. She suggested that there were both examples around the world of commons managed by the users and ways to understand what made these successful or failures. She framed these in the contexts of Common Pool Resources (CPR), and this is how she describes the multiple forms of decisions regarding how people use CPRs. Ostrom stated, "Instead of presuming that the individuals sharing a commons are inevitably caught in a trap form which they cannot escape, I argue that the capacity of individuals to extricate themselves from various types of dilemma situations varies from situation to situation."³⁸ She worried that if no theory was developed regarding how commons could be

³⁷ Wesley R. Henry, "A Preliminary Report on Visitor Use in Amboseli National Park" (University of Nairobi: Institute For Development Studies, 1976), <http://opendocs.ids.ac.uk/opendocs/handle/123456789/1144> [accessed December 6, 2014]; Frank Mitchell, "Value of Tourism in East Africa," Discussion Paper (University of Nairobi: Institute For Development Studies, 1969), <http://opendocs.ids.ac.uk/opendocs/handle/123456789/427> [accessed July 14, 2015].

³⁸ Elinor Ostrom, *Governing the Commons: The Evolution of Institutions for Collective*

collectively governed, everyone would always assume that CPRs cannot be self-governed even if there are good examples otherwise. What really must be understood are the internal and external factors that influence whether a group successfully manages a CPR. Communication is important, of course, but how this is done varies depending on trust, distance, and technology. External factors such as national and international politics, environmental change, war, or cultural change impact the success of self-monitored CPRs. How these CPRs are conceptualized is also flexible, according to Ostrom. It can be pastures, as described by Hardin, fishing areas, water sources, or more abstract resources like "landscapes".

Hardin envisioned people as having little agency beyond what decisions they were able to make over their own individual use, but even this was subject to the superstructure (my usage) of the nation or region. Since people are trapped in short-term use strategies from which they have no ability to do anything other than over-use and exploit the resource, he believed that an external entity needed to impose rules and a monitoring system of the CPR. Ostrom described the top-down governance as having two options in Hardin's framework. The first was the Leviathan option, or the socialist option, in which an external force, perhaps the state, decides rules, punishment, and has the power to enforce. The second option is through private ownership of property. This "capitalist" approach involves dividing the commons into smaller portions, and each member of the community owns their own parcel. This forces individuals to have to make management decisions to maximize their own profit based on their property rather than how to out-manuever other commons users for an advantage.³⁹ Either way, external forces must impose

Action (Cambridge University Press, 1990), 14.

³⁹ Elinor Ostrom, *Governing the Commons: The Evolution of Institutions for Collective Action* (Cambridge University Press, 1990); Elinor Ostrom et al., "Revisiting the Commons: Local Lessons, Global Challenges," *Science* 284, no. 5412 (1999): 278–82.

order on the commons. However, these approaches can be problematic and not effective at managing the commons. Corrupt states, greedy profit-seekers, or disconnected politicians can set up policies that do not benefit the users of the commons and perhaps lead to more misuse and decline in the resource. More effective approaches emerge when participants' are heard by the authorities, but also when governments are so dysfunctional that local communities must forge their own policies in order to prevent the destruction of resources and plan for their sustainability.⁴⁰

The debates over how commons should be governed have several implications for understanding the history of Amboseli and the choices that were made to set it aside for protection. Different groups of people had differing understandings of what the commons looked like in Amboseli. This is connected with the ideas of place. Just as Rodman explained that places are multilocal, so are the ways that commons are conceptualized. The Maasai saw grazing land in Amboseli, land that was situated in a particular place in how they migrated, sustained their herds' health, and where they met with other families. Maasai governed their grazing patterns through family and clan systems. When the government established Group Ranches in the late 1960s, local officials made these decisions. Elders depended on environmental signs, word of mouth, and, at times, prophesy, to determine areas to allow grazing, where to move next, and which locations needed to lie fallow. People tended not to deviate from these protocols because of social pressure to follow elders' orders and because to break the rules now might prevent them from benefiting from group security in hard times.

For colonial authorities who sought to protect wildlife and boost the tourist profits in Amboseli, used a different commons, though in the same place. The common pool resource was

⁴⁰ Ostrom et al., "Revisiting the Commons": 278–82.

the wildlife that fit this landscape. There was a certain aesthetic that Mervyn Cowie, the director for Kenya National Parks for both the colonial government and the early days of independence, had for Kenya's wild areas. His vision did not include human transformation of the wilderness.⁴¹ Similarly, the independent national government of Kenya wanted to maintain a suitable landscape for tourism, but attaining this became complicated. Economic development goals motivated the government to find the most profitable use for the land around Amboseli, whether this was wildlife preservation for the sake of tourism, multi-use land for hunting and livestock, or agriculture. I go on to describe in this chapter and the chapter on wildlife management how these decisions came about in Amboseli and what was decided to be the most practical and efficient use of the land.

Nina Johnson's discussion of the Ngorongoro Conservation Area (NCA) in Tanzania may provide a way of understanding how a wildlife conservation area serves as a commons. She likens NCA to one example of a "real tragedy of the commons" because the government decided the best way to preserve this area was to remove the Maasai who lived there. As she describes the aftermath of "conservation," one can see that the international community is the user of this commons area. The resource is the landscape, wildlife, and created idea of a pristine environment. The consumers of this common resource are tourists and conservationists, but not the Maasai. In an effort of privatization, at least in the sense that boundaries were drawn between a government administered area and those who now were to live outside the boundaries. Overuse by tourists led to soil erosion for which the Maasai were once blamed. Rhinos are over hunted and wildebeest are under-managed.⁴² The Crater, like other PAs in East Africa is now held as a

⁴¹ Mervyn Cowie, *I Walk with Lions; the Story of Africa's Great Animal Preserves, the Royal National Parks of Kenya, as Told by Their First Director* (New York: Macmillan, 1963).

⁴² Nina Johnsen, "Placemaking, Pastoralism, and Poverty in the Ngorongoro

commons for the "global villagers."⁴³

Who had the authority to govern the Amboseli commons? On the surface, it might seem obvious that the colonial and subsequent independent governments had the authority to govern Amboseli's commons. This would fit well with Hardin's theory that this is the best way to sustain a common resource, but in Amboseli, there was never a clear and direct authority from Nairobi for the governing of common grazing land and resource off-take. They often deferred to local authorities, both District Commissioners, who had more intimate knowledge of local conditions, and Maasai leadership. This has historical roots in the movement of the Maasai into the Southern Reserve and agreements allowing the Maasai to use the land without interference. From the Maasai perspective, they were the inhabitants of the land, and rightful authority to decide how land should be used, at least in theory. In reality, there was a delicate dance, back and forth, between local and national authorities regarding how the land should be utilized and governed.

Jan Bender Shetler offers an example of how people of the western Serengeti self-governed their common resources long before there was any larger state or property division to oversee its use. She argued there were very old diversification strategies that individual homesteads used to practice were part of a larger clan-based system of rotating where resources were extracted. This information came from oral histories, but she speculated that the practice has deep historical roots based on the spatial imaging she used to situate certain memories. When colonial officials saw large sections of "unused" land, they assumed there were few inhabitants and that it was alienated, they created a particular vision of an unspoiled Eden. In fact, the land

Conservation Area, Tanzania," in *Producing Nature and Poverty in Africa* (Uppsala: Nordic Africa Institute, 2000), 148–72.

⁴³ Johnsen, 151-157.

was at a different point in the management system of the Ikoma people.⁴⁴

By looking at the commons, we have another way of understanding the place-ness of Amboseli through examining how people related to common resources' locations and the ways resources were incorporated into everyday life, politics, and economy. Often competing commons exist in the same landscape. The fight over how Ol Tukai should be used is an example. The Maasai saw this as a common grazing and watering area and had been for more generations than they could remember, but the colonial and national governments, as well as international interests, saw the commons differently. These groups envisioned a commons for wildlife preservation and viewing that was being destroyed by the tragedy of overgrazing. Particularly after independence, the government put tremendous effort into ensuring that wildlife had space to roam and was protected. There was tension between local and national commons. The government wanted to extract the resource for wildlife viewing potential, as this would bring many tourists to Kenya, not to mention a great deal of revenue. If left to the sole decision of the government, there would have been another tragedy of the commons, as the Maasai saw it. They would benefit little from tourism, as is still the case. This follows Hardin's warning that one participant in a commons can choose to take as much as will benefit themselves, at the exclusion of other users.

There are two encompassing groups of opinions about Hardin's explanation of pastoralists' Tragedy of the Commons, according to J. Terrence McCabe. He divides these opinions into one group that believes overgrazing, an unquenchable thirst for more accumulation of wealth, and inevitable environmental degradation if the commons is left without top-down governance. The opposing group does not see pastoralists as inevitable environmental destroyers,

⁴⁴ Shetler, *Imagining Serengeti*.

but rather have local systems in place that govern the commons. It is outside forces, such as the state or privatization that disrupts the system, causing degradation. He uses the Turkana of Kenya to explain why he does not think Hardin's pastoral example was accurate, as no group of pastoralists are without some sort of governing system of the common grazing areas. The Turkana, through a mixed variety of livestock, and rotational grazing grounds, maintained productive rangeland commons. McCabe found that what disrupted the system was conflict with neighboring groups that limited their access to certain grazing land and watering sites. Veterinary care overrode the environmental check on herd size, decreasing livestock death by disease.⁴⁵

For the case of Amboseli, the commons idea must extend to the PA because Amboseli National Park was set aside to protect the commons for the global good. The defined boundaries of the national park established clear delineation between which part of the Amboseli commons belonged to the Maasai and what part belonged to the state. The creation of boundaries for national parks was part of a well-established approach to protected certain biodiverse or historically significant places around the globe. Amboseli's gazettelement was not a new phenomenon.

Maasai Historiography and the Ilkisongo of Amboseli

Pre-colonial Maasai history is a rather difficult story to tell, but most scholars of pastoralism in East Africa have pieced together a range of sources to begin to construct a chronology and ethnography of Maa speaking peoples. The historiography of Maasai history was heavily influenced by colonial interpretations of the landscape and of Western notions of progress, but by the 1960s, this began to change as more sophisticated interpretations of

⁴⁵ J. Terrence McCabe, "Turkana Pastoralism: A Case against the Tragedy of the Commons," *Human Ecology* 18, no. 1 (1990): 81–103.

archeologic and linguistic evidence revealed different patterns. One reason constructing Maasai history is difficult is that with the expansion of pastoralists from Southern Sudan, further and further south into the Rift Valley, older groups merged or were absorbed by other pastoralist groups. The Maasai are a rather new group within this evolution.

John Galaty describes the emergence of the Maasai as a long process of assimilation and annihilation of different pastoral groups in the Rift Valley of East Africa. The “new pastoralism” emerged about five hundred years ago with the shaping of a distinctive Maa social organization took shape, along with a highly adapted, heat-resistant humped zebu cattle breed. During this time the different *Iloshon* (sections) formed and reformed through trade, intermarriage, warfare, and adaptation to environmental change. Some Maa speaking groups were pushed to the periphery or consumed, but other groups became more distinctive (i.e., Samburu, Turkana). In the central region of the Rift Valley, the Maasai emerged as the dominant pastoralist group. The Ilkisongo, Loita, Kaputiei, and Purko emerged as the strongest alliances of *Iloshon* in the mid-eighteenth century. The Ilkisongo, situated in the southern region of the Rift Valley, primarily around Mt. Meru (near present day Arusha, Tanzania) and Mt. Kilimanjaro. During at least four age sets from 1811-1867, the Ilkisongo established their hegemony in the Southern Maasailand from Lake Manyara and Ngorongoro in the west, the Pangani River in the east and north to Amboseli, absorbing and or pushing aside the Iloogolala and Parkuyo *Iloshon*. In Amboseli, the Loitokitok Maasai, a sub-section of the Ilkisongo, pushed out the remaining Iloogolala (a small, sub-section eventually absorbed by the neighboring groups) in the early part of the nineteenth century.⁴⁶

⁴⁶ John G Galaty, “Pastoral Orbits and Deadly Jousts: Factors in the Maasai Expansion,” in *Herders, Warriors, and Traders: Pastoralism in Africa*, ed. John G Galaty and Pierre Bonte (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1991), 171–98. Age sets are generational groupings of 15 to 20

Several scholars have written about the Maasai before colonialism, and the modern interpretation is that although there is a sense of timelessness to Maasai identity, it has continually changed over the past two thousand years.⁴⁷ The Ilkisongo Maasai have not been the subject of as much academic scrutiny as other groups such as the Matapato or more northern groups. Although my work of scholarship is not meant to be an ethnographic history of the Ilkisongo, their sense of identity as a subgroup is important, as is their connection to the land.

The Ilkisongo Maasai were living in the Amboseli region long before Joseph Thompson and other explorers passed through on their way to the interior. The last decades of the nineteenth century were a time of a much more diffuse population and a time of drought and disease. Many whites believed this land to be unoccupied, but this was never the case. There was no border between Kenya and Tanzania and the Ilkisongo traveled through the region, continuing even after the boundary was put in place. Likewise, the land around Kilimanjaro was a part of the landscape, which at that time was called the Nyiri Desert or Nyiri Plains. This is what Joseph Thomson knew the land as, and what appeared on early colonial maps.

Thomson traveled to Amboseli in 1883, and his records described the landscape, people, and wildlife he encountered. His traveling companions traveled to Loitokitok, the "dreaded district" where they encountered aggressive rhinoceroses. They enjoyed the bounty of the land,

years comprised of young men, *illmurran*, who go through rites of passage throughout life together. Ages range from about 15 to 25 years old. During their time as *illmurran*, the young men live together in a *manyatta*, a warrior village, from which they serve as protectors of the community. See Paul Spencer, *The Maasai of Ilmatapato: A Study of Rituals of Rebellion*, International African Library (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1988), 65-77.

⁴⁷ See the following as examples: John G. Galaty, "Being 'Maasai': Being 'People-of-Cattle': Ethnic Shifters in East Africa," *American Ethnologist* 9, no. 1 (February 1, 1982): 1-20.; Dorothy Hodgson, *Once Intrepid Warriors: Gender, Ethnicity, and the Cultural Politics of Maasai Development* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2001); Thomas Spear and Richard Waller, eds., *Being Maasai: Ethnicity & Identity in East Africa* (Athens, OH: Ohio University Press, 1993).

hunting buffalos, eating ostrich eggs, and watching herds of antelope, wildebeest, and zebra. Thompson also found the landscape itself an awesome sight, even compared to other lands he had traversed. The land was dry during this time, with little grass and scrub bushes. Travelers could recognize watering points in the distance by the oasis of reeds and trees by springs coming from the underground water of the snow melt. Still, Thompson wondered how could such an abundance of wildlife exist in "this extraordinary desert"?⁴⁸

As much as the Maasai had been lords of the grazing land of this part of east Africa when Thomson trekked through Amboseli, their power waned in the later part of the nineteenth century throughout Maasailand. This was, in part, due to environmental factors and disease. It was also because of shifting economic systems and politics as different ethnic groups engaged with the British and coastal traders. During the Emutai, 1883-1902, a succession of diseases decimated the Maasai and their cattle. For most Maasai in East Africa, this meant a reorientation of identity, location, and social structure. Richard Waller writes that this crisis did not lead to significant environmental change, at least in terms of grassland alteration or water levels. However, it weakened their access to resources. This was not simply a direct result of loss of livestock, and thus wealth, but a consequence of their relationships with neighboring ethnic groups and with the increasingly influential British; they were further weakened politically and economically. The disaster also precluded British efforts to organize the Kenya colony according to ethnicity and race. The British used them, as well as other groups, to shift power dynamics in their favor. When the Maasai were useful, they worked with them, but when they were not, they

⁴⁸ Joseph Thomson, *Through Masai Land: A Journey of Exploration among the Snowclad Volcanic Mountains and Strange Tribes of Eastern Equatorial Africa* (London: Sampson Low, 1885), 269-285

moved them out of the way.⁴⁹

The *Iliokop* Wars between the various Maasai sections provides an example of the role of the British in Maasai politics. The Loita Maasai, in pursuit of cattle and grazing land, pushed smaller sections north. It seems that this would have increased the population in the northern region of Maasailand. As some sections sought refuge with the British at Fort Hall, the door to intervention in the political and geographical aspects of the Maasai opened. The *Iliokop* Wars also provides insight into the movement of people throughout "Maasailand." This might have provided some justification for the British to move them all into one contained area, though they must have known that co-existence was not possible. But after the war, the British were intimately involved in Maasai politics.⁵⁰

Moving the Maasai to the Southern Reserve

The colonial government's vision for Kenya involved an ordering of society along distinct geographic and ethnic borderlines. They wanted a colony in which there were ways to measure and control African subjects and maximize the land white settlers could turn into agricultural profit. White settlers also wanted prime grazing and agricultural land for their own use. The ordering of the Kenyan colony into ethnically distinct regions has had a long lasting impact on the independent nation, defining current politics, as well as how Kenyans now identify themselves and understand the land in which they live. For the Ilkisongo, being more southward oriented toward Tanzania, these movements did not involve their relocation, but they were faced

⁴⁹ Richard Waller, "Emutai: Crisis and Response in Maasailand 1883-1902," in *The Ecology of Survival: Case Studies from Northeast African History* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1988), 73–112.

⁵⁰ Richard Waller, "The Maasai and the British 1895-1905. the Origins of an Alliance," *The Journal of African History* 17, no. 4 (1976): 529–53.

with the influx of people into their land. The creation of the Southern Reserve for the Maasai shaped Maasai identity and their relationship with each other, their land, and cattle.⁵¹ The Southern Reserve gradually eroded in space over time. Now what could be identified as its remnants are the Maasai Group Ranches, Amboseli National Park, and the Masai Mara National Reserve.

Lotte Hughes tells the story of the 1904 and 1911 move of the Laikipia Maasai southward, alienating land that would clear space for other groups. The northern Maasai groups inhabited prime grazing land in the northern Rift Valley. This land had plenty of reliable water and was believed to have fewer diseases infecting cattle and people. As part of the Crown Lands Ordinance of 1902, white settlers could lease land with 99-year agreements for very little money. Much of this land was considered to be "alienated" by Africans, but this came at the end of the *emutai* of the late 19th century, an era in Maasai memory that killed large numbers of livestock and people. But unoccupied land was only temporarily vacant, as the Maasai migrated on a seasonal basis. This gave the British the opportunity to seize land. This was merely the beginning of white dominance in the Rift Valley and the marginalization of Maasai land rights.⁵²

Moving the Maasai was not a simple top-down decision from colonial authority, but rather many voices were part of the discussion of the necessity to do this for the peace, security, and prosperity of the colony. Some British colonials argued that moving the Maasai violated

⁵¹ G. R Sandford, *An Administrative and Political History of the Masai Reserve* (London: Waterlow and sons, 1970).

⁵² Lotte Hughes, *Moving the Maasai : A Colonial Misadventure* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), 23-55. For relocation of other Kenyan pastoralists see Vigdis Broch-Due and Richard A. Schroeder, "A Proper Cultivation of Peoples: The Colonial Reconfiguration of Pastoral Tribes and Place in Kenya," in *Producing Nature and Poverty in Africa* (Uppsala: Nordic Africa Institute, 2000), 53–93.

their rights and would result in large numbers of deaths, or at least violent retaliation. Internal Maasai politics played to the advantage of the pro-move British, with the controversial *olaiboni* Lenana.⁵³ The government recognized him as a Paramount Chief, perhaps giving him more authority than the Maasai had. Lenana's political maneuvering worked to the British's advantage, as he signed both the 1904 and 1911 treaties. The importance of this move to the history of Amboseli is that the treaties brought thousands of people and livestock into a smaller, concentrated area.

The Southern Reserve was not as abundant in resources as the northern region from which the migrants came. The landscape was more arid, and there were more diseases affecting both cattle and people. Hughes explains that the resident cattle already had built up immunity to East Coast Fever, for example, but the new cattle did not have this resistance. Hughes mentions two sections, the Kaputiei and the Matapato that moved to the Southern Reserve. Now the Kaputiei border the Ilkisongo to the north and the Matapato to the west. Newcomers had to adjust to a new climate, both socially and environmentally. The white settlers did not want this land when it was being given out under the Crown Lands Ordinance because it was not productive for agriculture and was too disease ridden for their cattle breeds.⁵⁴ By 1924, some settlers had changed their minds. Ostrich farms emerged on the northern border of the Reserve in the Athi plains, west of Nairobi, and members of the Society for the Preservation of the Wild Fauna of the Empire (SPWFE), the British colonial wildlife conservation organization that hoped to persuade the government and settlers the importance of wildlife preservation, discussed the impending establishment of several white farms on what was Reserve land. However, they

⁵³ See Hughes for more on Lenana's rise to power and deal with the British to move the Maasai south.

⁵⁴ Hughes, *Moving the Maasai*, 100-103.

argued, this land was best suited for the preservation of Kenya's wildlife. This was an early indication that the land would not just be a Maasai Reserve but also a wilderness sanctuary.⁵⁵

This is a history of Amboseli, the Ilkisongo Maasai who claim it as home, the process of conservation, and the land itself. By separating out different perspectives, I argue that this small place in Africa has much to add to the historiography of Kenyan history, the history of science and the environment in Africa, and interdisciplinary fields focusing on WNRM. The past is an important part of the present and future of a place, revealing a broader way to develop effective policies that promote conservation of biodiversity and give proper agency to communities.

⁵⁵ Adams, *Against Extinction*, 72.

Chapter 1

Creating Amboseli National Park: Multi-Local Visions of the Landscape

In 2009, one of the worst droughts in recent memory, a tree fell in Amboseli National Park. Well beyond 100 years old, the tree was the site for many Maasai age sets' rites of passage, including the braiding of *ilmurrans'* hair, and was a gathering place for important meetings among elders.⁵⁶ It looks like so many other fallen trees in the park, but this tree was a landmark in Ilkisongo Maasai memory. The tree was a site for important collective memories of many in the Amboseli community. (See Figure 1) Stanley Oloitipit, a local Maasai Minister of Parliament, called a *baraza*, a public meeting to confer with the residents of the surrounding area on the matter of gazetting Amboseli, which some were arguing was in decline as a result of overgrazing. It was held under this tree. Through a confusion of translation and perhaps some deception, the vote conveyed to the government officials present was that the Maasai consented to making Amboseli a national park. However, the process was not so simple. When the area was transformed from a game reserve to a national park in 1974, local access to this site was restricted. The creation of Amboseli National Park was part of a long history of local Maasai trying to maintain their traditions and livelihoods that connected them to this landscape as the state and international institutions pressed for a protected area with strict boundaries and restrictions on types of use.

⁵⁶ *Ilmurran*, or young warriors, braided hair and covered it in ochre.



Figure 1. Fallen tree in Amboseli National Park.
Photo by Amanda E. Lewis, Amboseli National Park, 2013.

The Kenyan colonial state saw Amboseli Game Reserve, and particularly the core thirty acres called Ol Tukai, as a “Tragedy of the Commons.”⁵⁷ Even before independence, the government wanted to secure a conservancy around this area, which attracted wildlife to the springs and had been a popular tourist attraction since the 1950s, with Mt. Kilimanjaro as the backdrop to dramatic images of savanna animals and iconic acacia trees. Many within the government and international organizations believed that by drawing a boundary around Ol Tukai, and the later boundary around 150 square miles for a national park, wildlife and the environment could be “saved” from destruction through overgrazing. Amboseli Maasai feared these invisible “fortresses” would grow larger and larger until they lost their land completely, as had happened in the 1904 and 1911 moves to the Southern Reserve.⁵⁸ They were kept from vital grazing and watering areas while the “government’s cattle” grazed freely.⁵⁹ “Fortress

⁵⁷ Hardin, “The Tragedy of the Commons.”

⁵⁸ Hughes, *Moving the Maasai : A Colonial Misadventure*.

⁵⁹ “Government’s cattle” is a term many people used to describe wildlife, since wildlife benefitted the government. David Western refers to this as well. *In the Dust of Kilimanjaro*

conservation,” as described by Dan Brockington, was the preferred method for protecting wildlife and landscapes in much of the twentieth century in east, central, and southern Africa protecting certain regions by turning a parcel of land into a national park or reserve.⁶⁰ Local communities were restricted from utilization but did not receive much, if any, benefit from tourism or scientific research in the park. The Amboseli landscape’s place in Maasai memory changed both in how they used the land and where they found their new place in modern Kenya. In the minds of many of the people I interviewed, the meeting under the tree was the point at which they “lost” Amboseli to the government. However, this day was only one of many in the years leading up to gazettelement when either the colonial government or the independent Kenyan government looked toward the salty plain as a place to conserve wildlife and a destination for tourists.

This chapter explores the opposing and supporting sides of creating Amboseli National Park, a move that forced people living within those boundaries to move elsewhere. Brockington argued that the Mkomazi Game Reserve, not far from Amboseli, was a prime example of “fortress conservation,” where people were forcefully displaced and suffered severely as a result. I argue that Amboseli, because of local political and social dynamics, did not so easily become the fortified protected area for conservation that many hoped for as early as the 1950s. Because of the relatively homogeneous population in the area, the presence of local politicians and prominent figures who sought to protect Maasai access and a state government that had its own internal problems, the Amboseli region was a site where opposition to permanent gazettelement and exclusion of locals delayed the creation of the national park and allowed alternatives to be proposed. Local actors had direct access to powerful people. Local government was given a

(Washington DC: Island Press, 2002).

⁶⁰ Brockington, *Fortress Conservation*.

chance to govern. These transformations highlighted that the government thought its citizens should prioritize national economic development even if it meant sacrificing some traditions for the sake of the nation. This was part of the spirit of *harambee*, or all people pulling their efforts together.⁶¹

International groups also backed the protection of Amboseli through financial support and the promotion of wildlife conservation in both Nairobi and Amboseli. These different perspectives saw the Amboseli landscape through many layers, but had uneven access to the national conservation stage. With these multi-layered understandings of Amboseli, I will discuss how this core area of Amboseli became the focus of so much attention from local, national, and international levels. Throughout the process of making Amboseli a protected area, from the time it was part of the Maasai Southern Reserve, then as a Game Reserve, up to its current status as a national park, I explore the politics, the changes in approaches to conservation, both fortress and community-oriented management, and the altered livelihoods of the Maasai who lived in and around Amboseli.

The making of meaning of the Amboseli landscape can be traced through the stories people told and through state-drawn boundaries. The Illkisongo's history can be seen in the topography, but often this past is obscured by more recent transformation of the land. These changes came about largely in the spaces between how the Maasai and the colonial (and later independent) governments situated themselves in relation to the land and natural world. The landscape held memories and was a place to situate knowledge; for the Maasai this was connected to *oloshon* and clan history as well as serving as a source for their ecological ethnicity. Ecological ethnicity refers to people, often those considered indigenous, nomadic pastoralists,

⁶¹ "'Preserve Wildlife' Plea to Masai," *East African Standard*, April 29, 1970.

fisher people, forest dwellers, or otherwise living on the periphery of industrialized societies, who depend on the land for their livelihoods, are subject to environmental change, but also have developed their own system of managing resource use without altering the landscape.⁶² For conservationists who would have an increasing amount of influence on the shaping of meaning of landscape in Amboseli, establishing clear boundaries of where wildlife conservation would take place and categorizing knowledge of the environment and people. The resulting history of these multilocal perspectives elucidates the tension between the land and people, a pursuit of some semblance of balance between nature and culture and between competing land use practices.

Early Perspectives on the Amboseli Landscape

There are stories of Amboseli from the days before intrusive colonial governance. Benjamin Tuarare told me a story of a war between the Ilkisongo and Ilkaputiei *iloshon* that played out on the Amboseli Plains. Stock raiding was likely the trigger that brought the two groups into conflict. We drove out the road from Kimana to the national park and stopped by a large *Acacia tortillis* tree. As he recounts, the *ilmurran* stopped fighting for a while, each side retreating to opposite sides of the hills that surround the plains. Battle had been fierce and the Ilkaputiei knew they had wounded an Ilkisongo leader. The Ilkisongo leader died of his wounds a few hours later, but even after death he was instrumental in battle. The men propped his dead

⁶² Pramod Parajuli, “How Can Four Trees Make a Jungle?,” in *The World and the Wild*, ed. David Rothenberg and Marta Ulvaeus (Tucson, AZ: The University of Arizona Press, 2001), 3–20; P. Parajuli, “Beyond Capitalized Nature: Ecological Ethnicity as an Arena of Conflict in the Regime of Globalization,” *ECUMENE* 5, no. 2 (1998): 186–217. Parajuli’s discussion of ecological ethnicity was originally focused on Indian communities in response to marginalization during development, but it provides a useful category for the Maasai, who fit many of the descriptions.

body against the acacia tree, in a seated resting position. They placed his spear in his hand and his shield by his side. It looked as though he was asleep. The Ilkaputiei, from their vantage point on the hilltops, saw the man and decided to capture him. When they arrived at the tree, they were ambushed by the Ilkisongo *ilmurran* and ultimately defeated. About four months after hearing this story, I drove by the same tree, and it had been cut down by Kenya Power and Lighting Company who were laying electrical lines to the national park. It was disappointing to me and to Tuarare that a lack of interest or knowledge on the part of the land owner and the company as to the local memory of this site resulted in the death of this historic tree.⁶³

During World War I, British soldiers were stationed in the region because of its proximity to Tanganyika. I was twice taken to sites where it was known that white soldiers were buried *en masse*, as well as their "treasures." One site is on a hill above the Amboseli Lake. The cairns of rock remain and the owner knew some of the history. It is believed that they buried gold there. At another site, beyond the hills of the plain's edge, I was told of hidden burial grounds that have whites' remains and their treasure. Some locals were less sure whether these were soldiers or just other whites wandering through for trade or other economic activities. During one walking interview, my interviewee, research assistant, and I came upon a man digging in a deep hole, perhaps twenty feet down. He said he was being paid by people in Tanzania to dig for buried treasure in Amboseli because it was well known that there was gold and jewels from the colonial days. He sold it to the Tanzanian dealers and who, in turn, sold it to "museums" and "interested buyers." He said he was Mchagga, and had no connection to the area. He had found bits of human bone and a bracelet recently.⁶⁴

⁶³ Benjamin Tuarare, interview.

⁶⁴ Gavana Ole Naiganya,; Sayianka Ole Korinko, interviews. James Willson, *Guerrillas*

Local history and generational memories permeate the landscape. Therefore, when the government began criticizing the Maasai of Amboseli for misusing the land and causing damage, some feared the land would be taken from them. Politics over grazing and gazettement emerged as a contentious topic, and the Ilkisongo Maasai struggled with the Kenyan colonial state. They did have an early advocate, however. Sir Evelyn Baring, who was the colonial governor from 1952 to 1959, came to Amboseli and remarked on how he believed Amboseli was a reserve that needed protection for both wildlife and the Maasai.⁶⁵ Lekanayia Ole Parselu recalled that the governor gave a letter to the Kajiado African District Council (KADC), stating that Amboseli was an important area for wildlife, but that it would not be taken from the Maasai. The Maasai took this seriously and even after independence, recalled the importance of this letter in the discussions about gazettement the park.⁶⁶

In contrast to Maasai memories of the landscape, Hollywood took its turn in creating meaning that matched Westerners' perceptions of Africa. In the 1952 film *Where No Vultures Fly*, images of "wild Africa" dominated the depiction of wildness in Amboseli. The movie is a fictionalized interpretation of the career of Mervyn Cowie who would eventually become the director of the Royal Kenya National Parks. In the movie, the protagonist Bob Payton's career as a professional hunter transforms into one of wildlife protector. He grew tired of the life of helping wealthy Europeans exploit the wildlife of Africa and wanted to start a wildlife sanctuary in the Kenya colony. Politicians asked him to set up a national park to protect wildlife from poachers. This brings him into conflict with a poaching cartel run by a white colonial hunter. The

of Tsavo (Nairobi, Kenya: Self published through Old Africa Books and English Press, 2012).

⁶⁵ David Lovatt Smith, *Amboseli: A Miracle Too Far?* (Mawenzi Books, 2008).

⁶⁶ Lekanayia Ole Parselu, interview.

hunter hired locals to assist his business endeavor. The movie was filmed before any tourist infrastructure emerged in Amboseli. The crew built temporary thatched-roof *bandas* in Ol Tukai, and many scenes were shot there. Mervyn Cowie hoped this film would bring international attention to the need to establish national parks in Kenya. The movie was successful in gaining support in Britain, but feedback from white settlers in Kenya was mixed. Some supported the idea and were even critical that it appeared wildlife was harmed in the movie, while detractors argued that national parks were detrimental to the economic life of the colony.⁶⁷

Where No Vultures Fly shows how white settlers conceptualized Amboseli and undeveloped land in Kenya. The Amboseli landscape, where much of the film was shot, is a part of the east, giving the viewer a vision of a wild landscape being destroyed by modernity. Payton (Cowie) had a hands-on management approach, reflective of the trend in the 1950s, which emphasized preservation of wildlife, often at the expense of people. The movie advocated a "fortress conservation" approach to protecting wildlife from poachers and local people. In the movie, Kamba hunters were stupid and subservient. They killed indiscriminately with their poisoned arrows. Corrupt *askaries*, Kenyan police, were lazy and failed to carry out patrols looking for poachers. The Maasai were presented as timeless, just as they were 1000 years ago, roaming across the landscape with their cattle. However, Payton bemoaned their disease-ridden cattle that must be kept out of the park. Cattle were dangerous, the colonial authorities believed. One scene shows several dead wildebeests, killed by rinderpest Maasai cattle carried into the park.⁶⁸

The creation of the national park was successful in routing out poachers and trespassers

⁶⁷ Mervyn Cowie, *Fly, Vulture* (Harrap, 1961). Cowie assured the audiences that no animals died as a direct result of filming.

⁶⁸ *Where No Vultures Fly*, directed by Harry Watt, Ealing Studios, 1952.

so that no vultures identified the presences of poachers, hence the title of the film. Ironically, few vultures now fly over Amboseli, not because poaching has been eradicated - far from it. Rather, poachers have used poison to kill vultures so that they do not give away the location of poached wildlife.⁶⁹ If a movie was made with that title now, it would have a sad meaning rather than a triumphant one.

Amboseli's landscape was part of the mid-twentieth century's obsession with "wild Africa." The movie showed a landscape where wildlife were free to live naturally. Human interference was the enemy, unless it was by a benevolent manager seeking to reestablish the preconceived idea that the original landscape did not include the Maasai or any other people. Even the days of the "great white hunter" were numbered. Although the images of Amboseli were unaltered from their original state, it was the way in which they were presented to the viewer that makes me think about how this vision helped form the image the West still holds about the continent. Iconic photographs of elephants grazing by swamps or the ubiquitous acacia tree on the horizon fill modern photography books and nature documentaries. This is the meaning of Amboseli's landscape that drove the tourism industry and informed the outside world of its conservation problems.

These contrasting memories of Amboseli's landscape, both Maasai and Western, show that the landscape was layered with meaning, but the meaning originated from different experiences and was purposed for different reasons. The Maasai in no way wanting to eradicate wildlife, but wanted to continue to exist as they had before the Reserve, using natural resources and grazing cattle. These are the places where their memories and stories originated. The Kenyan Game Department and the Royal Kenyan National Parks wanted a permanent barrier between

⁶⁹ James Kupere, interview, Amboseli Tsavo Game Scouts Association.

people and wildlife. This not only fit Western notions of nature, but also the colony's goals of becoming profitable and self-sustaining.

Colonial Governance of Amboseli

Empire-wide policies and legislation regarding national parks and reserves were initially established by the 1933 Convention Relative to the Preservation of Fauna and Flora in their Natural State, the London Convention for short, where many European and some African nations and colonies established an understanding of what national parks and other protected areas (PA) should represent.⁷⁰ In Kenya, a dual system of wildlife management oversaw land within PAs and outside them separately. The Royal Kenyan National Parks was responsible for running national parks and reserves and protecting the wildlife within. In a colonial Kenyan national park, "the rights and interests of the wild animals take precedence over every other consideration, such areas being set aside for the primary purpose of conserving wild life."⁷¹ In 1952, with the passage of the Wild Animals Protection Ordinance (1951), the Game Department was set up to protect wildlife in the areas outside PAs. Managing human-wildlife conflict, for the Game Department was a challenging endeavor to find a balance between wildlife and people. In the Annual Report for that year, W.H. Hale, the Chief Game Warden wrote that:

The Southern Game Reserve that has existed since time immemorial was abolished. But the whole of the Masai Extra-Provincial District was declared a Controlled Area and very extensive restrictions imposed. Capt. Zaphiro [Warden of Kajiado District] discusses the matter at length in his report...Kamba poachers roamed at large and often drastic control measures have had to be taken in the past to protect the interests of the Masai. Ranchers are now stationed at Narok and Kajiado, and by taking mild measures from time to time

⁷⁰ John M. MacKenzie, *The Empire of Nature: Hunting, Conservation, and British Imperialism* (Manchester University Press, 1988), 200-224.

⁷¹ Adams, *Against Extinction*.

can keep the balance between the interest of the Masai and the wild life.⁷²

The structure of protected areas in colonial Kenya was an attempt to delineate certain areas for wildlife protection, but because of the split responsibilities of the National Parks and Game Department, policies were often inconsistent and inefficient, a legacy carried over to independence. The colonial definition of a national park, established under the National Parks ordinance of 1945, was that the Royal National Parks' Board of Trustees had "full power over all human activities and forms of land use as well as fauna matters," as the Assistant Game Warden M.S. Sandeman wrote in a letter to the Chief Game Warden of Tanganyika in 1961. No one was allowed to enter without a permit, or without paying an entry fee. National Reserves were similarly set up under the National Parks Ordinance. In these spaces, no wild animals can be killed without permission of the Trustees, but the Trustees have no power over the human inhabitants of these areas, only with regard to tourism. Sandeman remarked that these were a failure in Kenya, with overpopulation and overgrazing. Game Reserves, predating the establishment of National Reserves were overseen by the Chief Game Warden, and hunting was allowed, but controlled. There was no control over the human inhabitants of the Reserves. Local sanctuaries were smaller, less than ten square miles, protecting a particular site or species, but none were in existence in Kenya in 1961. Controlled areas were sites where people could hunt by permit, similar to Game Reserves, but were not under Reserve status. Theoretically, hunting could be managed without having to go through the process of transferring land to the government. Amboseli was a Game Reserve, thus hunting was allowed by permit and was run by the Royal National Parks, though people who lived there were under their own form of local

⁷² *Game Department Annual Report* (Colony and Protectorate of Kenya, 1952), 8.

governance.⁷³ Although these categories seemed to carefully delineate responsibilities, human-wildlife conflict, natural resource management, and development were difficult to do well.

Since the creation of the Maasai Southern Reserve⁷⁴, the physical space of what is now considered the Amboseli Ecosystem (see Figure 2), as colonial notions of proper hunting changed and as the state took a greater interest in pastoralists. In the 1950s, the memory of the relocation of the Maasai to the Southern Reserve was still prevalent in the consciousness of the colonial state. The Maasai feared another loss of land because of the increasing involvement with the Maasai in terms of livestock development and negotiating the shared space between them and wildlife. These fears were not unfounded. The Kenyan government's conservation agenda was part of a colonial and international focus upon wildlife preservation and environmental management.⁷⁵ Part of the British plan for protecting Kenya's wildlife was to convince Africans of the necessity and good of coexistence. Governor Evelyn Baring reminded the Game Policy Committee, the Royal National Parks, and other ministries invested in the Maasai, wildlife, or Kenya's development that they had to find ways to impress upon their subjects a sense of the importance of conservation. In 1957, he explained he wanted, "to bring the Masai gradually to an

⁷³ "Administration of Game Laws," 1967 1955, KW/1/17, KNA, "Faunal Sanctuaries: Kenya" May 12, 1961, Sandeman's explanation to the Chief Game Warden in Dar es Salaam who was seeking information in establishing ADC control over PAs in Tanganyika.

⁷⁴ See "Introduction" for discussion of the creation of the Southern Reserve.

⁷⁵ For a few examples of colonial concerns of environmental degradation beyond East Africa see Arun Agrawal, *Environmentality: Technologies of Government and the Making of Subjects*, New Ecologies for the Twenty-First Century (Durham: Duke University Press, 2005); Kate Showers, *Imperial Gullies: Soil Erosion and Conservation in Lesotho*, 1st ed. (Ohio University Press, 2005); Richard Grove, *Green Imperialism: Colonial Expansion, Tropical Island Edens, and the Origins of Environmentalism, 1600-1860* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1995); Richard Grove, *Ecology, Climate and Empire: Colonialism and Global Environmental History, 1400-1940* (Knapwell, Cambridge, UK: White Horse Press, 1997).

attitude of mind of thinking that game is to their advantage rather than to their disadvantage.”⁷⁶

Baring took a very hands-on approach to conservation in the Maasai areas, wanting to both protect wild game but also respect the land rights of the Maasai. He was one of the few Kenyan heads of state who took an active role in finding a solution to natural resource management that did not diminish the livelihoods of those who lived with PAs in their midst.⁷⁷

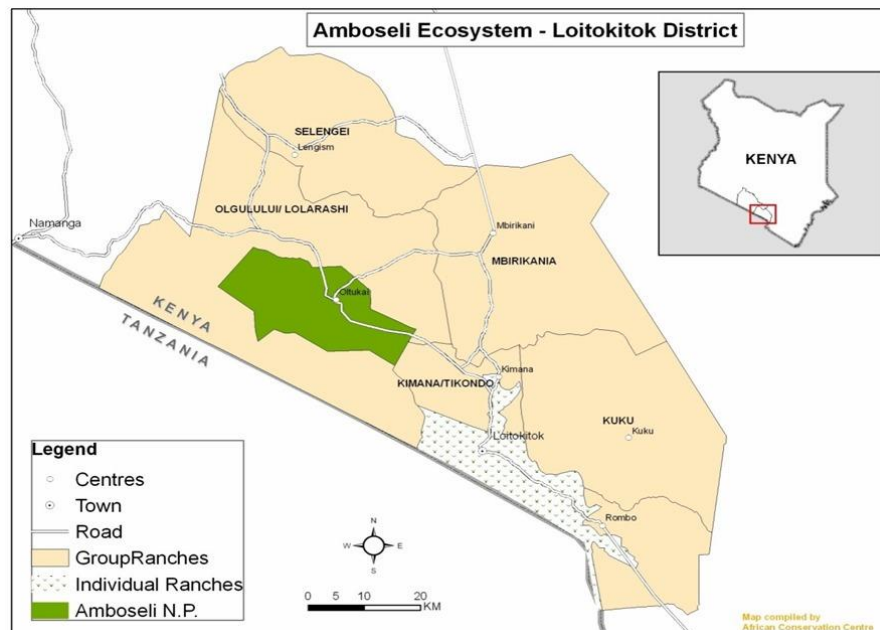


Figure 2. Map of Amboseli Ecosystem. From the “Amboseli Ecosystem Management Plan 2008-2018”.

Lekanayia Ole Parseleu, an elder living in Loitokitok, recalled this time in Amboseli. He said Baring wrote a letter, sending it to Lenku Ole Mpaa, the Senior Chief in Kajiado District during the 1950s and 1960s, stating the government would not take Ol Tukai from the Maasai.

⁷⁶ “Amboseli Water Project,” KL/7/8, KNA, “Record of a meeting held at Government House on Tuesday, February 19th, 1957, to discuss problems connected with the preservation of game in the Amboseli and Mara areas”.

⁷⁷ This is ironic, given that during this time, he was involved in suppressing Mau Mau with harsh, dehumanizing tactics. See David Anderson, *Histories of the Hanged: The Dirty War in Kenya and the End of Empire* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2005); Caroline Elkins, *Imperial Reckoning: The Untold Story of Britain’s Gulag in Kenya* (New York: Henry Holt, 2005).

Ole Mpaa was remembered as generous chief and a peacemaker. He was an effective mediator between the government and the Ilkisongo and between the Maasai themselves. With the letter in the hands of Ole Mpaa, people felt a bit of security; at least they would have something with which to negotiate.⁷⁸

Baring's letter signified the complicated, often double-sided state interest in the Maasai and Amboseli. Although he committed himself to keeping grazing rights open, others in Nairobi had their own plans. Grazing rights included access to the swamps within the Reserve, and was largely a self-regulating system before the government stepped with "development" and formalized the *de facto* grazing system. Colonial practices toward PAs and wildlife in Kenya were a combination of empire-wide trends and policies and Kenya-specific issues, such as balancing white settler agendas with African development. There was already a global shift toward establishing national parks and reserves, and Kenya was an active participant in bringing biologically diverse landscapes under the management of the colonial government.

It became apparent to Maasai elders that more and more white people were coming to Amboseli and that they were paying large amounts of money to do so. However, they saw none of this wealth in the form of cash or kind. Mervyn Cowie, Director of the National Parks,

⁷⁸ Lekanayia Ole Parselu, June 18, 2013; Lengu Ole Mpaa and Sopyioi Ole Mpaa, June 17, 2013; first son of Ole Lenku, September 12, 2013. My initial visit to Eselenkei Group Ranch where Ole Mpaa lived with his family necessitates some explanation. At the time of my visit, the mzee was reportedly about 114 years old and unable to carry on a conversation. The family still wanted to tell me about the elderly man, so his third wife, Sopyioi told me about his life while in the room with Ole Mpaa. He would only speak to his wife, but knew there were visitors in the room. He asked if we were staying the night, and if we were, had they brought in a goat for us to eat? His generosity in his old age fit other descriptions I had from many people about his character. He died in January 2015, which was remarked in newspapers not because of his history as a local Maasai leader, but because one of his sons served as President Uhuru Kenyatta's Minister of Internal Security during the Westgate Mall attack (September 2013). "President Uhuru Kenyatta Mourns Joseph Ole Lenku's Father," *Standard Digital News*, accessed July 18, 2015, <http://www.standardmedia.co.ke/article/2000146793/president-uhuru-kenyatta-mourns-joseph-ole-lenku-s-father>.

convened a meeting with Major W. H. M. Taberer, the warden of Amboseli, and Amboseli elders to discuss the imbalance of revenue coming from tourists. The conclusion was that a portion of the revenues would be handed over to the elders for disbursement. It was not much, more a token of good will. David Lovatt Smith, an assistant warden in Amboseli in the 1950s and 1960s who wrote a memoir of his involvement in conservation, presented this as a benevolent act on the part of this particular group of men, but it was already a part of a more comprehensive move toward "Africanizing" the Kenyan government and natural resource management.⁷⁹

In 1961, the colonial government handed over control of many reserves to African District Councils. For Amboseli, this meant the Kajiado African District Council (KADC) became the governing body overseeing most aspects of the Reserve, from tourism to maintenance of roads. Not everyone looked upon this "Africanization" favorably, but as it was part of a Native Land Unit, there were limited options available to the government. This new set up was not established in any law or government statute but was a way to try to elicit local support for game preservation. They were somewhat successful in that revenue was going to the ADCs for use in local infrastructure. The ADCs set up grazing schemes, hired game wardens and staff, oversaw entry fees, and managed agriculture. At the same time, wild game was ultimately under the management of the Game Department and national management policies. This created tension between the local and national governments, each having differing conceptualizations of the purpose of these PAs. Chief Game Warden I.R.M. Grimwood was concerned that there was not enough land set apart for wildlife preservation, stating that:

In Kenya the Parks are totally inadequate in both size and number - only the Tsavo... and Nairobi park, which is too small to stand on its feet, are of real faunal significance - and between them they cover but few of the typical species and habitats of the country. Other

⁷⁹ David Lovatt Smith, *Amboseli: A Miracle Too Far?* (Mawenzi Books, 2008), 56.

National Parks cannot be proclaimed, because nearly all the good game areas already been allocated as tribal reserves. The only hope, therefore, is to persuade the occupiers of these reserves themselves to set aside part of their land as game reserves, and to make it worth their while to do so.⁸⁰

In theory, the ADCs benefited from tourism revenue and hunting fees, but if local public opinion supported it, it was better for the National Park Trustees to run a reserve as they had better skills. When good will and support were not there, ADC's were the better option, Grimwood believed. The KADC was eager to take on this task.

By 1961, *uhuru*, or independence, had not yet come, but the government took actions to start the process of handing over aspects of governing early, and land issues was one of them. Discussions of Amboseli centered on the ability of the Reserve to generate revenue from tourism, although day to day management would fall to the KADC, soon to become the Kajiado County Council (KCC) at independence. The handing over of the Reserve to the control of the KADC looked like an attempt at community-oriented conservation. They were tasked with governing the land and wildlife in trust of the people who lived there. However, the KADC was not equipped with natural resource management or hospitality skills. Once Amboseli became the ward of the KADC, its maintenance declined, poaching became more of a problem, and it appeared that cattle grazing was keeping wildlife away and destroying the environment.⁸¹

Amboseli was renamed the Masai Amboseli Game Reserve, and the KADC put together a Game committee that was to be in charge of wildlife management. It was made up of council members, local chiefs, the Kajiado District Warden, and the Reserve Warden. This committee

⁸⁰ "Administration of Game Laws," 1955-1967, KW/1/17, KNA, Grimwood correspondence to B.G. Kinlock, Chief Game Warden, Dar es Salaam, January 3, 1963.

⁸¹ Smith, *Amboseli: A Miracle Too Far?*, 171. Smith was particularly despondent about the KADC's authority over Amboseli Reserve, stating that it sent Amboseli on its "slippery slope towards extinction, a slope on which it is still sliding."

lasted until 1963 at the point of Kenya's independent General Election. It approved the exclusion of livestock from the 30 square mile sanctuary around Ol Tukai, though this was not observed in practicality, nor fully implemented. The Game Committee was persuaded that overgrazing was damaging the area and competing with wildlife.⁸²

For Warden Taberer, the changes of 1961 meant more responsibilities. He arrived in 1951 when the Reserve was almost 1,300 square miles and was the first warden to begin implementing new policies of wildlife management in Amboseli. He worked closely with his assistant Warden David Lovatt Smith and African rangers to monitor the Reserve, keeping poachers at bay and mitigating human-wildlife conflict. Smith recalled that they tried to work closely with the Maasai community, listening to their concerns and conveying them to policy makers.⁸³ They consulted prominent men in the Amboseli area, such as Lenku Ole Mpaa and elders of his age set. However, now he had to work for the KADC. Not only was Amboseli's status changing from a National Reserve to a Game Reserve, but the areas surrounding the reserve were now controlled areas. These were dual purpose lands, and Taberer had to report to the Game Department the revenue collected and the number of poached and hunted wildlife. This was a rather difficult task to take on, given that the KADC's record keeping was erratic. Taberer had been working as Amboseli Warden for many years, but this proved to be the time for him to step aside. He felt he could no longer continue to work as warden. The stresses of the transition affected his health and in February 1962, he submitted his resignation to the KADC, promising to work for another three months to allow them to find his replacement. He said that he regretted:

⁸² "Administration of Game Laws," 1961-1968, KW/1/21, KNA, 118.

⁸³ David Lovatt Smith, *Amboseli: A Miracle Too Far?*, 32-36, 41.

That the stage has been reached in the management of Amboseli where I can no longer continue as Warden. The changes in the methods and systems of control are so profound as compared with the period of administration by the Royal National Parks of Kenya that I find I cannot adjust myself to them with the result the strains and worries are not doing my health any good...I would like it to remain on record that I value greatly the splendid cooperation and support I have always receive from the Masai in all aspects of my endeavors to create the Amboseli Game Reserve into an asset of International importance.⁸⁴

Once control of Amboseli and other reserves shifted to ADCs, the reputation for their appeal to tourists diminished. German tour operators notified Tanganyikan game officials that they would no longer be taking tourists to African District Council Game Reserves in Kenya. Tourists usually landed in the colony and traveled on a circuit of safaris between Kenya and Tanganyika. They thought they were badly run and not enjoyable places for tourists to stay. Reports circulated about broken and untended infrastructure and uncut grass in Amboseli, making the appearance disheveled. However, Chief Warden Grimwood argued that, "Amboseli lodge may have gone down-hill immediately after being taken over by the ADC. The reason was that the Parks Warden went over with the Reserve on secondment for an initial period of six months. To put it kindly, he was too old to take to new ways and let things slide badly. Since he has gone and the ADC have employed their own warden, things have been going as well, if not better, than before."⁸⁵ Unfortunately, Grimwood was premature in his assessment of the KADC's ability to manage the Amboseli Game Reserve.

Amboseli at Independence - Kajiado and the Nation

There were competing interests - local, national, and international - as well as political

⁸⁴ "Administration of Game Laws," 1961-1968, KW/1/21, KNA, Correspondence between Taberer, Grimwood, and KADC, November 2, 1961 to January 28, 1962.

⁸⁵ "Administration of Game Laws," 1955-1967, KW/1/17, KNA, Grimwood to Kinloch, January 3, 1963.

complications including jurisdiction and who were the responsible entities. Among the various ministries, civil servants searched for clear answers or made their own way forward regarding who decided what, but land was always a contentious issue. It took years to determine legal control over the 30 square mile area around the swamps of Ol Tukai. The politically ambitious assumed a course and walked forward; others sought bureaucratic affirmation.

Amboseli's location between Nairobi and Northern Tanzania's parks, such as Arusha and Ngorongoro Crater, was a stopping point for tourists on an East African safari circuit. As Kenya approached independence, many sought a way to accrue revenue through tourism. President Jomo Kenyatta encouraged *harambee*, to bring the new nation to full development, utilizing the nation's resources, human and natural.⁸⁶ For Amboseli, this meant maximizing tourist potential. Not only would the nation as a whole benefit, so too, the government said, would local people. This declaration made it appear as if they would get direct payment from Reserve revenue and tourist income. But Amboseli was a 'bottleneck', having too few beds to support the number of tourists arriving in Kenya. Tour operators begged the government to remedy this problem. Investors pursued the KADC with offers, but the *bandas*, thatch-roof huts with beds, were not enough to suit the needs of the tourist market. The KADC did not want to put their own money towards expansion, but wanted the returns of someone else investing in lodge development and construction. Amboseli was beloved by tourists. To miss the Reserve because of lack of accommodation was hugely disappointing and the government missed out on significant revenue. Tour agencies sought the opportunity to help build facilities in Ol Tukai, a prime wildlife viewing area. From this point, visitors could see elephants and the herds of zebra and wildebeest taking in the water. During certain months, they could have unobstructed views of Mt.

⁸⁶ Charles Hornsby, *Kenya: A History Since Independence* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2012), 84, 138-139.

Kilimanjaro, snow-capped and magnificent, but they would only come if there was enough space for them to be able to return to a warm meal, hot bath, and a mosquito-netted bed in the evening. Ker & Downy, one of the largest tour operators in East Africa invested in Amboseli, but this relationship was fraught with tension for many years. Visitors complained of the presence of Maasai cattle in the swamps, where they preferred and paid to see, and wildlife. The Amboseli Lodge General Manager told the council to make sure the cattle were out of the sanctuary or they would be forced to terminate the lease. Tourists did not want to see cattle there.⁸⁷

The reality of the financial distribution was far from the hoped for revenue for the local community. Locals complained of not seeing direct benefits of the Reserve, as schools, clinics, or other development was slow in coming. Tour operators were the big winners when it came to financial benefit from tourism, even after fees were paid. In 1963, when Ker & Downy threatened to pull out their business over the continued presence of cattle in the Reserve, the KCC, the new name at transition, pleaded with them to stay. The KCC asked for a month, at which time they would have a new set of board members and would determine the issue of restricting cattle in Ol Tukai. The District Commissioner, pleading with Ker & Downy, said that it is only a few Maasai who were disrupting tourism in Ol Tukai, and the majority was in favor of preserving the area for wildlife purposes. Convinced their wishes would be carried out, Ker & Downy agreed to stay. Even the District Commissioner, A.B. Simpson questioned the KCC's ability to oversee the day to day running of any facility. They lacked the knowledge for tourism hospitality and the running of the business. Simpson recognized the tension between the leasing of land in Amboseli and the sovereignty it had over the Trust Land. It would be dangerous, he suggested, taking away the entire Reserve from the council, and thus limiting the control and use

⁸⁷ KNA, KL/7/9, "Masai Amboseli Game Reserve," 1961-1970.

of land by local authority. By 1963, the KCC's efforts at running the Reserve came under government scrutiny. The KCC accounting books did not add up, and some money was being allocated to inappropriate purposes.⁸⁸ Ministry of Information, Broadcasting, and Telecommunications supported the development of the tourism industry. For Amboseli, they offered to build the pipes for swamp water to be taken out of Ol Tukai. The Ministry of Information, Broadcasting, and Tourism, worried that:

...Amboseli as the most important tourist area, will be 'dead' in the course of the next two years or so. Whether or not this pessimistic view is shared by your game experts, it is obvious to us, and from a purely tourist point of view, that the fame of Amboseli is decreasing at an alarming rate. More tourists are being sent to Tsavo as opposed to Amboseli.”⁸⁹

The issue of cattle grazing in Amboseli swamps was difficult to resolve. Although Ker & Downy's contribution to the KCC coffers may have been more than the livestock market or business fees, the tour company did not elect them. The people did. The Maasai did not want to be pushed from the swamps. Besides, they saw little revenue themselves, and tourists were an anomaly in the landscape. The Maasai argued they had always co-existed with wildlife, their livelihoods being connected on a seasonal cycle with wildlife. The KCC, nevertheless, promised Ker & Downy that the cattle would be removed from Ol Tukai. Still within the larger 200 square mile Reserve, the limit was set at 7000 head of cattle, a number reached by local elders' deliberation with the Game Department.⁹⁰

Other districts of Kenya looked at Kajiado's revenue from Amboseli and wanted to find a

⁸⁸ KNA, KL/7/9, “Masai Amboseli Game Reserve,” 1961-1970.

⁸⁹ KNA, KL/7/9, “Masai Amboseli Game Reserve,” 1961-1970. W. Mugoro, Ministry for Information, Broadcasting, and Tourism to Ministry of Natural Resources, May 5, 1964.

⁹⁰ KNA, KL/7/9, “Masai Amboseli Game Reserve,” 1961-1970. “House of Representatives Question No. 2340” August 4, 1965.

way to benefit from tourism. Although it was limited to Maasailand and Samburu, where reserves were turned over to local authorities, other districts wanted their share. Before Parliament, an MP from Machakos, north of Amboseli suggested that wild animals spread disease to cattle, hindering the development of the livestock industry, and that the wildlife eat grass that should otherwise be going to cattle. Therefore what was the point of national parks? He asked this question of Amboseli, "Is it true that the Minister has decided to declare Amboseli Game Reserve a National Park whether the Masai people agree or not?" Ayodo responded with scientific explanations, pointing research in progress regarding disease transfer, but that it is "pure emotionalism" to suggest that wildlife/cattle disease transfer is a major problem. Furthermore, wildlife and cattle do not graze at the same "herbage" niche, and the two have co-existed naturally for a long time. Concluding, he said that national parks can only be established after "consultation with the competent authority," which in this case was the KCC. He did not directly answer the last question regarding consent by the local people at large, but that the KCC was acting as representatives for them. No one on the KCC was in favor of gazetting Amboseli as a National Park at this point.⁹¹

Machakos wanted to have the same benefit from Tsavo, and their M.P. made this demand in Parliament, asking for 90% of revenues from Tsavo National Park. Mervyn Cowie replied that Kajiado receives revenue from Amboseli, but this is primarily a result of historical processes, not being a national park. Tsavo was a national park under the Royal National Parks of the Kenya colony and transferred to Kenya National Parks at independence. Amboseli was still locally

⁹¹ KNA, KL/7/9, "Masai Amboseli Game Reserve," 1961-1970, "House of Representatives Question No, 414.

managed.⁹²

An important argument that emerged from this exchange is who "owns" a national park. Cowie said the Trustees of the Kenya National Parks were the representative overseers, but the land was owned by the State, and thus the people of Kenya as a whole. Furthermore, "At no time has any particular tribe 'owned' any part of the Tsavo Park, though claims have been made from time to time."⁹³ Ayodo followed up the questioning in Parliament by recognizing the need for local people to benefit from wildlife and protected areas. Perhaps something could be done for those living around Tsavo. The M.P. for Machakos asked why Tsavo was so large and could not some of it be set aside for agriculture for the areas original owners - Kamba, Taita, Maasai, and Giriama? This debate highlights the indigenous issues that Kenya did not want to address at a time when forging national unity was essential, and fears of "tribalism" were rampant. Kenyans recognized the inequalities of living near a national park. Decentralization would have given more revenue to people, perhaps, but it did not fit the government's policy of creating national parks for wildlife preservation and economic development.⁹⁴

When the KCC needed a push, the government argued the council was anti-conservation. They pointed to the backwardness of the Maasai who did not understand the potential revenue in tourism. These arguments never reflected the reality that little money ever trickled down to the local families. Chief Game Warden Grimwood argued that since wildlife are the property of the

⁹² KNA, KL/7/9, "Masai Amboseli Game Reserve," 1961-1970, "House of Representatives Question No. 2340" August 4, 1965.

⁹³ KNA, KL/7/9, "Masai Amboseli Game Reserve," 1961-1970, "House of Representatives Question No. 2340" August 4, 1965.

⁹⁴ KNA, KL/7/9, "Masai Amboseli Game Reserve," 1961-1970, "House of Representatives Question No. 2340" August 4, 1965.

national government, it was up to the Maasai to take the long view. Local people and their representatives were short-sighted, to the detriment of wildlife and economy. These questions were even debated in the House of Representatives. Wildlife was property of the government because wild animals knew no boundaries. Some in the government argued there should be compensation for death and damages from wildlife. The reply was that the money would be misused and the disbursement process could be corrupted by local authorities. This is the same argument Leakey used in his memoir reflecting on his time as director of the Kenya Wildlife Service in the 1980s.⁹⁵

Over the next few years, the contentious issues related to developing Amboseli's tourist potential shifted to water and who would pay for it. In Amboseli, the water table is typically high, very close to the surface. It is common to see people digging open wells in low lying areas. At only a couple of meters down, they hit water.⁹⁶ The KCC set aside a thirty square mile "sanctuary" or perimeter around the Ol Tukai swamps. This was a compromise between parties, but one that still banned the Maasai from the best dry season water. Standing between the local people and national interests was not an easy task for the KCC. They were obviously tempted by the potential revenue from tourism, but without the support of their constituents, they would be ousted from office. Stanley Oloiptip understood this, and stood with the Maasai, at least early in the debates over Amboseli's future. Oloiptip was a Maasai politician from Kajiado who served in various capacities throughout his career, including M.P. for Kajiado and the Minister of

⁹⁵ KNA, KL/7/9, "Masai Amboseli Game Reserve," 1961-1970, "House of Representatives Question No. 2340" August 4, 1965; Richard E Leakey and Virginia Morell, *Wildlife Wars: My Fight to Save Africa's Natural Treasures* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2002).

⁹⁶ Personal observations.

Education. He was politicized by his experience serving in the army in World War II and during his time as an *askari* fighting against Mau Mau. He saw himself as a Kenyan fighting against his countrymen, and was part of the political movements for independence. Although he was not educated, he rose to high level politics; his friendship with Jomo Kenyatta gave him social and political capital both in Nairobi and at home in Kajiado.⁹⁷ Oloiptip argued that the evidence of co-existence between the Maasai and livestock proved the ability to have dual-use sanctuaries. However, the government urged development and wildlife and natural resource preservation. Continued grazing where wildlife also grazed would damage the environment, and consequently, the tourism sector.⁹⁸ The national government wanted the cattle out, but to do this, the Maasai needed permanent water elsewhere.

The Game Department pledged £25,000 in improvements if the Maasai would agree to restrict their cattle from Ol Tukai. This was backed up by a private investor as long as the KCC agreed to a ten year lease, and at the end of the lease, all improvements would revert to the KCC. The company also offered to contribute £10,000 toward the water piping project. The offer would be withdrawn if cattle reentered Ol Tukai. The government did not want this. In fact, Grimwood thought the KCC and Game Committee, a sub-group of the KCC, agreed to exclude cattle, not only from the 30 square miles of Ol Tukai, but the entire 200 square mile Reserve in 1962. This kept investment offers on the table. If people were reneging and only agreeing to Ol Tukai, the offers might fall through. By May 1964, the game changed again, hinging on the election of a new council. The Game Committee, charged with making a final decision, wanted to wait for the new councilmen who would be the ones responsible for any updated agreement.

⁹⁷ Koikai Oloiptip, interview.

⁹⁸ KNA, KL/7/8, “Amboseli Water Project”.

This was to happen in June. It seems this meeting was confused by the presence of Stanley Oloiptip, who was not a member of the KCC but rather a Minister of Parliament, hoping to prevent cattle exclusion. He was only supposed to be an observer, but voiced his opposition to excluding cattle without water and the possibility of a presidential decree making Amboseli a national park, throwing the Committee into confusion. Grimwood was frustrated that negotiations were stalled again.⁹⁹

In order to get cattle out of Ol Tukai and give them the promised water, the Ministry of Tourism and Wildlife discussed with the KCC the possibility of providing boreholes, but not piped water for Maasai cattle. The Game Department was trying to get the Game Committee to stand up to Oloiptip, but the Ministry of Tourism and Wildlife interfered with their own plans. Grimwood complained that the two institutions needed to have the same plan in Amboseli, which was that all the negotiations were not necessary. The president had constitutional authority to decree national parks.

Then Oloiptip raised the demands even higher. Not only was piped water required, but irrigation schemes needed funding. Furthermore, the government had to eradicate tsetse flies and East Coast Fever throughout the district. For his personal benefit, he wanted the Ilmatapato and Ilkaputiei Maasai to cede 100 square miles to the Ilkisongo.¹⁰⁰ Simultaneously, he demanded concessions be conducted before the Maasai would abandon the 200 square mile Reserve. He was trying to get more land for the Ilkisongo since he knew land adjudication was not far in the future. Land adjudication was the process of creating group ranches on which the Maasai would

⁹⁹ KNA, KL/7/9, "Masai Amboseli Game Reserve," 1961-1970, Grimwood to Permanent Secretary of Natural Resources, May 21, 1964.

¹⁰⁰ KNA, KL/7/9, "Masai Amboseli Game Reserve," 1961-1970, Grimwood to Permanent Secretary of Natural Resources, May 21, 1964.

live and hold a collective title to the land.¹⁰¹ "On one hand, for the interest of Kenya's economy, wild game, although they have been destructive to both human and domestic life, out to be given enough area for expansion and free from poaching and molestation and, on the other hand, this goal should not be achieved at the expense of human beings," Oloiptip wrote in the letter to the MIBT. The Ilkisongo, he argued, had grazed for centuries with the wildlife in Amboseli because of the water, grass, and salt during drought, as the "survival place for all Masai of Kajiado District in time of hardship."¹⁰² If they want to limit the cattle to 7000 in the 200 square mile Reserve, then the government needed to fulfill his requirements. The oddest part of his demand was for the ceding of land by the Ilmatapato and Ilkaputiei. This was to be in the region of Osilalei, Angata-Ongish, Remito, and Oltemwas, which were very dry areas, thus did not have enough grass and water for the Ilkisongo in that area. Furthermore, he argued, the Ilkisongo were recognizing the need to "settle down" as Kenya modernized. With permanent settlement in their future, water was to be the main issue allowing them to do this in the dry areas.

Oloiptip's involvement was used as an advantage by the national government. Mugoro, from MIBT, urged that:

It is considered essential for the benefit of the Maasai, game preservation, and tourism that the game sanctuary should be extended to 200 square miles as soon as possible...Amboseli belongs to the Masai and we have not in any way indicated that we are forcing the Masai to move out. All we have done is impress upon the Kajiado County Council the importance of Amboseli and the urgent need to extend the area. All the financial returns will go to the Council although, admittedly if Amboseli ceases to exist the tourist industry in general will be affected considerably.... Without in any way whatsoever minimizing the importance of the points raised by Hon. Oloiptip, I wonder

¹⁰¹ Discussed in detail in Chapter 5.

¹⁰² KNA, KL/7/9, "Masai Amboseli Game Reserve," 1961-1970, Oloiptip to MIBT, April 23, 1964.

whether we should pursue this issue in full consultation with the County Council as we have been doing or by-pass the Council and work in direct consultation with Mr. Oloiptip and the electorate and by so doing only consult the Council where and when necessary...Under the circumstances it is recommended that Mr. Oloiptip's views should be born in mind when we come to discuss the water scheme. Amboseli as tourist focus should have a higher priority than any other development in Kajiado County. Those other developments require a long time to plan and thus they have to rank low in priority.¹⁰³

Mugoro's comments reflect the national agenda regarding Amboseli's importance to the nation.

As the nation developed, all Kenyan people had to make their contribution. For Amboseli's Maasai and the Kajiado County Council, this meant saving wildlife, setting aside a portion for tourism, and shifting their pastoralist habits to suit a modernizing nation. Francis Ole Legis, the Chairman of the KCC, told the MIBT that Oloiptip did not speak for the council. He was not an elected representative at that level. He was pushing his own political agenda to get land.

Oloiptip and Ole Legis even had a physical fight over his role in gazettelement. Ole Legis said he spoke for the Maasai of Amboseli as their local elected county council chairman, and Oloiptip must have something to gain.¹⁰⁴ Still, all parties had to be of the same mind and plan. Continued miscommunication and assumptions needed resolving. They all needed to be in the same room.

In July 1964, the various institutions with an interest in Amboseli, including local government, MIBT, Water Development, and the KCC's Game Committee met in Kajiado town to come to an agreement regarding Amboseli (See Figure 3). The agenda centered around the eminent collapse and denigration of Amboseli's environment if agreements were not finalized. The *East African Standard* reported that the interested parties met to determine the best way to conserve Amboseli. On July 22, the author emphasized that if the Maasai continued to graze

¹⁰³ KNA, KL/7/9, "Masai Amboseli Game Reserve," 1961-1970, Mugori to Minister of Natural Resources, May 5, 1964.

¹⁰⁴ "Masai Amboseli Game Reserve," 1961-1970, KL/7/9 KNA, Legis to MIBT, May 7, 1964; Francis Ole Legis, June 10, 2013.

there, Amboseli's wildlife will die and tourists who come to Kenya to see Amboseli will stop coming, and Kenya will lose revenue, continuing on a path of underdevelopment.¹⁰⁵ In an undated response to the report, another journalist recorded Oloiptip's reaction: "The Masai would do all they could to protect wild life, but not at the expense of human beings. Mr. Oloiptip assured that not one more inch of Masailand would be taken for game purposes, unless all the Masai were dead."¹⁰⁶ Oloiptip's reversals on the Maasai agenda did not help negotiations. No policies changed after this meeting, and the water issues and tourism revenue problem continued as the various institutions continued in gridlock.

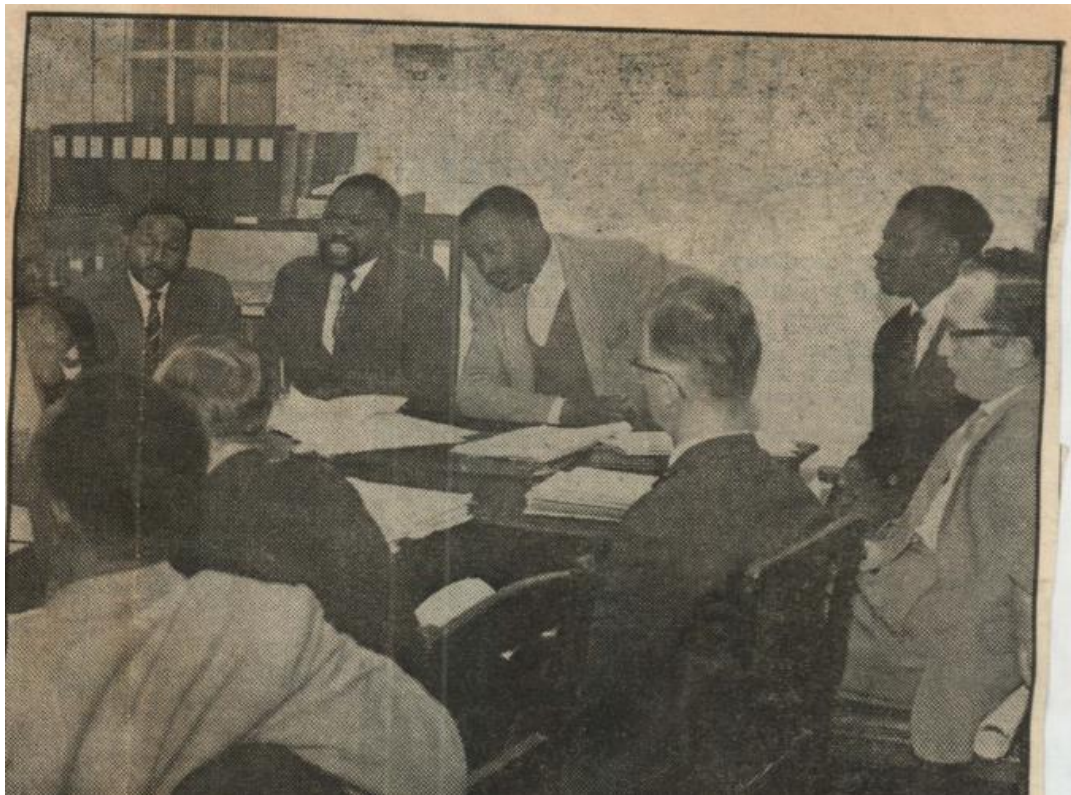


Figure 3. Game Committee, *East African Standard*, July 22, 1964.

¹⁰⁵ "Masai Warned on Grazing in Areas Kept for Game," *East African Standard*, July 22, 1964.

¹⁰⁶ KNA, KL/7/9, "Masai Amboseli Game Reserve," 1961-1970, Mugoro Memo 11/2/3/97; David Western, *In the Dust of Kilimanjaro* (Washington DC: Island Press, 2002).

Gazettement, Land Adjudication, and the Kajiado County Council

Daniel Sindiyo, who had been Amboseli's warden since 1965, always felt that any goals in wildlife and ecological conservation had to be agreed upon by the local people, not just the members of the KCC. It was not the council that really spoke for the common people, even though they were elected, but rather their elders, chosen according to custom, because they showed particular traits desired in responsible leadership. These were not necessarily the characteristics of those who worked for the County Council. Only at a *baraza* could real consensus be reached and hearts and mind turn toward a particular goal. Although the KCC formally passed a resolution acknowledging that 200 square miles were going to be set apart in 1967, locally, this found little favor with those claiming residency within that area. Once Sindiyo set up the Game Committee, under the auspices of the KCC, perceptions of the resolution began to turn. The members were elected and chosen elders of the people, giving more authority to decisions regarding land use. It would be these people who would shape the opinion of the people whose lives would be most affected by the setting apart. If they thought this was a bad idea, then the whole thing would fall through. Only a direct presidential decree would resolve the issue. The Game Committee resolved that they would consent to the setting apart if there was a sufficient plan to establish watering points along the periphery of the reserve and if cattle dips were set up. Some of these men consulted with him on how local people would be willing to work with the plans to protect Amboseli and what would sufficiently support their lifestyle and livestock.¹⁰⁷

The New York Zoological Society (NYZS) had a practice of assisting the establishment

¹⁰⁷ KNA, KL/7/9, "Masai Amboseli Game Reserve," 1961-1970, Sindiyo memo "Masai Amboseli Game Reserve", October 14, 1969.

of national parks in East Africa. Amboseli was an obvious site to focus funds for gazettelement. The NYZS President wrote that, "There is no question that if this new National Park is established, it will prove one of the most interesting, beautiful and valuable parks in East Africa as a means of protecting the remarkable fauna in that region and at the same time becoming a notable tourist attraction with the income from tourism that would be gained by the Kenya Government."¹⁰⁸ In the minds of many Americans and Europeans, creating national parks based on the American model was the only way to protect the environment.

In 1967, The MTW discussed moving Amboseli under the control of Kenya National Parks, which oversaw only national parks; reserves were under the Game Department. This would inherently change the status of Amboseli. Because NYZS put up £90,000 for the development of the Amboseli Water Project, the national government had a stronger bargaining chip with which to press forward. Now the plan went beyond the 200 square mile cattle-free zone to include a 400 square mile perimeter that would be managed to rotate cattle grazing, preventing overlap with migrating animals. No one mentioned that the wildlife arrived at the same time the Maasai wanted to bring their cattle - during the dry season.¹⁰⁹ The NYZS's participation in the setting apart process was not welcomed by local people, still being left out of negotiations or at least notified of their future. The KCC and MTW still went in circles regarding conditions that needed to be met before funds were disbursed from NYZS. The KCC wanted the money released before they would remove people from Ol Tukai, and the NYZS wanted the people out before handing the money over. This was not a simple matter of one side taking the

¹⁰⁸ "Masai Amboseli Game Reserve," 1961-1970, KL/7/9, KNA, Correspondence May 26, 1965.

¹⁰⁹ "Masai Amboseli Game Reserve," 1961-1970, KL/7/9, KNA, "Olkejuado Council Delegation".

first step. The process of setting up group ranches was about to begin, making resettlement of those in Ol Tukai a problem no one knew just how to address legally. To which group ranch would they belong, since they migrated through and may be far from other families? Will they just go to the closest group ranch? They may not consider that home, and those already there would have to make room for them.¹¹⁰

The Game Committee called a *baraza* on October 12, 1968, but the results were not favorable for the plans that were already set into place. Sindiyo recalled this event. Although the *baraza* is supposed to be open to the entire community, either only a few came or only a few signed the resolution. Those present resolved that the Amboseli plans, as they were presented to them, were unacceptable because they were being forced out of the 200 square miles against their will. This would make them potentially landless, as the group ranches were set up. They remembered the Maasai lost land during colonial times, referring back to the loss of northern Maasailand. Furthermore, Maasai co-existed with the wildlife, so there was no need for a formal reserve. Although the tourists want to come to see the wildlife without cattle, the Maasai never saw any tourist revenue, so there was no incentive for them. Referring to the NYZS, they told the "rich American Millionaire" to save his money. They will take care of themselves.¹¹¹

Sindiyo recorded this in the resolution he sent to the Ministry of Tourism and Wildlife, omitting the names signed for their protection, but showing that local publicity of this issue was important. His frustration is clear, stating that:

The outcomes of this meeting made those of us who were present wonder whether a

¹¹⁰ KNA, KL/7/9, "Masai Amboseli Game Reserve," 1961-1970, "Crucial Period for Amboseli," April 20, 1968.

¹¹¹ KNA, KL/7/9, "Masai Amboseli Game Reserve," 1961-1970, "Re: 200 Sq. Miles in Amboseli", letter from constituents to KCC, October 12, 1968.

change

of mind can ever be expected. It made us feel that the whole future of Amboseli is grim if the decision is left in the hands of the local residents. No doubt they are protecting their own interests but these are interests of only a few people, as few as the 36 persons who signed the memorandum. Amboseli is deteriorating very fast. The present situation cannot be left to continue for another three years. Trees are dying and there is little regeneration in a few places and nil in many areas. I am alarmed at the numbers of rhino. I believe we had more rhino last year than we have had this year...I feel we have gone back where we were before the March 1967 Council's resolution to extend the Sanctuary and Stock Free area to 200 square miles. Now that the local people have strongly rejected the proposal, the Council resolution is made to be of little effect.¹¹²

Sindiyo was in a difficult position. He was the one tasked with managing Amboseli's wildlife, but to exclude the human inhabitants without their consent was only causing bigger problems.

By April 1969, Ayodo had £5000 to give the KCC as a grant-in-aid for building infrastructure. At this meeting he assured the Council that the government was still keenly interested in Amboseli and did not want to see further decline. This money should be seen as a token of the government's goodwill in finding a solution. However, negotiations with the NYZS had fallen through. The organization had demands that Kenya and the Maasai were not prepared to meet – primarily that Amboseli should be a national park. Furthermore, Ayodo reminded the council that even though they were turning down this offer, they had still passed a resolution to keep livestock out of Ol Tukai, and this should still stand. There was no reason to cancel that plan because the environmental health of the region depended on it.¹¹³

The rejection of the NYZS offer frustrated the setting aside process American's perception of the Kenyan's ability and willingness to protect wildlife. Cyril Toker of the NYZS, concerned that the money was insufficient, asked Ayodo if more money was raised in the US,

¹¹² "Masai Amboseli Game Reserve," 1970 1961, KL/7/9, KNA, "Amboseli 200 Sq. Miles – Memorandum", October 28, 1968.

¹¹³ "Masai Amboseli Game Reserve," 1968-1973, KL/7/22, KNA, "Speech by the Minister of Tourism and Wildlife, The Hon. S.O. Ayodo to the Olkejuado County Council on Friday the 11th April 1969 on the Occasion of Handing Over a Grant-in-aid cheque for £5000."

would the Maasai be satisfied enough to leave the reserve on their own. But still, he wanted to know would not legislation be the easiest route here, making residency in the Reserve illegal? Surely, the Kenyan Government was already working on this.¹¹⁴ Royal Little, the driving force behind the NYZS's involvement, was concerned that the Kenyan Government might have second thoughts in going forward with the gazettement of Amboseli. He and the organization had raised most of the promised \$100,000 to finance the creation of Amboseli National Park, and returning the money to the donors would be embarrassing if the Kenyan Government did not submit plans for gazettement.¹¹⁵

Frank Mitchell, an environmental economist, made a list of what needed to be completed for the final allocation of funds from NYZS to go through and for final gazettement to move forward. First the government needed to notify the public that the government was taking over the 150 square miles, except Ol Tukai. Then the Kajiado District Commissioner would have to hold a hearing for those who may have land claims. If it was agreed that the water project was enough compensation, there would be no hearing. For that to happen, the KCC would have to pass a resolution approving the water plan as compensation, and then a group of elders needed to give final approval to a water project. If all that happened, the gazettement would be complete. If it were that simple, then the whole process would have moved faster than nearly a decade. Still, who would maintain the boreholes? Everyone pointed to someone else. Where would they even be placed? Furthermore, how would the KCC continue to get revenue? If they were completely cut off from Amboseli's tourism, the district would have little other revenue to support

¹¹⁴ "Masai Amboseli Game Reserve," 1968-1973, KL/7/22, KNA, Toker to Ayodo, June 5, 1969.

¹¹⁵ KNA, KL/7/9, "Masai Amboseli Game Reserve," 1961-1970, Little to J.L. Shako, Min for Tourism and Wildlife, January 10, 1972; David Western, March 12, 2013.

dispensaries, schools, or livestock markets.¹¹⁶

During all these negotiations, another plan was put forth in 1969. David Western, a biologist who had been studying the Amboseli ecosystem for several years, and Philip Thrasher, an economist, formulated a plan intended to be an alternative to the Government's proposal of a national park. It took a more sweeping view of Amboseli, by framing the whole ecosystem within an integrative management plan, giving control to the local community, accounting for local needs and wildlife/ecological needs. Western recounted that he realized that the Maasai would be opposed to any plan that would remove them from the Ol Tukai area. His plan emerged out of his time in Amboseli as a biologist studying the local ecology as well as conversations with the Maasai, including Parashino Ole Purdul and John Marinka. His plan included maximizing benefits to the Maasai who would be displaced by areas set aside for exclusive use of livestock. These benefits need to be tangible and transparent, unlike in the previous years. As with other plans discussed by the KCC and national government, he proposed permanent water facilities and grazing schemes, but these should be coordinated according to sociological and ecological patterns. Compared to prior plans for water and grazing for the Maasai, his research reflected an understanding of how the ecology of the landscape worked, how the Maasai used it, and the migration patterns of the wildlife. The plan was favorably received in Nairobi before an international audience of conservationists, but it struggled to gain support because of Kenyan politics.¹¹⁷ With Western's plan, Amboseli stood at a cross roads. The government was rapidly moving toward a National Park, removing responsibility and access from the Maasai, but the

¹¹⁶ KNA, KL/7/9, "Masai Amboseli Game Reserve," 1961-1970, "Amboseli Water Supplies and Future Park", February 9, 1972.

¹¹⁷ David Western, *In the Dust of Kilimanjaro* (Washington DC: Island Press/Shearwater Books, 2002), 100-123; Western, David, interview; KNA, KL/7/22, "Proposal for an Amboseli Game Park", 1968-1973.

plan Western suggested gave authority and management responsibilities to the Maasai. He believed empowering the local people to take ownership of the wildlife and tourism on their land would be the best direction for conservation in Amboseli in the long term.

Oloiptip, who had previously supported the idea of a Maasai park, then turned around and said that the idea would not go through and that "not one more inch" of Maasailand would be given to the Government. Oloiptip constituents threatened to remove him from office if he sided with the government on this. They threatened to kill rhino unless the land was completely put under titles for the Maasai. He took a delegation of Maasai to the State House to protest the size of the proposed land, arguing it should be reduced by 50 square miles.¹¹⁸ Oloiptip met with Jomo Kenyatta to get the Office of the President to reduce the size of the reserve.¹¹⁹ This indicated that he was trying to find avenues to Kenyatta to prevent a presidential decree for gazettelement. He wanted to run again for office in 1972, and to ensure local support, he had shifted sides on the establishment of such a large section of Maasai land. Oloiptip and his delegates proposed that only half of the 200 square miles be set aside, but Kenyatta responded publically that wildlife were a national asset. Protecting wildlife meant protected one of Kenya's largest sources of revenue, tourism. This in turn, would benefit the Maasai, if they would only participate.¹²⁰

By July, Kenyatta decided that he would reduce the proposed 200 square mile Game Reserve to 150 square miles, allowing for 50 square miles to be used for Maasai grazing, but holding off on gazettelement at that time. The government was to provide water outside the Game

¹¹⁸ Western, *In the Dust of Kilimanjaro*, 129-130.

¹¹⁹ KNA, KL/7/22, "Masai Amboseli Game Reserve," 1968-1973; Charles Hornsby, *Kenya: A History Since Independence* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2012), 255, 279.

¹²⁰ "'Preserve Wildlife' Plea to Masai," *East African Standard*, April 29, 1970, 1.

Reserve within range of good grazing land. The President and the national government were initially attempting to negotiate with local needs. His determination was that the size should still coincide as closely as possible to the maps of the 200 square mile reserve. The KCC's ability to exert control over the setting apart process was slipping away. The Enk'ong Narok and Ol Tukai sites were still under lease deliberation between the KCC and private companies. The Ol Tukai area, the KCC argued, had to have a special status because the Kilimanjaro Safari Club had already invested large sums of money in building a lodge. The government had already agreed to provide money for boreholes and compensation for those people displaced.¹²¹

In September, Juxon Levi Madoka Shako, the new Minister of Tourism and Wildlife, wrote to Oloitiptip telling him that the setting apart process, by which he meant the establishment of a national park, was moving forward and that there was great hope that both wildlife conservation and the interests of the Maasai were at the forefront of this process. Oloitiptip, in a previous letter, said that the County Council had passed a resolution as a first step in the setting apart process, but Shako reassured him that no action was necessary on the part of the council. The land would be set apart for public use by the Kenyan Constitution. The land was not a commons held by just the inhabitants of Kajiado County, but of the nation. Trust land, though held in common by local people, is primarily in the jurisdiction of the national government.¹²²

While negotiations over gazettelement and how to handle land adjudication and resettlement continued, the Maasai continued to insist that their greatest loss would be in

¹²¹ KNA, KL/7/22, "Masai Amboseli Game Reserve," 1968-1973.

¹²² "Mr. Shako Gets to Grips with Problems of New Job," *East African Standard*, KNA, BN/81/108, "Tourist Development in the Amboseli Area," January 8, 1970.

water.¹²³ However, it was difficult to find someone to make the first move, a test of good faith on promises, by setting up water or trusting that it would be done. Permanent Secretary Maina urged the Office of the President to move forward with the setting apart process of the park so that alternative water supplies could begin to be established outside the Reserve. There were investors ready to supply funds for the water, but they would not disburse funds until the setting apart was completed.¹²⁴

Eventually, after the setting apart process was moving forward, the MTW turned to the Water Development Department to assist them with the Amboseli Water Project. Money had been allocated, and with the NYZS's help, it was merely a matter of experts putting the plan into action. In 1971, the KCC, MTW, and the people themselves were ready for water, but something always arose that kept the project from moving forward. Each place had to fall in position. Even if the KCC was ready, then the surveyors had not been out. No one would dig boreholes without the final boundaries set around Amboseli. Even this had to be done in coordination with the Land Adjudication office. Bureaucratic inefficiencies caused confusion and miscommunication and delayed action. Maina had been assuming that all agreements were falling into place because he contacted Perez Olindo, asking to use the KNP's equipment for the boreholes. The equipment came, but this only confused matters more because Olindo was concerned about who was going to pay for the use of the KNP's equipment.¹²⁵

¹²³ Land adjudication, the placing of Trust Land under titles, was an ongoing process that coincided with the creation of the National Park, and although it was an integral component to land management in Amboseli, was dealt with by the Ministry of Lands. The government saw the division of the same landscape in two different ways as a separate issue. The Maasai did not. See Chapter 5 for land adjudication.

¹²⁴ KNA, BN/81/108, Maina to Office of President, January 25, 1971.

¹²⁵ KNA, KL/7/22, "Amboseli Water Supply: Agreement with New York Zoological Society."

High level bureaucrats had no problem changing the status of land or granting or withdrawing access as they saw fit. In 1973, American prospectors found rubies in Tsavo National Park. They registered with the government to mine the mineral, and they attempted to solidify their bid politically by aligning with Daniel arap Moi, Shako, and William Odongo Omamo, the Minister of Natural Resources had promised them 51% of the profits. But this plan fell through when the registration was lost and reappeared under the name of George Criticos, part of a Greek family with investments in Kenya and close ties to the Kenyatta family.¹²⁶ National parks and wildlife could be used as leverage and shows of power in political games, even as people who lived there struggled for practical reasons to prevent gazettement.

The land was still Trust Land, and there were laws in place to oversee how these lands were administered and by whom. Maina, the Permanent Secretary of the MTW attempted to clarify the policy to the Commissioner of Lands. The Amboseli Game Reserve would continue to be considered Trust Land of Kajiado County. Therefore, the County Council would receive royalties from development in the Reserve, as the government sought to, "Pave the way for proper conservation of the wildlife... In this respect, the local people would be benefiting as a community."¹²⁷ This was an attempt at smoothing the process of gazettement locally until the national government settled its internal bureaucratic confusion.

Maina turned to the Attorney General to confirm the process of gazetting Amboseli. It was a rather ambiguous process of gazetting in Trust Land. The KCC assumed they had more control than the national government believed they did. Trust Land, at its most fundamental

¹²⁶ Charles Hornsby. *Kenya: A History Since Independence*. London: I. B. Tauris, 2012, 263.

¹²⁷ KNA, KL/7/22, Maina to O'Loughlin, April 8, 1971.

level, belonged to the people inhabiting the land. In the case of Amboseli, this land belonged to the Maasai, and the County Council oversaw the logistics of local governance. The Kenyan Constitution allowed for the land to be re-purposed if there was a national need for the land. In this case, wildlife conservation and tourism were national priorities; Amboseli was prime land for both. According to Section 118 of the Constitution, the government could acquire the land, without the consent of the inhabitants or County Council. However, they were expected to properly compensate the people for the loss of land. Maina not only had to determine the proper course of action according to the Constitution, but also the 1967 National Parks Act, which complicated the matters of Trust Land and the consent of the governed. If the area was Trust Land and the Council did not consent, it must first be made into government land under Section 118 of the Constitution. This would first end the customary law rights in that land, allowing for the national government to gazette as a national park.¹²⁸

Changes in leadership at the county level slowed down decision making. There appeared to be a real lack in understanding or interest in preserving the ecological viability of Amboseli. The KCC's interest seemed to lie solely in the amount of profit they could accrue from tourism with a minimal amount of investment. By 1970, when all seemed to be on board with the plan to set about 200 square miles, the KCC asked the government to contribute funds to active tourism promotion for Amboseli. They wanted to bring all VIPs to the reserve, thus they also needed more funds for the improvement on the new Amboseli Lodge and for the best facilities for tour drivers. The goal was to funnel Kenyan tourism through Amboseli.¹²⁹ The council showed no

¹²⁸ KNA, BN/81/108, "Amboseli National Park – Agreement with New York Zoological Society for Masai Water Supply".

¹²⁹ KNA, KL/7/22, Ole Leken (KCC) to Ministry of Local Government, March 5, 1970, Maina to MTW, September 11, 1972.

action on passing a resolution for setting apart Amboseli. This mattered little at the level of the President's Office.

As gazettelement moved forward, the MTW was unsure how to address the issue of the KCC's continued involvement in Ol Tukai, the core conservancy in Amboseli. The area was still administered by the KCC, but the National Parks wondered how this relationship would work. Maina expressed his concern to J.A. O'Loughlin, the Commissioner of lands telling him he was not sure how this "island" in the middle of the park could remain under the KCC while the National Parks would have no involvement in its management. The KCC depended on the revenues from the lodges, and if this was totally cut off, the political fallout could be severe. Some in government proposed that the KCC could lease it from the National Parks with the agreement that they would then sublease it to a hotel management group. Maina worried that as Ol Tukai went, so would the rest of the park. O'Loughlin thought the best move would be to allow the KCC to continue in its current capacity, as owner of Ol Tukai. Of course, this would present problems for the National Parks, but it would speed up getting an agreement and final resolution passed by the KCC for the setting apart process and water installation. As long as the KCC was pacified with keeping Ol Tukai, they could guide the mood or at least the understanding local people had regarding the setting apart, compensation, and water installation. O'Loughlin believed that this issue needed to be written into the final draft of the agreement. It also appears that he did not think the KCC was fully aware that the government was setting this aside not just as "government land," but as a National Park.¹³⁰ It was very apparent that most local people did not know either.

As gazettelement negotiations moved forward, the land adjudication progressed, by which

¹³⁰ KNA, KL/7/22, O'Loughlin to MTW, March 3, 1972.

Group Ranches would be established. However, it could not resolve land adjudication around the reserve until precise boundaries for the park were set. Every delay in making plans for Amboseli delayed the plans for land adjudication. It was not just a matter of drawing borders and handing out titles, real people needed placement on the group ranches. Oloiptip weighed in on the issue of adjudication:

On behalf of my constituency I wish to bring to your notice the fact that since His Excellency the President of Kenya Honorable Mzee Jomo Kenyatta declared the above mentioned area to be set aside exclusively for game, my people have always been waiting anxiously to see the boundary demarcated. This is so because our people are now settling down into group ranches and those of that side have come to a standstill because the boundary have [sic] not been put. I would therefore request you being the Commissioner of Lands [O'Loughlin] responsible for our Trust Land to see to it that this boundary is effected [sic] immediately so that our progress is not jeopardized. According to law I know that compensation will be payable to the local people but could arrange that later after the boundary.¹³¹

Those displaced were owed compensation from the government, but there was neither a regular amount nor process for this. Oloiptip's question of compensation was the first time this issue was voiced to the MTW. Until then, providing water for the Maasai was the only form of compensation being considered. Since they were entitled by Kenyan law, what would stop them from asking for other forms of compensation? The possibility of having to deal with individual compensation applications might have been a push to move the setting apart process forward. Maina asked again and again, suggesting that they move forward before any applications could be submitted. Eventually, O'Loughlin placed an announcement in the *Kenya Gazette* announcing the acceptance of applications and the deadline. None were submitted. The Commissioner of Lands and Permanent Secretary of the MTW wanted to get that door securely closed.¹³²

¹³¹ KNA, KL/7/22, Oloiptip to Commissioner of Lands, March 19, 1971.

¹³² KNA, KL/7/22, "The Trust Lands Act, 1968: Setting Apart of 150 Square Miles at

In 1972, Maina was eager to move forward with the gazettement and removal of residents in Amboseli. It was difficult to finalize gazettement with important land adjudication issues unresolved. He wrote to the Kajiado District Commissioner:

We have held the view that we should not remove the Masai now resident within the 150 sq miles area before we supply alternative water, and where applicable, grazing to them. These people may still be under the impression that they own land within the area to be converted into a Park since no physical demarcation [of] boundaries has taken place. At the same time, the land adjudication and registration of titles is taking place or is likely to take place soon in the Amboseli area and we fear that those people who will lose their grazing land within the Park might be made landless when the Park is declared unless they now register their claims for land outside the Park. We would like to seek your assistance in telling the Masais to be displaced that they would be displaced and they should now register their claims for the Trust land outside the 150 square miles. This would mean that when the setting apart of the 150 square miles takes place, the residents within this area will have registered their interests over land in the north, east, west, and southern sections. We would like to have your assistance on this matter. We on our part shall endeavor to get the boundaries demarcated in the course of this month so that the local people can know how far the Park is to go and whether they will be within it or without it. Meantime, please get the district Land Adjudication officer acquainted with this problem and let him register the claims of the Maasai who are within the 150 square miles.¹³³

The government was moving ahead with gazettement and land adjudication, and unknown to many on the local level, talks with Kenyatta had apparently been going on much longer and away from the KCC, locals, Warden Daniel Sindiyo, and David Western.¹³⁴

Like Water Poured in a Hand – Promises and Trickery

Unknown to most Maasai living in the Amboseli region, the national government was moving rapidly toward gazettement. As far as they knew, negotiations continued with the KCC,

Amboseli for National Park”.

¹³³ KNA, KL/7/22, Maina to Kajiado District Commissioner, March 11, 1972.

¹³⁴ David Western, interview.

Oloitiptip, and the Ministry of Tourism and Wildlife. However, the MTW no longer saw the present course as profitable. Matheka, Permanent Secretary of the MTW wrote to Geoffrey Karithi, one of Kenyatta's close advisors:

Can't we resort to His Excellency the President's powers conferred under Section 118 of the Constitution? The County Council representatives stated today that they did not expect their Council to change their mind at all and were in fact wondering why the Commissioner of Lands has not initiated the Setting Apart operation in accordance with the understanding reached at their last interview with His Excellency the President.¹³⁵

The MTW asked if they could just by-pass the KCC and go straight to Presidential powers. It appears that Matheka's plea was heard. The president ultimately decreed the land as government land, though reduced by 50 square miles. This was a compromise made with Oloitiptip and some set of Maasai elders who went with him to the President's office.

Perez Olindo, who was the director of Kenya National Parks (KNP) at the time, informed me that by 1971, all negotiations for the amount of land to be gazetted had finished from the perspective of Kenya National Parks. He recalled a meeting between himself, Kenyatta, and other top level bureaucrats. The Maasai had only been willing to cede 50 square miles, but Olindo argued for increasing the park to 600 square miles, which would be large enough to protect the ecosystem and the KCC could keep Ol Tukai. He said his priority was to prevent Amboseli from further decline, which should be the nation's priority, and it was his job as the director of KNP.¹³⁶

In August 1972, Olindo was instructed that he needed to get involved with Amboseli as it would be gazetted in a couple of weeks. This would all be done in preparation for the Worlds

¹³⁵ KNA, KL/7/22, "Masai Amboseli Game Reserve," 1968-1973.

¹³⁶ Olindo, Perez, interview.

Parks Congress in Yellowstone in September 1972.¹³⁷ P. Ndibo of the Game Department wrote to Olindo in September 1972, "I wish to inform you that at this stage it is not considered advisable to gazette Amboseli as National Park. However, we intend to do so as soon as the compensation in the form of water supply has been paid to the Masai and in this connection you may be interested to know that the report from the consulting engineers on the water supplies has been submitted to the government, but the government is of the opinion that the water project should be approved by the Masai before it is implemented. It is therefore intended to present the project to the Masai as soon as possible."¹³⁸ From the government's perspective, all was set to transition Amboseli to the KNP and change its status, but what had not been settled, in addition to providing watering sites, was the app

The meeting under the tree near Ol Tukai Orok in the dry season of 1972 provides a stark contrast to the government record of the gazetting of Amboseli. The memory of this meeting is closely tied to the landscape of the Amboseli basin around Ol Tukai in the telling of this story. Those who recalled this meeting did so as part of a larger history of the people in that area, remembering where the acacia groves used to be, and how age-sets functioned there. Their ownership of the land came from their use of the land for generations. They believed that the land held in trust by the KCC, was indeed the law of the nation, and that they could not lose it without their agreement. None of the individuals I interviewed indicated that they knew of higher level negotiations. What they remembered was the *baraza* under the tree.

The tree is situated along the Mpash corridor that divides the park. It is a wide strip of land without trees that allowed people to pass from the foothills of Kilimanjaro to Olgulului or

¹³⁷ KNA, KL/7/22, KNA, M. Hyder, KNP Board of Trustees to Olindo, August 1972.

¹³⁸ KNA, KL/7/22, Ndibo to Olindo, September 27, 1972.

areas west of Amboseli. It was a favorable path because the Maasai could see potential threats like herds of elephants or buffalo. This does not mean that human-wildlife incidents did not happen here. Benjamin Tuarare told me of being chased by a Cape buffalo near Ol Tukai Orok, remembering how close the horns came to goring his body. He laughed, with the fondness many men recall of their days as *ilmurran*. During the dry season, many families set up their temporary housing along Mpash. Tuarare pointed out an area where there was a small village of about twenty families. The site used to have large acacias, which provided some protection from wandering herds of elephants that might otherwise trample through human habitations. Now most of these trees have died, compared to what was described to me.¹³⁹

The *baraza* tree was once part of a grove of trees, but in its last years stood alone. The *olasitit* tree was a hardwood tree, but not one of the acacia species. For generations, *ilmurran* sat beneath the tree, braiding their hair and covering it in ochre as part of the tradition of being a warrior. As they sat there, they planned their next cattle raid, discussed the best grazing sites or locations of reliable water. This was a place for socializing. It was not only the *ilmurran* who spent time under the shade of this tree. Elders with serious decisions to discuss or marriage agreements to settle spent time there. Ole Kumpau told me that usually someone built an *enkang* nearby, and if there were serious matters to discuss, beyond the earshot of women, they moved to a tree that was further away, under an *acacia tortillis*. This tree is no longer standing either. He told me that when he was an *olmurrani*, part of the Ilnyankusi II age set (1942-1959), the older Iliterito age set (1926-1948) was the one who passed the story of the history of the tree to them. They told stories of the first *ilmurran* of the Iltalala age-set (1881-1905) to begin using this tree

¹³⁹ Benjamin Tuarare, interview.

as the site for hair braiding. Their elders were the Iltuati I set (1836-1856).¹⁴⁰ The age set sequence was important because it shows how long the area was used and how age sets passed history from one generation to the next. Most of the older Maasai I interviewed organized their chronology based on the age set system, both men and women. Some age sets correspond with environmental events such as drought. Thus the Iseuri (1955-1976) were in power during the terrible 1961 drought.

On the day of the infamous meeting, Oloiptip called together people from the surrounding community. There were government administrators, provincial administrators, the Game Department, presumably National Parks, and the Minister of Natural Resources. Oloiptip officiated. It is not clear what else happened at the meeting, whether there were any speeches given or discussion and debate from the community. Everyone who related this story to me focused on the vote. Oloiptip asked the community members, in Maa, if they wanted to allow the government to take over Amboseli as a national park. A few raised their hands. "Who does not want Amboseli to be taken by the government?" There was an overwhelming majority of hands raised up in response. It seemed clear to the Maasai audience, some of whom believed this to be a legitimate vote for or against gazettelement, that they declined the government's plan to establish a national park.

"Look," Oloiptip said to the government representatives, "all those people are raising their hands in support of a national park."¹⁴¹ He translated this in English to the government officials. According to Parashino Ole Purdul, there was a young Maasai man there who knew English and immediately stood up and said that Oloiptip had switch the results when he

¹⁴⁰ Sironka ole Masharen, *The Maasai Pioneers: The First Modern Cream* (Nairobi, Kenya: Resil Print & Supplies, 2009), 22-23; Ole Kumpau, March 21, 2013.

¹⁴¹ Paraphrasing the story told by several interviewees.

translated it to the government representatives.¹⁴² Oloiptip told him to shut up, and turned back to the audience. From that point, the meeting was finished. Tolito Laigali, one of the Maasai spokesmen, asked if he wanted to be greeted by the people. Oloiptip said he would allow people to greet him for two minutes, and then he would depart. Tempers were raised. Although attendees knew that they had been deceived, there was the feeling that they had no recourse to confront their MP. For many of the younger set, they did not feel free to challenge the elder.

The disenchanted locals decided to call subsequent meetings to raise the issue again. They did not think that the vote was binding since they had been deceived. As they had been left out of government level negotiations about gazettelement, they were unaware that the meeting was more for the purpose of informing the public and giving them a sense of being involved in the decision-making process. Another meeting was called and the invitation sent to Oloiptip, but he did not attend. Three more times, they called a meeting. Still the MP did not come.

Perhaps Oloiptip feared what his angry constituents might do to him. He would have to answer their questions about why he gave away Amboseli. He would have to tell them that he had been part of the negotiations long before it was widely known locally that changes were coming. He might have feared for his life, as one interviewee told me. There were people who wanted to put a spear through him. Immediately afterward, there were retaliatory killings of wildlife, including elephants and lions.

Oloiptip, feeling their anger perhaps, tried to alleviate some of their concerns. He told the government that there would be no dry season move. This would have been a cruel act, resulting in loss of livestock and likely impoverishment. He promised that the government would dig boreholes and pipe fresh water to locations outside the park, and lorries would be provided to

¹⁴² Parashino Ole Purdul, interview.

move possessions to the Group Ranches. This was a promise he really had little control over, as the negotiations over water were contentious. Some understood him to also mean that although the Ilkisongo could no longer live in the boundaries of the park, they could still bring livestock to certain parts during the dry season. This was never an official position, but rather a *de facto* policy that continues to this day.¹⁴³

Conclusion

The history of the creation of Amboseli National Park is a local story with high level national politics and international funding. The process was very different than many other African parks where unilateral decisions simply removed people from the PA. President Kenyatta did use his Constitutional power to gazette Amboseli, but this did not happen until years of negotiations for permanent water and grazing were promised. The meeting beneath the tree, however, obscures the efforts of many who sought more direct participation on the part of the Maasai. Considering this history in the context of Kenya's independence, the government had little interest in a bottom-up approach to conservation. When donors were offering large sums of money in exchange for gazettelement, a few pastoralists had little power to protest.

Brockington's characterizations of fortress conservation did not completely unfold in the gazetting of Amboseli National Park. Of course, people were restricted from accessing a 150 square mile area with their livestock and they could no longer live there, but they were not marginalized to the degree that other areas have been such as Mkomazi or Ngorongoro Crater. This is not to say that what happened was fair or that it did not have as significant of an impact on local people. Maasai memories reside in the park. This is particularly apparent in interviews

¹⁴³ Ole Kumpau, interview.

with women, who told me of where they lived when they were circumcised, married, or gave birth to their first child. However, it was still created out of a certain outsider conceptualization of what wildlife conservation should look like. By putting boundaries around a certain area, there could be order to conservation. After 1974, there was a clear space for wildlife, although environmental change continued even without the large number of cattle in the park. Maasai livelihoods were still connected to what happened to Amboseli because the KCC still controls the immediate Ol Tukai area where the Ol Tukai Lodge operates and where the Amboseli Lodge still stands. In theory, they derive benefit from this, as the KCC receives revenue from its leasing lodges.

The "fortressing" dynamic at play is the top down force that dictated the final decision. Many groups exerted their agency over this landscape, calling upon various memories and visions of what Amboseli meant. Most importantly, the Maasai kept pursuing compromises in the face of state power that could, with the sweep of a pen, turn the area into a park. Both the colonial and independent governments deliberated with the Maasai through traditional channels of male elders and elected representatives. For more than a decade before its gazettelement, the people of Amboseli, through local leadership, used tactics to slow the government down before the presidential decree after independence.

Nevertheless, it is important to see the inklings of a new path for conservation. David Western use his experience as a biologist in Amboseli to press for more Maasai-centric policies, and he would be an advocate for community-based conservation in Amboseli and all of East Africa. When the figurative walls went up around the national park, conservation would have to take a different path. This part of Amboseli's history is the linchpin around which much of this landscape's recent history turns. Lessons learned from having a closed-off national park in the

midst of productive rangelands begin unfold in the 1970s. It also provides a framework from which to understand the problems and politics of hunting as well as the role of science in Amboseli.

Chapter 2

Counting Cattle: Colonial Development Discourses in Amboseli

Attending a Maasai livestock market in Kimana, a small town in eastern Kajiado County, on a Tuesday morning is a full sensory experience. To an outsider, it seems chaotic and disorganized. It smells of dust, dung, and sweat. Cattle are gathered in a large fenced area and sheep and goats are kept in a smaller separate pen. Interested buyers interact with sellers next to the animal for sale. There are cattle of all colors and patterns, but many will tell you the red ones fetch the best prices. Some herders have brought livestock from far away, starting the journey the previous day. This is a male dominated activity, as Maasai women do not typically own livestock. The women are gathered in a shaded area with *ilkarash*, or the ubiquitous red fabrics associate with Maasai, spread on the ground. They sell beadwork, sodas, and snacks. Some men sell knives and *rungus*, a type of knobkerrie. Many are dressed in their most colorful *olkarasha* and necklaces. Older men wear a sports jacket over their *olkarasha*, blending Western and Maasai fashions in a way that represents what this market is - a product of decades of change in how Maasai cattle ownership has transformed through development initiatives of both the colonial and independent governments of Kenya in the rangelands of Amboseli.

Maasai pastoralist way of life is adaptable and flexible, depending on the environment, social and political changes, and shifts in cultural identity, but the colonial endeavor to develop the colony inhibited their ability to adjust to new political, social, and environmental changes. Throughout Kenya, the government embarked upon an expansive project of rural development aimed at establishing organized land tenure of both agricultural and rangeland regions. Conservation and land improvement were solutions raised in the land degradation discourses in

the government.¹⁴⁴ In Kajiado District, the focus was on cattle and water, but wildlife management was also important for the developing tourist industry. There was a struggle between competing visions of what the Amboseli landscape should look like and who had the power to control it. Ilkisongo perceptions of the land focused on its common resources that sustained their livestock and cultural identity. Colonial visions of the land saw Amboseli as part of a larger system of resources; it was one semi-arid landscape, suitable for livestock markets, hunting, and tourism, which were all needed to support economic growth for the colony. In this chapter, I trace the history of the overstocking debate, development of livestock markets and permanent water sources, the inclusion of the Kajiado African District Council as the local authority for establishing management regimes, and the emergence of international interest in wildlife conservation in Amboseli. The common assumption by many wildlife advocates in Kenya argued the establishment of a national park in Amboseli was the only way to end the overstocking debate, but others, within the same government advocated a more integrated approach, involving local African leadership. This was not done out of the modern community-based conservation paradigm, but rather as a way to ensure local self-sustainability and economic growth for the whole colony.

The Overstocking Debate

The debate over whether or to what extent Maasai areas were overstocked with cattle is indicative of the disconnect between different systems of knowledge. The Ilkisongo adapted their natural resource consumption and their relationships with neighboring people, but this was not

¹⁴⁴ David Anderson, *Eroding The Commons* (Athens, OH: Ohio University Press, 2003). Anderson discusses the development of the rangelands in Baringo County, in the Rift Valley, during colonialism.

something to be systematized. It was a part of knowing the land in a daily and seasonal way and responding accordingly. The notion that Maasai have coexisted for hundreds of years with wildlife in a setting undisturbed by external interference is one that most Maasai accepted, but in a more complex way than outsiders understood. Indeed, they did not normally hunt wildlife for food, depending largely on their own livestock for food and clothing until Western materials entered their culture. Prior to European colonialism, surplus cattle died, and if there was overgrazing, it was short lived because drought or tsetse flies regulated populations. They were also part of a long distance cattle trade between southern Ethiopia and Somalia and Northern Tanganyika, which was well established before British imperialism. Colonial interference stopped this trade, which was considered "illegal."¹⁴⁵ They had always maintained a vital trade with neighboring agriculturalists; the cattle they traded bought staples to supplement their milk-based diet and living needs, but it also forged social alliances through marriage as well as debt or famine relief.¹⁴⁶ Cattle were part of pastoral mode of production for the Maasai, but held a much more complex position in the community and household. The colonial government believed cattle should be a part of the economic growth of Kenya as a resource exporting country. For both, cattle represented a source of revenue, but they disagreed over the control over price and quantity as well as the meaning of profit. For the Maasai, the utilization of cattle had broader significance such as for such as marriage arrangements or *enkiyieu*, a formalized relationship between two men of the same age set who, through the ceremony of *Olkiteng Iolobaa*

¹⁴⁵ Fred Zaal, "Pastoral Integration in East African Livestock Markets: Linkages to the Livestock Value Chain for Maasai Pastoral Subsistence and Accumulation," in *Economic Spaces of Pastoral Production and Commodity Systems* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate Publishing Co., 2011), 107–26.

¹⁴⁶ Thomas Spear, "Being 'Maasai', but Not 'People of Cattle': Arusha Agricultural Maasai in the Nineteenth Century," in *Being Maasai: Ethnicity and Identity in East Africa* (Athens, OH: Ohio University Press, 1993), 120–36.

(Translated: bull of arrows) with the exchange of bulls, are pledged to be lifelong advocates and friends. It is a bond that can be closer than that of brothers.

In order to maintain these herds, the Maasai had to have a specific understanding of the environment, an indigenous ecological knowledge, unique to the Amboseli ecosystem and how their zebu breed of cattle responded to the seasonal cycle. Ole Kumpau, with whom I spent time driving through Amboseli National Park, described the relationship the Maasai who lived in Ol Tukai had with the land. Before gazettement, he and his family lived in Ol Tukai during the dry season. There were good reasons to go there, but many reasons this was not a suitable place to spend much time. Tsetse flies were bad during the rainy season when he was younger.¹⁴⁷ This was a reason to not stay longer than necessary. Another reason to move herds out as soon as there was pasture elsewhere was the risk of disease transfer from wildlife to livestock. Ole Kumpau described the situation using the wildebeest placenta as the disease vector. Cattle gave birth during the rainy season, therefore outside of Ol Tukai, but wildebeest gave birth in February, the driest month of year in Amboseli. This meant cattle grazed in the same places where wildebeest gave birth, and contracted the disease. The disease he described was possibly what the Ilkisongo refer to as *oinkati* or Malignant Catarrhal Fever (MCF), which has a host of symptoms, most notably discharge from the nose and mouth.¹⁴⁸ Some symptoms can lead to death. Most disease transfer takes place with young wildebeests below six months of age; it is rare for adults to be contagious.¹⁴⁹ This may be why Ole Kumpau believed the disease was

¹⁴⁷ I did not encounter any. The closest I found were in Tsavo West National Park.

¹⁴⁸ Wildebeest in Maa, *oinkat*, pl. *Linkati*.

¹⁴⁹ “Malignant Catarrhal Fever,” *The Center for Food Security and Public Safety - Iowa State University*, 2015, <http://www.cfsph.iastate.edu/DiseaseInfo/disease.php?name=malignant-catarrhal-fever&lang=en>; R. N. Ngotho, P. K. Mirangi, and L. N. Mimano, *Perceptions And*

transferred through the placenta. Cattle contracted MCF by grazing where young wildebeests had been. He said once the rains came and washed the ground, the disease disappeared.¹⁵⁰ It was best to leave wildebeest calving areas as quickly as possible. Prior to colonialism, proximity to disease helped maintain herd populations and prevented overgrazing. It also meant that the Maasai had to carefully watch environmental changes and make decisions in response. With this example, it is important to see that precolonial Maasailand was no Eden, where the pastoralists perfectly coexisted with wildlife. Calamity could follow them even in the best of seasons. At the same time, the Maasai had the agency to make their own decisions about movement, breeding, or allowing access to resources. This agency never disappears when colonial measures to develop the rangelands forces them to change their relationship with the land. David Anderson argues that it is important to not overemphasize African agency and indigenous knowledge or colonial policies and practices, rather, “It is the interaction between African agency and colonial ideas that matters.”¹⁵¹

When the British became more fully entrenched in managing Kenya, their policies regarding Maasai cattle ignored some of the traditional knowledge about cattle and land use. The colonial attitude toward Maasai evolved throughout the first half of the twentieth century from one of a paternalistic vision of "noble savages" to frustration over their apparently irrational

Attitudes To Malignant Catarrhal Fever [MCF] By The Maasai People Of Kajiado And Narok Districts In Kenya (Kenya Agricultural Research Institute, 1999), <http://www.kalro.org:8080/dspace/handle/1/727>.

¹⁵⁰ Ole Kumpau, March 21, 2013; Mara Goldman, “Tracking Wildebeest, Locating Knowledge: Maasai and Conservation Biology Understandings of Wildebeest Behavior in Northern Tanzania,” *Environment and Planning: Society and Space* 25, no. 2 (2007): 307–31.

¹⁵¹ Anderson, *Eroding the Commons*, 8; .For marginalized people’s modes of resistance to the state see James C. Scott, *Weapons of the Weak: Everyday Forms of Peasant Resistance* (Yale University Press, 1987).

attachment to cattle. The Maasai had to be taught to be better managers of their herds and engage fully in a modern society as sedentary agro-pastoralists. David Collett argued that government policy toward Maasai accumulation of cattle was based on an evolving view of Maasai identity. Early perceptions that Maasai were benign co-habitators with wildlife were used to justify the alienation of Maasai from northern areas of their lands for the creation of white settlement in the highland region of the Rift Valley. Thus, the Southern Reserve was designated a Game Reserve because the Maasai did not hunt wildlife. It was a win-win for the government. Settlers received the land they wanted and the Maasai were moved to an area where their cattle could use land that was seen to be too "marginal" for agricultural production. Wildlife, having been exterminated in areas of white settler plantations, would be protected in the less desirable regions. Within two decades of the move, this attitude began to shift.¹⁵²

In Baringo, Anderson found that after 1920 the discourse took aim at soil erosion, land degradation, and exceeding of the land's carrying capacity by livestock. The argument that the Maasai were overstocking the Southern Reserve was the government's justification for destocking campaigns in the 1930s and 1940s.¹⁵³ This was intended to solve two problems. They believed the Maasai were not contributing to the economy and this would bring them into the system through the sale of stock. It would also alleviate the overtaxed carrying capacity of the

¹⁵² David Collett, "Pastoralists and Wildlife: Image and Reality in Kenya Maasailand," in *Conservation in Africa: Peoples, Policies and Practices*, ed. David Anderson and Richard Grove (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 129–48.

¹⁵³ Myles Osborne, *Ethnicity and Empire in Kenya: Loyalty and Martial Race among the Kamba, c.1800 to the Present* (Cambridge University Press, 2014), 103-132. Osbourne gives an account of the 1938 destocking campaign in Machakos, the District just north of Kajiado in which opposition by the Kamba resulted in the rescinding of the policy. The government did not anticipate such a negative response from Africans. Likewise, no serious efforts to destock took place in Kajiado either.

grasslands. As livestock population increased, the competition with wildlife for food and water increased; at least this was the government's perspective. However, Anderson and Grove, as well as Raikes, question the evidence for this assertion. There were never any scientific surveys of livestock and wildlife populations or of grassland productivity at that time.¹⁵⁴

In 1933, the Kenya Land Commission determined destocking would free up the land for further development. Their preference was for the "development of the Masai Reserve as an efficiently managed pastoral country...The game would not only consume much of the available grazing, but would also break down fences, and any steps which might be taken would in our opinion be of no advantage to the Masai and might even be detrimental to them." Through proper management, coexistence between wildlife and livestock was possible. However, if the Maasai decided they would prefer more agricultural and pastoral development, the government would not allow the existence of the Game Reserve to stand in their way. If the Maasai were willing to submit to stock culls, the government would assist them in reducing wildlife in the Reserve.¹⁵⁵

The offer was declined; voluntarily selling off cattle served no purpose for the Maasai, even if the rangeland's environment was declining. The government believed this was evidence that Maasai cattle ownership was "irrational". The Maasai refused to see the value in a cash economy, avoided permanent settlement until the 1950s, and held on to livestock even when prices were good. This apparent irrationality is disputed by Philip Raikes, who pointed out that

¹⁵⁴ David Anderson and Richard Grove, "Introduction: The Scramble for Eden: Past, Present, and Future in African Conservation," in *Conservation in Africa: Peoples, Policies and Practices*, ed. David Anderson and Richard Grove (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 1–12; Philip Lawrence Raikes, *Livestock Development and Policy in East Africa* (Nordic Africa Institute, 1981).

¹⁵⁵ *Report of the Kenya Land Commission* (Nairobi, Kenya: Secretary of State for the Colonies, 1934), 203.

although the British saw the Maasai's low off-take of cattle herds as poor management and a lack of foresight, the situation was not so simple. The Maasai often feared the government's motives for wanting them to sell cattle, after having been marginalized by forced relocations in the past. They also were part of a larger ecological cycle, and cattle were insurance for hard times that would inevitably come. To sell off a quota each year seemed like a risky investment.¹⁵⁶

Governance and Development – Improving Herds, Empowering ‘Natives’

The government established African District Councils (ADC) in 1948 in order to devolve power to local communities, giving local African leadership authority to pass local ordinances specific to their area's needs, raise revenue through taxes for local projects, and carry out British colonial policy. Bruce Berman describes the colonial endeavor to govern at the local level in Kenya as a reflection of their "paternal ideology: their belief in the value of the traditional 'organic community.'" Berman goes on to state that, "The preservation of communal values they saw in traditional African society became a goal of paramount importance, and they approached the postwar commitment to development with reservation and great emphasis on the maintenance of social cohesion, by introducing change slowly, carefully, and with firm control."¹⁵⁷ The creation of Local Native Councils or what would become African District Councils is a part of this system, which, more often than not, set up a wholly different local

¹⁵⁶ Raikes, *Livestock Development and Policy in East Africa*; Katherine Homewood and W. A. Rodgers, "Pastoralism, Conservation and the Overgrazing Controversy," in *Conservation in Africa: Peoples, Policies and Practices*, ed. David Anderson and Richard Grove (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 111–28; "Kenya Colony and Protectorate Development Committee Report, Vol. 2" (Nairobi, Kenya: Colony and Protectorate of Kenya, Kenya Legislative Council, 1946).

¹⁵⁷ Bruce Berman, *Control & Crisis in Colonial Kenya the Dialectic of Domination* (Athens, Ohio: Ohio University Press, 1990), 276.

governing system than individual communities used on their own terms. Their belief in this approach is apparent in the state's tactic in handing over control of Amboseli to the Kajiado ADC and their lack of enthusiasm to fund permanent water sources. Within the various Ministries and institutions involved in managing natural and agricultural resources, there was diversity in beliefs about Africans' ability and willingness to govern local issues and raise revenue to implement policy and development.¹⁵⁸

Understanding the formation of ADCs in 'Masai District' is important for understanding the evolution of land management in Amboseli because these councils had the authority to pass ordinances on land use and development of agriculture and animal husbandry. Councilmembers were chosen from local elders in the area or those deemed "progressive" Africans while others were elected by members of the community with no traditional position of authority among the Maasai.¹⁵⁹

In Kajiado, the government used the ADC to persuade Maasai to sell off cattle. After much debate between the Ministry of Local Government and the Southern Provincial office in Ngong, it was decided that, after a failed attempt to unite Narok and Kajiado for the purpose of local governance, the two should be separated. An initial effort at having one council was supposed to combine resources and provide uniformity among the different Maasai groups. In this way, the colonial government lifted some of the responsibility off their shoulders for the development of local regions and for disaster relief. The goal was to make each district self-sufficient, but Kajiado's dependence on livestock did not satisfy the colony's goal of cash crop

¹⁵⁸ Berman, 283.

¹⁵⁹ Rita Hinden, *Local Government and the Colonies: A Report to the Fabian Colonial Bureau* (London: George Allen and Unwin, Ltd., 1950), http://archive.org/stream/localgovernmenta032583mbp/localgovernmenta032583mbp_djvu.txt.

production, as Narok did. What the Kajiado African District Council (KADC) needed was a way to raise revenue through livestock sales. Engaging the KADC was a way to employ Africans in land management and conservation, but this inclusion was not meant to be an intentional way to enhance African agency nor draw upon indigenous knowledge. It was way to avoid dissent and garner compliance, but more importantly, it allowed them to manage a vast landscape without deploying many colonial officers to do the same work.¹⁶⁰

The ADCs provided the local structure for the powerful white settler population in post-World War II Kenya, to maximize agricultural output, including livestock production. The African Land Development Board (ALDEV) oversaw the allocation of a ten year development grant for the improvement of African areas for settlement and agriculture. ALDEV, begun in 1945, was intended to oversee the development of the African agricultural sector, only tangentially addressing pastoral production. Originally conceived of as the African Settlement Board, the group relocated Africans out of areas of high population concentration (and areas intended for white settlement), the board evolved into the African Land Utilization and Settlement Board when it became apparent that overpopulation was not the problem. Poor land management was the problem. Other government departments complained ALDEV was a redundant institution, trying to do the same work as the Ministries of Agriculture, Veterinary, and Public Works. This argument becomes more prominent in future struggles over installing permanent water in Amboseli, the takeover of the KADC, and establishing livestock markets in the district. The ALDEV board considered themselves a source of seed money for development projects, but as district and national levels of government saw project money funneling into much needed development, they did not want to contribute their own limited resources to

¹⁶⁰Collett, "Pastoralists and Wildlife: Image and Reality in Kenya Maasailand,." 144-146.

continue the work. Although the focus of ALDEV was on agricultural development, livestock development was crucial to the overall improvement of Kenya's export market. However, they believed the primary hindrance to the successful development of African livestock markets was the "cattle complex", or a "religious" attachment that "nilohamitic" peoples held to cattle.¹⁶¹ The government saw little advantage to investing resources in a people who had an inherent inclination to behave illogically.

In 1954, Roger Swynnerton was appointed Director of Agriculture field services. His policy, which came to be known as the Swynnerton Plan expanded ALDEV, focused on applying new "scientific" agricultural methods to African farming. Until this point, most large-scale agriculture was carried out by white settlers, with gradual limiting of Africans' ability to own land and farm it as they saw fit. Most policies gave the government power to control and enforce Africans' ability to access land and dictated methods they should use. Still, most of this was focused on cash crop production. The Swynnerton Plan put more emphasis on pastoralist development than ever before. The goal was to bring livestock numbers down to the "carrying capacity" of the land, establish grazing rotation plans for each region, install permanent water sources, and tax each head of cattle to raise funds to continue the projects. By working toward this goal, they would also meet another, to increase the number of exportable livestock to 600,000 head of cattle.¹⁶²

¹⁶¹ African Land Development Board, *African Land Development in Kenya* (Nairobi, Kenya: Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Husbandry, and Water Development, 1956), 4.

¹⁶² Anne F. Thurston and University of Cambridge, *Smallholder Agriculture in Colonial Kenya: The Official Mind and the Swynnerton Plan*, Cambridge African Monographs 8 (Cambridge: African Studies Centre, 1987), 22, 52-55; Phylo Evangelou, *Livestock Development in Kenya's Maasailand: Pastoralists' Transition to a Market Economy*, A Westview Replica Edition (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1984), 40-41; African Land Development Board, *African Land Development in Kenya* (Nairobi, Kenya: Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Husbandry, and

Although the focus was on the highlands of the Rift Valley, other arid lands also received some funding for development through ALDEV. In Kajiado and other pastoralist regions of Kenya, they encouraged the increased livestock production. Veterinary medicine improved the health and lifespan of livestock. Exotic breeds, particularly the Indian Sahiwal, were introduced to the common zebu stock. Although this improved milk production, they became more susceptible to local disease.¹⁶³ ALDEV built earthen dams and dug large seasonal catchment pools to extend the usage of wet season grazing areas. Ironically, this aggravated the overstocking problem in the Southern Province. Establishing regular markets was deemed necessary to help destock and prevent soil erosion.¹⁶⁴

The government held the perception that Maasai pastoralists were not engaged in the market economy of Kenya, but by the 1940s, the argument had little traction in reality. The cattle off-take from the destocking campaigns of the 1930s and 1940s primarily went to the meat canning facilities for the production of corned beef to be exported to Europe. Until the Leibig canning factory was built at Athi River, the only markets in Kajiado were in Ngong, near Nairobi, Kajiado, far from people in the south of the district, and Namanga, on the border with Tanganyika throughout the 1950s. These factories were situated so as to not violate the quarantine restrictions on Africans' cattle intended to keep poor quality stock from the higher

Water Development, 1956), 5-11. For discussion on the politics of “carrying capacity” in WNNRM see Christian Curtis Young, *In the Absence of Predators: Conservation and Controversy on the Kaibab Plateau* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2002).

¹⁶³ Thurston and University of Cambridge, *Smallholder Agriculture in Colonial Kenya*, 22, 57-58, 124-125.

¹⁶⁴ KNA, KL/7/8, “Minutes of a Meeting Held at Government House on Tuesday, February 19th, 1957, to Discuss Problems Connected With the Preservation of Game in the Amboseli and Mara Areas.”

quality European breeds. The government continued to complain that the Maasai were overstocking, but they had fewer options for markets than European cattle owners had. Vaccination, cattle dipping, and quarantining improved the survival of African cattle as well. Arguments that the overstocking of Maasai cattle was a result of their "cattle complex" was misplaced. Africans were given fewer choices for markets and lower prices for their animals.¹⁶⁵

Someone had to oversee the sale of overstock animals, especially after World War II ended and British meat rationing ended. The Kenya Meat Commission (KMC), first envisioned in 1946 by the Development Committee of the Legislative Council, was intended to oversee the sale of livestock in the colony. Cattle of white settlers received higher prices and priority on the market, but African cattle were plentiful. The KMC organized markets, established local butchers in the reserves, determined distribution of meat depending on consumption needs, and graded cattle. One of the targets of such organization was the "independent itinerant stock trader in native areas" who needed to be eliminated. The Committee warned that the natives would resist the system at first, but they would eventually see the advantages. They would know the set prices and the markets would be established according to quarantine regulations.¹⁶⁶

Veterinary services were improving the health and viability of cattle, but pleuropneumonia and rinderpest still plagued the region. Foot and mouth was a constant worry. Markets were few and far between, the primary one being in Athi River, closer to Nairobi than Tanganyika. Thus, many Maasai simply took their cattle to market across the border. Maasai attitudes about cattle sales confounded colonial agricultural authorities. The Maasai had little

¹⁶⁵ Raikes, *Livestock Development and Policy in East Africa*; Mukhisa Kituyi, *Becoming Kenyans: Socio-Economic Transformation of the Pastoral Maasai*, Drylands Research Series, no 1 (Nairobi, Kenya: Acts Press, 1990).

¹⁶⁶ "Kenya Colony and Protectorate Development Committee Report, Vol. 2."

interest in selling healthy animals at market, when they would fetch the highest prices. The Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Husbandry and Water Resources frequently complained that the only time Maasai cattle came to market in significant numbers was when there was a drought or a number of low quality animals.¹⁶⁷

Since the Maasai viewed their cattle, in part, as a form of wealth, it made sense to them to keep the best of the herds for their own purposes. Trading cattle for cash had little value. The best insurance was to have healthy cattle for milk and meat. Cash was only necessary to pay taxes and buy occasional food stuffs such as maize flour. Since this was not a central part of their diet, it was only needed in the dry season. They attached meaning to the animals, often with ceremonial purposes. Cattle served as their own currency in the Maasai community.¹⁶⁸ The lack of Maasai engagement with a cash economy was seen as a sign of their failure to modernize.

In reality, it mattered little how the government planned to tax or establish markets and reliable prices. Frequent droughts thwarted efforts to raise revenue for the ADC. Cattle died before they could be slaughtered. Grass disappeared. The KMC was unsuccessful in attracting Maasai from Kajiado, so ALDEV established the African Livestock Marketing Organization (ALMO), which made arrangements with livestock owners in the Southern Province to buy a quota of cattle per month in 1953. ALMO's purpose was to bring more cattle to market from pastoralist regions of Kenya for the Kenya Meat Commission (KMC). They did this by establishing holding grounds and sending mobile abattoirs to regions far from markets to deal

¹⁶⁷ KNA, DC/NGO/1/9/4, correspondence between Officer in Charge, Masai Area, Ministry of Agriculture, Kenya Meat Commission, private slaughter houses, District Commissioner, and Ministry for Local Government. 1947-1958.

¹⁶⁸ For example, Ole Purdul, interview; Tuarare, interview; Lele Kayie, August 15, 2013.

with low quality stock. These traveling butchers paid a set price per head.¹⁶⁹

One of the biggest problems with ALMO and the KMC was that it kept African cattle separate from white settler cattle. The two markets were not integrated and Africans received artificially set prices for their cattle. African herds grew with the improvement of veterinary medicine, but there was no good outlet for the overflow of cattle. The lack of integration of all livestock markets in Kenya was the primary reason why the Maasai moved their market orientation southward into Tanyanyika.¹⁷⁰ Utilizing family connections with Ilkisongo on the other side of the border, they found better prices and a freer market, away from Kenyan taxation. One of ALDEV's most successful attempts at setting up a market in Kajiado was in Illasit, on the southern border near Tanganyika.¹⁷¹

In order to keep the cattle in Kenyan markets and destock the Southern Reserve, the Ministry of Agriculture set up a twice weekly market in Ngong. This was still a long journey from Amboseli. The government also saw the livestock markets as a source of revenue for the ADCs, which needed money to pay their employees and implement development projects of their own. Therefore, the government's policy to reduce the stock in Native Areas in order to reach the "carrying capacity of the ground" coincided with the need to find an efficient way to tax the Maasai. The Kajiado District Commissioner raised the point that not all Maasai owned livestock, and thus, would pay no tax if this plan went into effect. The district then implemented a trial period of three months, taxing at two shillings per head sold at market. If this did not

¹⁶⁹ Raikes, *Livestock Development and Policy in East Africa*, 118-119.

¹⁷⁰ Evangelou, *Livestock Development in Kenya's Maasailand*, 44-45. Evangelou argues that the Maasai did not want to disengage completely from the market, but conditions rarely favored their participation.

¹⁷¹ Kituyi, *Becoming Kenyans*, 62; Benjamin Tuarare, interview.

prove effective, they would try another taxation plan.¹⁷²

ALDEV started two grazing schemes in Kajiado District. The Konzo Grazing scheme, which ran from 1942-1955, was, in the end, a failure. Situated in the Kaputiei *olosh* section of Kajiado, the scheme was to demonstrate to other Maasai the benefits of properly organized grazing management. Ten families agreed to participate and moved to a 22,000 acre plot of land surrounded by wire fencing that was supposed to keep out wildlife and control where livestock grazed. Participants had to agree to weekly cattle dipping, regular vaccinations, rotation of grazing areas, and restricting stock to a set number. At first it seemed like all was going according to plan, because in 1953, a very dry year, as herd productivity outside the scheme declined, the herds inside the scheme continued to increase. Yet, the project was a victim of its own success. Despite agreeing to destocking when capacity was reached, the participants did not sell. They said that quarantine restrictions prevented them from taking cattle to market. By 1955, the herd was too large for the ranch and the participants were forced to reduce the herd to 1,700, from 2,400. Rather than sell off, four families left the project, taking their cattle with them.¹⁷³

Rather than seeing the Konza Grazing Scheme as a failure, since overstocking remained a problem despite a carefully laid out plan and participants left the program, ALDEV reported that some value was still gained. It was now proven that sedentary livestock ranching reduced the amount of livestock deaths as a result of drought, dipping and vaccinations worked, and stock limitation was necessary to maintain healthy herds and viable grazing spaces. However, Konza was known as an "incubator for an already overstocked Land Unit." The grazing scheme also

¹⁷² KNA, DC/NGO/1/9/4, correspondences between J.F.D. Buttery, acting Provincial Commissioner, Southern Province, Kajiado District Commissioner, and Commissioner for Local Government regarding the ADC, 1956.

¹⁷³ African Land Development Board, *African Land Development in Kenya* (Nairobi: Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Husbandry, and Water Resources, 1956), 70-73.

highlighted the role of migratory grazing in arid ecosystems. Although sedentary grazing increased reproduction, it led to rapid overstocking because the participants were unwilling or unable to take their livestock to markets. Seasonal migration kept numbers lower or at a slower increase due to drought, disease, or accidents. A natural population regulation was part of the traditional grazing patterns.

The Ilkisongo Grazing Scheme, funded for 1954-1955, comprising largely of the Amboseli ecosystem, was intended to solve the problem of livestock loss during drought and overstocking during good years, leveling it out to a manageable number over time. Planners believed the traditional grazing system as too dependent on permanent water sources, such as the one in Ol Tukai. They used the traditional routes, but planned to build permanent water sources throughout the region to increase the amount of resting time for dry season grazing areas. The land was divided into blocks according to sections of the Ilkisongo, giving 600 square miles to the Ilaitaiyok, 500 to the Ilaiser, and 930 to the Ilmolelian, each having a quota of livestock allotments. The project was overseen by a Livestock Officer, but also a group of elders. The project built dams and troughs to catch rain water and hold it longer at the end of the rainy seasons. Unlike the Konzo Scheme, there was no direct effort to sedentarize the Ilkisongo.¹⁷⁴

By the end of the funded scheme, the number of cattle reached 80,000 or one head per sixteen acres, but ALDEV considered the carrying capacity to be one in thirty acres, a ratio decided upon by the board. Their reasoning for determining this carrying capacity is not clearly explained. They debated mandatory destocking but determined that the political implications would make it impossible. The planner counted on the limitation of permanent water to encourage the owners to sell the surplus. By the time of publication of the 1955 report, the

¹⁷⁴ ADLEV, 73-75.

scheme was still functioning with mixed success. The dams were effective to keep cattle out of dry season grazing for several more weeks each season. There was some success in off-take of cattle, but this was through an agreement with the Tanganyika Veterinary Department, which allowed Kenyan cattle to pass over the border into Chagga area. The Chagga had experienced their own economic boom through coffee production and had more money to spend. Thus the Ilkisongo were able to get higher prices.¹⁷⁵ ALDEV also paid *ilmurran* one shilling a day to construct dams throughout the district; this was successful from 1949 to 1954, but then they began to run out of men as the age-set diminished through marriage and equipment broke down and was not replaced.¹⁷⁶

ALDEV's grazing schemes' failures lay in the fact that policies were not founded in the knowledge of local management systems or in consultation with locals who would be expected to comply.¹⁷⁷ The water schemes exacerbated grassland loss by concentrating large numbers of stock in smaller areas, increasing erosion. The 1960-1961 drought brought most remaining schemes to an end that had not yet failed. By 1960, 3.7 million hectares were under an ALDEV grazing scheme, but in 1963 only 320,000 hectares remained. In Kajiado District, many Ilkisongo Maasai who had joined projects left as the drought exacerbated the problems imposed

¹⁷⁵ ALDEV, 73-74.

¹⁷⁶ ALDEV, 75-76. ALDEV implemented other projects in attempt to alleviate overstocking and establish better land management practices. These included a private ranch for Reverend Daudi Mokinyo, who was given a loan to establish permanent water and develop his own grazing scheme on 4,000 acres as an example to other Maasai ranchers. ALDEV funded education programs in Kajiado and Narok District schools, teaching animal husbandry and grass management to Maasai boys who boarded there.

¹⁷⁷ Peter D Little and David W. Brokensha, "Local Institutions, Tenure, and Resource Management in East Africa," in *Conservation in Africa: Peoples, Policies and Practices*, ed. David Anderson and Richard Grove (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 193-209.

on them by grazing schemes.¹⁷⁸

By 1961, the year of the worst drought in Amboseli, ALMO was only able to meet 2% of their stock buying quota. The government's involvement in managing the drought was slow to materialize and lacked any real initiative. Death by drought and disease decimated herds. The provincial agricultural officer T. Hughes Rice sent a mobile abattoir throughout Kajiado to slaughter cattle on the spot to try to salvage some meat. At least the Maasai would receive some payment for their declining herds. The abattoir was prepared to slaughter 100 head of cattle per day, but was only taking in 30 head per day.¹⁷⁹

For drought relief, the government brought maize flour into the drought-stricken areas, but they preferred selling it to giving it out. The revenue from the maize would pay for local development projects, particularly for the development of permanent water sources in Kajiado. The Provincial Commissioner felt that the money should be directed toward ALDEV projects and the abattoir, thus putting money directly in the hands of the Maasai. He argued this would:

restore to the people some much needed dignity and morale instead of forcing them to live on charity...nothing like enough money in sight anywhere to cause more than a ripple in the present situation, and the more money is diverted from other projects to meet what is to be hoped is only a short term emergency, the more likely we are to prejudice the medium and long term economy of the country.¹⁸⁰

It is this same drought that many of the Maasai I interviewed said was the worst in their memory before the 2009 drought.¹⁸¹

¹⁷⁸ Evangelou, *Livestock Development in Kenya's Maasailand*, 44-45.

¹⁷⁹ KNA, DC/NGO/1/9/4, memo by L.A. Weaving, Ministry of Agriculture, "K.M.C. Cattle From Masailand," October 30, 1961

¹⁸⁰ KNA, DC/NGO/1/9/4, memo by the Unemployment Working Party, aiding in drought relief, "Livestock Marketing: Kajiado," September 8, 1961.

¹⁸¹ Moipa Leyian, August 18, 2013; Olorryoshi Leyian, March 28, 2013; Francis Ole

The individuals I interviewed regarding the 1960-1961 drought in Amboseli recalled a dark time. While the government was arguing over whether to continue to tax them during the drought, the Ilkisongo Maasai were simply struggling to survive. Lele Kayie and Moipa Leyian were young girls at the time. Kayie lived in Itoneti at the time and recalled that so many of the livestock died, and many people died too. People were too weak to move, which made fetching water more difficult. Only the permanent sites had water and they were far away. It was only possible to carry water that far if you had a donkey. Kayie said the 2009 drought brought back all those memories when livestock died. “When there is no livestock, homes are lonely,” she said. Leyian's memory was similar, but she framed it in such a way as remembering the 1960 drought as the time they lost a whole generation, with many of the adults dying because they gave the food to the children. USAID dropped bags of maize flour and powdered milk by airplane near the scattered *manyattas*. Many called this time *Olengruma ilo merekani*, referring to the flour given to them by the Americans.¹⁸²

The Ministry of Agriculture thought the best solution to end the famine and to make sure the Kajiado ADC was self-sufficient was to use ALMO to distribute cash. Maasai would make money from their cattle (sick and weak) sales and receive a Famine Relief Voucher. The voucher would then be used to pay their taxes and buy famine relief maize. This, however, meant that those who had no cattle to sell could not obtain vouchers. Not all in the Ministry of Agriculture

Legis, June 10, 2013; first son Ole Lenku, September 12, 2013.

¹⁸²Kayie, interview; Leyian, interview, August 18, 2013; “USAID History,” *USAID From the American People*, May 15, 2014, <http://www.usaid.gov/who-we-are/usaid-history>., It is likely that the air drop did not happen until 1962 because USAID was not formally established until November 1961. This was likely one of their first projects. It is also possible my interviewees only referred to USAID because they are familiar with that agency. It could have been general aid from the US. President Kennedy was keenly interested in Kenya, having implemented the “Kenya Airlift” from 1959-1961

supported this plan. If the Maasai were receiving market value for their cattle, was this not cash in hand? Some in the Ministry disregarded the fact that market value was low due to the poor quality of cattle during the drought. In fact, ALMO's involvement in the market de-incentivized other buyers from purchasing cattle in these markets because the prices were artificially high.¹⁸³

The toll on herds was immense. By October 1961, 100,000 hides had been exported from Kajiado District, but the Provincial Commissioner of the Southern Province suspected as many as 50,000 animals died that had not been recorded. The typical yearly export was 23,000. Only ALMO bought the weakened cattle. Other private buyers stopped purchasing Kajiado cattle. Even still, weak cattle continued to graze almost non-existent grass. The government was providing 2,500 bags of maize per month, but the Kajiado DC requested 1,000 additional bags because conditions were so bad. The price tag of £50,000 was more than the government wanted to invest. The Provincial Commissioner feared total breakdown of local government if the ADC went bankrupt during the drought.¹⁸⁴

By the time the rains finally came in late 1961, government plans for destocking and revenue-raising were in limbo. Destocking had occurred by natural events, but this was a waste of resources. The problem was, once again, to get the Maasai to bring their cattle to market. One member of the Kenya Meat Commission remarked:

My view is that now the rains have broken, and if they continue reasonably, the Masai will sell the bare minimum of stock necessary to supply their most basic cash needs. This *cri de couer* from the Masai African elected members is typical of the whole attitude of pastoral tribes, and others to livestock marketing in which they fail to press their people to market stock when it is fit to be bought, connive at, if not encourage overstocking in

¹⁸³ KNA, DC/NGO/1/9/4, memos of Ministry of Agriculture, "Livestock Marketing: Masai" September 4 and 6, 1961; Raikes, *Livestock Development and Policy in East Africa*.

¹⁸⁴ KNA, DC/NGO/1/9/4, memos of Ministry of Agriculture, "Livestock Marketing: Masai" September 4 and 6, 1961.

good years, and then scream the place down when stock starts dying from starvation in bad years.¹⁸⁵

By giving the ADC the authority to regulate the sale of stock through taxation and with their traditional rights to advise on livestock movement, the government began losing control of the ability to manage resources. Despite the severity of the drought, the government stood by its policy of district level self-sufficiency.¹⁸⁶

Water Works

Water is one of the crucial aspects of understanding "management" from a Maasai perspective. Examining water development projects in Amboseli provides a broader scope of the ecological context of the Ilkisingo cattle system and landscape of management on the ground. Women often used the phrase, "water is life" when explaining how daily activities and survival depends on their access to it. Collecting water was women's work and donkeys were women's animals. Water management was critical to the problem of overgrazing in Amboseli, but the solution, as with livestock markets, was a moving target. This perspective also shines a light on the Royal National Parks of Kenya and the Game Department, more formally called the Ministry of Forest Development, Game and Fisheries.¹⁸⁷

The 1950s marked a shift in the environment of the Amboseli Reserve. Water management in Amboseli provides a different angle from which to understand the development

¹⁸⁵ KNA, DC/NGO/1/9/4, memo of Kenya Meat Commission, "KMC, Cattle from Maasailand" November, 1, 1961.

¹⁸⁶ KNA, DO/NGO/1/9/4, memo of L.A. Leaving, Ministry of Agriculture, "KMC Cattle from Masailand," January 2, 1962.

¹⁸⁷ I will simply refer to it as the Game Department because its name is changed frequently, but the essential purpose is as a Game Department.

discourse. In 1952, Amboseli's Assistant Warden David Lovatt Smith, who wrote a memoir of his experiences providing a contrast to the archival records, recalled that wildlife in Amboseli was vibrant, but tourism was minimal. Within three years, this changed with a drought in 1955. This was not the first such occurrence, with widespread grassland depletion and a drastic loss of water, but it was the first time a serious drought coincided with improved veterinary care and larger herds. By October, over 50,000 head of cattle were watering in the Reserve. Chief Lenku Ole Mpaa worked with Warden Tabs Taberer and Smith to negotiate with the herders to limit the number of cattle. This was a difficult task as animals were dying with the lack of rain.¹⁸⁸

Ole Mpaa told Smith that the Maasai did not favor the water in Ol Tukai because of its salinity, but they were hesitant to agree to install any permanent water outside the sanctuary because they remembered previous agreements with the colonial government. The 1911 move lingered in their memory. Eventually, he obtained the agreement of local elders that placing permanent water sites in better grazing areas was the best plan. Smith worried that even with the agreement, the Director of the National Parks, Mervyn Cowie would not be able to find the funding to move forward. He was right.¹⁸⁹

The 1956 Game Policy Committee, as discussed in Chapter 1, met in Amboseli in April that year to make a proposal about what to do about Ol Tukai. Its members, including Cowie and Dr. Likimani, a trustee of the National Parks who was also a Maasai, believed the problem was one of correct land management rather than an either/or decision between cattle and wildlife. They advocated a water supply scheme to move Maasai cattle out of Ol Tukai. If water supplies were located beyond the sanctuary, the conflict between cattle and wildlife could be resolved.

¹⁸⁸ David Lovatt Smith, *Amboseli: A Miracle Too Far?* (Nairobi: Mawenzi Books, 2008), 60-64.

¹⁸⁹ Smith, 62.

The Game Policy Committee's first report to the Governor was, in part, a response to Mr. Lehner's hydrological report. As a hydrological engineer for the Public Work's Department (PWD), the hydrologist reported in 1957 that the chances of finding good water on the northern border was very small but suspected that the water would have high salinity. Therefore, the Hydraulic Branch of the PWD would not invest in further drilling there. He recommended finding water at higher elevations to improve the piping process with gravity, but even then, the cost of pipes and water storage was going to be prohibitive. ALDEV's recommendation was to use a pumping system, which the PWD found to be too expensive.¹⁹⁰

Governor Baring laid out his agenda for Amboseli in a February meeting at the Government House in Nairobi. At this meeting, he said that the government's chief aim was "the improved organization of Masai stock farming." This would be done through a well-planned water and grazing system. The second priority was to protect game in Amboseli. These two goals could only be reached together. Kenya, he believed needed to focus more intently on tourism because trade was so low in any other type of trade. He attempted to allay Maasai fears that the government sought to take Amboseli away from them through the establishment of a national park, stating that, "Amboseli is an integral part of the Maasai land unit, and Amboseli's development must be dove-tailed with the development of the district as a whole."¹⁹¹ He warned that the difficulties in solving the Amboseli water problem were many. Water without high mineral and fluoride content had to be avoided. The process of digging lines and laying pipe would be difficult because they would have to be buried deep to avoid being crushed by elephants, and while the pipes were being laid, the Maasai would probably think they were

¹⁹⁰KNA, KL/7/8, note by H.J. Squires, Hydraulic Engineer, PWD, "Amboseli – Water Supply," January 14, 1957.

¹⁹¹ KNA, KL/7/8, Baring speech to Game Policy Committee, February 5, 1957.

deceived because of the amount of government construction needed. Before any pipes could be installed, there was another problem; they would have to decide on how to get permission from the Maasai. To ask for permission outright might open the door for refusal. If they went ahead with the expensive (£80,000) construction and the Maasai refused to cooperate, they would have trouble. He suggested a third way in which watering sites would be placed to the south and north, as the hydrologic report suggested, being a less expensive option. If, after installing the system, the Maasai balked, the government would not have lost as much of their investment. However, the number of cattle in Ol Tukai still needed to be negotiated with the Ilkisongo to set a quota allowed to grazing for a number of years.

Gerald D. M. Campbell traveled to Amboseli late in 1956 and spent the next six months exploring potential sites. He worked with Smith and Taberer to locate places that were both plentiful and water and appropriate for Maasai herds, and developed a close relationship with the reserve's employees. Smith recalled that Campbell, after having completed his investigations returned to Nairobi to find that the government only approved funding for one of the four recommended boreholes. His report suggested some specific sites that would be easy to find water. The maps he used were inaccurate in their depiction of the location of year-round water. He saw no water there. Their map of Longido showed permanent water from the Legurumani Plain and on the north and west slopes of Kilimanjaro, but in discussions with local people, he found that there was only seasonal water. At this time the swamps around the Ol Tukai lodges were full of water, and he gathered this was the area with permanent water fed by springs from the underground water table. In Sinya, two miles south of Lake Amboseli, he found shallow wells dug by the Maasai and Warusha (of Tanganyika). He was amazed by the ingenuity of these wells, believing them to be the only wells dug by Africans in the region. The well-diggers dug

shallow rectangle pits with a ramp, which the cattle used to walk down into the hole. From there, about six cattle could drink from a trough dug into the water table. Perhaps, he thought, this could be a simple method to employ in a larger water management plan.¹⁹²

In response to Lehner and Campbell's reports, and in an effort to resolve the problem of cattle in Amboseli, the Governor called a meeting at the Government House on February 19, 1957. He may have also reacted to the flood of letters to the newspapers by local and international conservation groups, disparaging the government's lack of action to save Amboseli from overgrazing by Maasai cattle.¹⁹³ Governor Baring met with several government officials including the Minister for Works, the Director of the Royal National Parks, and Dr. L.S.B. Leakey, among others. Baring believed Lehner's recommendations were too expensive and would not be acceptable to the Maasai, but Campbell's recommendations might prove more feasible. By creating an inner and outer ring of water points in areas outside Amboseli that would have sufficient grazing, the cattle would have no reason to go into the Ol Tukai sanctuary for dry season water. Springs from the slopes of Kilimanjaro would be the best option for the southern part, as long as the Tanganyikan government would work with them. These watering points would also keep the Matapato out of Ol Tukai, which often led to conflict between Ilkisono and Matapato herders. Still, funding this project, including further investigations, was a matter of debate. Those present decided a special fund would be put aside for this, justifiable because it would be helping move the Swynnerton Plan closer to its goals.¹⁹⁴ However, the Game

¹⁹² Smith, 66-70; KNA, KL/7/8, Gerald Campbell report, "Preliminary Observations on Surface and Ground Water Conditions – North and West Slopes of Kilimanjaro Amboseli National Reserve.

¹⁹³ Smith, *Amboseli*, 67-68.

¹⁹⁴ KNA, KL/7/8, "Minutes of Meeting Held at Government House on Tuesday February 19th, 1957 to Discuss Problems Connected with the Preservation of Game in the Amboseli and

Department, of which the Trustees of the National Parks depended for funding, only allocated £8,800 for all of the colony's national park development that year.¹⁹⁵

Following this meeting, Campbell returned to Amboseli and from March to June 1957 dug boreholes, measured the water table, and surveyed for possible future borehole sites. His report, "Amboseli Water Supplies Investigation", was the most detailed analysis of the water systems above and below ground. He reached the water table in most drilling sites, but the closer he was to Lake Amboseli, the higher the salt and mineral content. The lake is the drainage point for the whole Amboseli region, filtering out minerals as the water evaporates. During the dry season, the white chalky residue can be seen quite easily. The word of mouth information he had received before, that surface water could be found on the Kenyan slopes of Kilimanjaro, proved unfounded, or at least there was not enough water for piping purposes.¹⁹⁶

By mid-year, a perfect storm was brewing over the water situation. Severe drought affected both wildlife and Maasai herds. Smith recalled the increase in the number of Maasai moving into Ol Tukai reached unprecedented numbers. Ole Mpaa and other elders could do nothing to stop the violation of the agreement. Rumors circulated that the Kajiado District Headquarters were encouraging this settlement. These were new people, not those who traditionally used Ol Tukai as part of their seasonal movement. These were Maasai unaccustomed to grazing so closely with large numbers of wildlife. As a result, human-wildlife conflict increased. Lions killed more cattle than usual and many buffalo, rhino, and lions were

Mara Areas.”

¹⁹⁵ Smith, *Amboseli*, 69.

¹⁹⁶ KNA, KL/7/9, Gerald Campbell, “Amboseli Water Supplies Investigation,” 1957.

killed by Maasai.¹⁹⁷

Despite Cowie's pleas for more money to alleviate the congestion and provide relief from the drought, Baring issued a memorandum in December that the plans proposed by the hydrologists and Amboseli administration were too expensive, both financially and politically. This was more the heart of the matter from the government's perspective. The rhetoric around preserving wildlife and assisting the Maasai in their time of need was hollow; the political will was not there. Baring said if the required amount was actually spent, financial conservatives in his administration and the colonial office would criticize the use of so much money on one project in such a small and remote location. He also pointed to the potential rift this would create with the Maasai, if a permanent project of digging pipelines on the Maasai Land Unit were to go ahead. Since the Maasai were in agreement with permanent water, this is an unlikely problem, especially since Baring was so keen to keep good relations with the Maasai. It seems more like a way to put the burden of political will on the Maasai leadership. Instead, he encouraged a short term bandage for the larger problem - fund two boreholes at the Ilenguruyuni Hill and Lemongo sites.¹⁹⁸

Surprisingly, and apparently unknown to Baring or anyone in the PWD, ALDEV, or Game Department, the hydrological landscape changed almost overnight. Despite the lack of rain, the swamps around Ngong Narok had risen above the track Taberer and Smith used to do patrols in the southeast region of the reserve. The Maasai had no living memory of this phenomenon ever happening before. Campbell speculated that rains from Kilimanjaro had filled the underground aquifers to high levels, but water continued to rise through 1958. It was also

¹⁹⁷ Smith, *Amboseli*, 71-72.

¹⁹⁸ KNA, KL/7/9, memo of Evelyn Baring, Governor, December 7, 1957.

possible there was a seismic shift that moved the water table. The increase in water had a positive effect on wildlife. Birds returned that had been locally extinct for years. Fish eagles, kingfisher, herons, ducks, geese, and rails of various species increased in number around the newly emerging water. Word spread that Amboseli was now a great place for bird watching. It even attracted ornithologist Roger Tory Peterson, who was visiting Lake Nakuru in 1957.¹⁹⁹

Despite fears that the water might be temporary, Taberer and Smith worked with Campbell and Ole Mpaa to make a plan for diverting some of the water for cattle. If the government was not going to fund boreholes in the near future, they would take matters into their own hands. They borrowed a bulldozer from Tsavo West National Park to dig a trench from the swamp toward Lake Amboseli. With this one piece of machinery and the assistance of local Kamba and Maasai who were keen to have an alternative source of water outside Ol Tukai, they were successful in creating troughs for cattle. Smith estimated it watered 15,000 head of cattle out of Ol Tukai each day. This eased relations between Amboseli administration and the Maasai but not with Amboseli's wardens and the government.²⁰⁰

The natural increase in water did not completely solve the problem of cattle in Ol Tukai. The trench needed continual maintenance as the water eroded the soil piled on either side. Secretary J.C. Colchester of PWD believed more boreholes needed to be dug, but the department had no extra funding for further exploration. They recommended working with Tanganyika for cost saving. Baring, conscious of the political implications of any decision he made regarding Amboseli's water, said that the plans put forth by Lehner, Campbell, and Colchester were too expensive, and would open him up to criticism by those who advocated a conservative colonial

¹⁹⁹ Smith, *Amboseli*, 75-90.

²⁰⁰ Smith, *Amboslei*, 75-90.

fiscal policy. This costly setup would require watering by permit only to raise funds. The Maasai would not accept this proposal. The best option, Baring believed was to go ahead with the digging of Campbell's two recommended sites at a cost of £2000 and if they were successful an additional £2500 would be needed to make them function. This, he argued, would redirect cattle out of Ol Tukai, bringing them north and south. The plan would fit well with the Maasai grazing schemes set up by ALDEV.²⁰¹

P.W. Low, Kajiado's District Commissioner, tasked with implementing ALDEV's grazing scheme grew weary of the lack of any real and practical action on the part of the government. He was able to negotiate with Loitokitok Section Council to limit cattle in the perimeter around Ol Tukai to 7000 in January 1958 to alleviate some of the congestion around the swamps. This was a hard fought victory for him, so he wanted to insure the agreement with permanent water sources. Having a permanent site south of the Reserve would help keep the cattle in the forests of Kilimanjaro and at least two miles away from the Oladare Swamps. He disagreed that surface dams and pans would provide any real relief. The Maasai feared these permanent watering sites could themselves become desiccated after continual year-round use, and rightly so. However, this could be resolved by controlling the movement of livestock through the grazing plan. In the meantime, he wanted them to allocate L1500 to pipe water from the swamps.²⁰²

Baring's wishes prevailed, and the Ministry of Works hired a company to drill the boreholes, but with the involvement of so many bureaucratic entities to dig two boreholes was more complicated than he intended. The Ministry of Development only allocated £1000 of the asked for £4500, enough for one borehole only. The government refused to allocate anymore

²⁰¹ KNA, KL/7/8, memo of Governor Baring, December 7, 1957.

²⁰² KNA, KL/7/8 letter from P.W. Low, D.C. Kajiado to Provincial Commissioner, Southern Province, "Amboseli National Reserve," January 16, 1958.

funds. S.I. Ellis of the Royal National Parks agreed that their funds for the improvement of Ol Tukai water supply would be used to dig a borehole in the north. J.J. Adie of the Ministry of Forest Development, Game and Fisheries said these funds could not be so easily reallocated without prior approval from the Development Committee of the Ministry of Works. He suggested that the second borehole be sunk since the company was already there, but the money would need to be found elsewhere.²⁰³

Cowie, eager to see progress in Amboseli spoke with Governor Baring about the problem. Baring told him to go ahead and have the borehole sunk. In the meantime, he would make sure the money was found. Cowie authorized the dig, but when the digging company asked for payment, Baring's promise fell through. The director petitioned Adie for funds, but he told Cowie the national parks took this responsibility upon themselves. The Game Department would not give them money. Adie became frustrated over the increasing costs of which no one would take responsibility and the bureaucratic shuffling. He argued this was not a problem of his ministry. The boreholes were a project of ALDEV and conservation, which would fall under other institutions.²⁰⁴

In August 1958, Baring held a *baraza* in Amboseli to convey his agenda to the Ilkisongo, telling the mostly Maasai audience of the goals he set at the February 1957 meeting.²⁰⁵ He told them the government was working on establishing permanent watering points outside of Ol Tukai and had come up with a grazing scheme in collaboration with twenty local elders. He

²⁰³ KNA, KL/7/8, Secret memo of Council of Minister, Development Committee, "Provision of £4,500 for two exploratory boreholes in the Amboseli National Reserve," January 30, 1958.

²⁰⁴ KNA, KL/7/8, letter from J.J. Adie to Cowie, "Amboseli Borehole," July 22, 1958.

²⁰⁵ "Governor's Pledge to Masai on Amboseli Rights: Tribe Congratulated," *East African Standard*, September 12, 1958.

praised their agreement to limit grazing to 7000 head of cattle at a given time and for staying out of the sanctuary for an extra six weeks that year, thanks to the temporary dams and troughs dug through ALDEV. Unfortunately, money had not yet been procured for permanent water, but he was endeavoring to find funding and work with elders on placing these sites. He assured them:

The Government recognizes that the whole of Amboseli area is within the Masai Native Land Unit and belongs to the Masai, whose rights to it are protected under the Native Lands Trust Ordinance. The government will not take away any of this land from the Masai. In order that sufficient water and grazing may be maintained it will be necessary to limit the number of cattle permitted to water and graze at a particular place within the areas of the scheme.²⁰⁶

Smith showed him the work on the water trough, and he was impressed at the initiative people were taking in solving the water problem themselves. During the construction of the canal, a layer of silica rock which the bulldozer was unable to break. The project had to take a long detour. A week after Baring's visit, £1,000 and a message from the governor, "for David to take the short cut," arrived in Amboseli's headquarters. Smith suspected the money was Baring's own as the government was still debating who would fund permanent water sources. Baring saw local efforts as a sign the Maasai had come to terms with the reality of tourism in their midst by making an effort to stay out of Ol Tukai. He recommended they be given more authority in the everyday running of the reserve. Even before he made the recommendation to the District Commissioner that a committee be created from Maasai, National Parks, and District officers, Taberer and Smith had an unofficial committee of local Maasai. This committee emerged out of the discussions of what to do about the new water. Baring's recommendation was a precursor to the eventual handover to the Kajiado African District Council.²⁰⁷

²⁰⁶ KNA, KL/7/8, minutes from Council of Ministers Development Committee, "Water Supplies at Amboseli," 1958.

²⁰⁷ Smith, *Amboseli*, 94-97.

This speech, or perhaps Baring's presence in Amboseli, spurred the Ministry of Agriculture to take responsibility of the boreholes, as it was a project to improve livestock and had become a low priority for ALDEV. He petitioned the treasury for additional funds, unwilling to allocate money from another project. Even without funds drilling continued. Campbell returned to Amboseli in August and dug several successful wells, enough, he believed, to keep cattle from entering Ol Tukai from the north for the time being. He noted the unusual presence in the dry season rivers and the death of mature acacias. He blamed uneven rainfall.²⁰⁸ The government's lack of willingness to fund water development reflects the colony-wide and empire-wide philosophy that revenue should be sourced locally and each region should be self-sufficient. Even when famine threatened the livelihood of local communities, the state was hesitant to get involved because it might lead to dependency. Rather, they pushed the Maasai to sell livestock, creating capital, rather than use Colonial Office funds to assist struggling Africans. Even as development on the local level in Amboseli unfolded, the region was also the topic of discussion at the national and international level. Many concerned more with wildlife management than cattle had their own agenda for how Amboseli should be governed.

The International Context of Managing Wildlife in Amboseli

There was still a strong push from the international conservation sector to set up national parks, ensuring the long term survival of wildlife in strategic locations. The prevailing opinion among members of organizations like the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) and UNESCO was that wildlife and protected areas were best placed under legal and

²⁰⁸ KNA, KL/7/8, Gerald Campbell's report, "Amboseli Water Supplies Investigation Report No. 5."

permanent protection. This "fortress conservation" mentality was the dominant philosophy for much of the twentieth century.²⁰⁹

The British East Africa Fauna Conference's 1958 meeting took place in Nairobi, a propitious meeting of like-minded colonialists in Britain's East African colonies. In this meeting, they discussed the future of conservation, which in their opinion, rested firmly in the establishment of national parks throughout the region.²¹⁰ The organization brought members of Kenya, Uganda, and Tanganyika's Game Departments and National Park organizations together at periodic intervals to coordinate approaches to wildlife protection. Noel Simon, who led this meeting, was the founder of the Kenya Wildlife Society, later to become the East African Wildlife Society. His philosophy was to involve Africans in wildlife conservation, believing this to be the best way to secure the sustainability of these populations. His work in East Africa led him to work for the IUCN and was responsible for starting the IUCN Red Data Book, which is a comprehensive list of known endangered organisms.²¹¹

By 1958, they had three major topics on the agenda. First was to increase the number of national parks by converting national reserves and controlled areas. Reserves were intended to be a short term category for a section land to come under protected status according to the 1933

²⁰⁹ William Mark Adams, *Against Extinction: The Story of Conservation* (Sterling, VA: Earthscan, 2004), 112-113.

²¹⁰ Berman, *Control & Crisis in Colonial Kenya the Dialectic of Domination.*, 2-4.

²¹¹ Quentin Luke and Geoffrey Mwachala, "Noel Simon: A Hero Passed Over?," *Journal of East African Natural History* 98, no. 1 (2009): 1–2. After serving in World War II in Africa, he moved with his wife to Kenya to run a farm in the Kenya Highlands. He became concerned that the wildlife he saw around him was diminishing and wanted to do something about it. Thus, he formed the organization. After his involvement in securing Kenyan national parks, he worked with David Sheldrick of Tsavo National Park to employ Waliangulu as anti-poaching rangers, keeping them from becoming poachers again.

London Convention. Controlled areas were secure only for the hunter and, therefore, not a real protected area, according to Noel Simon, the Chairman of the Kenya Wildlife Society, who commented on the future trends in conservation at the conference. Once a national park was established, it needed a "game management zone" around it where humans could live, but had restrictions placed on how they used the land. In effect, these would be controlled areas zoned for permit hunting.

Second, the conference pointed to the need to have a science-based approach to managing wildlife conservation. All game related departments needed to employ biologists and work with veterinarians to stem the spread of disease. Part of the scientific management of the environment was to first determine the best use of the land. Parks needed to contribute to the economy of the colony. Simon believed some of the best places in East Africa for national parks were the places that had "practically no lawful human inhabitants, and this arid, semi-desert type of country is never likely to be capable of supporting more than an extremely limited number of people, and then only at bare subsistence level."²¹² Amboseli fit this characterization well. These were places where "wild animals have lived there for countless generations without damaging the soil, but it certain that any attempt to utilize this land for ranching domestic live stock (sic), or worse, for cultivation would prove disastrous." The perspective of the East African Wildlife Society was one of preserving these untouched "Edens" for wildlife.

Each park needed to have wildlife surveys, and then biologists, and presumably politicians, could determine the carrying capacity of the land. Any populations above that capacity could be hunted under license. Simon suggested Kenya establish a research committee to work with the Game Department and National Parks to determine the best direction for

²¹² KNA, KW/8/2, report by Noel Simon, Chairman of Kenya Wild Life Society, "British East Africa Fauna Conference: Future Conservation Trends," 1958.

conservation policy. Serengeti National Park had just such a committee to serve as a model. Urgent action was needed, he believed, because most Native Reserves were rapidly increasing in population and flora and fauna would disappear before any solid action was taken. "The Committee considers that no wild life conservation or management can be successful without adequate scientific knowledge and advice which are essential in order to make the optimum use of wildlife as a valuable natural resource."²¹³ This foreshadows the arrival of scientists in Amboseli, who started arriving just months before independence.

Finally, if conservation was to succeed in protecting East Africa's wildlife, then Africans needed to be brought into the picture. They needed to be persuaded to have an attitude change toward wildlife and environmental protection. D.L. Blunt the Minister for Forest Development, Game and Fisheries in Kenya argued that wildlife would come increasingly in conflict with humans due to the "great intensification and development of agriculture and the livestock industry and an upsurge of African nationalism...It was increasingly necessary to educate the public not only to an appreciation of wildlife for its interest and aesthetic but also to a realization of its direct economic value to the people as a whole."²¹⁴ The colonial government had not been successful in persuading the Maasai to engage in "rational" natural resource management, but neither did the government want to provide adequate funding to make their projects successful. The resolutions of the British East Africa Fauna Conference mark a change in approaches to management and involving the Maasai in WNRM. This was the beginning of international involvement through both scientific research and conservation and management policy development. These groups were willing to put money behind their ideas, a strategy the

²¹³ KNA, KW/8/2, "British East Africa Conference: Report by a Sub-Committee," 1958.

²¹⁴ KNA, KW/8/2, British East Africa Fauna Conference, Opening Address by D.L. Blunt, Minister for Forest Development, Game and Fisheries, Kenya, 1958.

government was unwilling to do.

The severe drought of 1961 in southern Kenya and northern Kenya provided a vivid context for the international community to urge the governments of newly independent African countries to create wildlife management policies. Members of the IUCN, FAO, UNESCO, the East African Wildlife Society, and other interested conservation, tourism, and scientific groups met in Arusha, Tanzania in September 1961. The conference built on some of the same principles as the 1957 BEAFC meeting in Nairobi, but had a broader focus with the promise of funding to back the proposals.²¹⁵

Huxley had just completed a tour of major areas of Sub-Saharan Africa in need of wildlife policy overhaul in order to prepare new African governments for modern scientific management as part of the “African Special Project”, a program set up by the IUCN, FAO, and the Commission for Technical Cooperation in Africa south of the Sahara. Huxley published a report to UNESCO giving recommendations on how to set up management plans for national parks and land use policies.²¹⁶ He considered national parks to be the best structure to protect wildlife, since it removed the human factor, particularly in livestock areas. The essence of his plan was a “fortress conservation” approach, which was apparent in the discussion over what to do with Amboseli Reserve and Ngorongoro Crater. Both locations were Maasai areas with increasing herds and competition between livestock and wildlife for grazing space. In Ngorongoro Crater, he urged the Maasai to take a different attitude toward wildlife and keep cattle out for the benefit of conservation. In order to do this, he listed an extensive program for

²¹⁵ “The International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources, African Special Project, Stage I,” *Oryx* 6, no. 03 (September 1961): 143–70.

²¹⁶ Julian Huxley, *The Conservation of Wild Life and Natural Habitats in Central and East Africa; Report on a Mission Accomplished for Unesco, July-September 1960* (Paris: Unesco, 1961), 55-56, 103-106.

educating Africans on the social and economic benefits of wildlife. In Amboseli, he urged the government to declare it a national park as soon as possible because he feared the outcome of mismanagement by inexperienced local African authority. Proper gazettelement, Huxley argued, would bring in much needed funding for tourism infrastructure, and the IUCN, World Bank, and UNESCO were prepared to assist countries who chose to properly gazette national parks for the conservation of wildlife.²¹⁷

At the International Wildlife Conference, referred to as the Arusha Conference, one of the topics on the agenda was ensuring the sustainability of conservation by turning Africans' attention to the profitability and aesthetic purposes of wildlife. Huxley's recommendation that the most important task African nations could undertake was to change the way of thinking of Africans toward wildlife was the theme of Tanganyikan Prime Minister Julius Nyerere's speech to the conference. In his "Arusha Manifesto," Nyerere said that if wildlife was to endure in Africa, both Africans and the international community would have to work together. This was praised as a victory for conservation, that the head of state of one of the newest countries declared wildlife and natural resources management to be a national priority. However, Huxley's opinion on Africans' ability to manage protected areas was not as optimistic. Africans presented a spectrum of problems. On one side, they had a "meat-hunger" that needed to be satisfied, driven in part by poverty and a lack of understanding that live wildlife can bring in revenue. On the other side were educated Africans, those poised to take control of newly independent states, who saw national parks as legacies of colonial rule, which needed to be abolished.²¹⁸ Since the Reserves in Maasai areas were already slated to be taken over by ADC's Huxley proposed that

²¹⁷ Huxley, 60-71.

²¹⁸ John Hillaby, "African Special Project: Stage Two—The Arusha Conference," *Oryx* 6, no. 04 (April 1962): 211-14; Huxley, 92-100.

they should be turned over in name only, allow a portion of the revenue to go to them for development, but management should stay in the control of the National Parks. This could work in Amboseli, he suggested, by making it a “Masai Tribal Park,” but giving the area the level of full protection usually awarded to a national park.²¹⁹

Conclusion

The Arusha Conference represents a shift in the global integration of conservation on the local level. The question was now how to “Africanize” conservation and at the same time reinforce the very Western idea of human-less national parks. Amboseli lay at the center of this debate in East Africa. The British colonial approach of devolving power to African subjects laid the foundation for community involvement in WNRM. This was entirely unintentional, but institutions were in place for local people to voice their opinions, resist policies they did not favor, and utilize their own knowledge about the landscape. All along the way, the state tried to both marginalize this agency but at the same time, utilize it.

The history of wildlife and natural resource management in Amboseli during colonialism highlights the many competing and contradictory discourses on the development of the livestock market, conservation of wildlife, and the role of the Ilkisongo Maasai in the landscape. The Ilkisongo held significant power to guide their adaptation to the changes the future would bring. Their power did not wield enough influence to prevent their ultimate marginalization within Kenyan society as a whole, but unlike other pastoralist groups in East Africa, they held on to a not insignificant degree of autonomy. While people debated the fate of Amboseli Reserve as a protected area, similar discussions were playing out in Tanganyika regarding the Maasai of

²¹⁹ Huxley, 108.

Ngorongoro Crater. They were not as fortunate during this time, being completely excluded from their historical grazing lands.²²⁰

For many Maasai, counting cattle was taboo; it was just not something one did. During conversations I had with older men in Amboseli, I asked them about the size of their herds. They replied that you do not count cattle or children.²²¹ But the colonial government was adamant about counting the cattle. The carrying capacity had to be determined to have proper rangeland management, and this could not be done without counting cattle. Then they imposed grazing schemes and established permanent water to sedentarize and ultimately count Maasai. This was counterintuitive to the Maasai. Such regularizing of processes that needed flexibility ran against their own ways of managing their resources. Even though the government engaged ADCs and traditional Maasai leadership in resource management to a degree, they did not utilize their best resource, knowledge and experience from living in the Amboseli landscape.

²²⁰ Kaj Århem, *Pastoral Man in the Garden of Eden : The Maasai of the Ngorongoro Conservation Area, Tanzania* (Uppsala: Published by University of Uppsala Dept. of Cultural Anthropology in cooperation with the Scandinavian Institute of African Studies, 1985); Katherine Homewood and W. A Rodgers, *Maasailand Ecology : Pastoralist Development and Wildlife Conservation in Ngorongoro, Tanzania* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991).

²²¹ I tried to ascertain why it was taboo to count cattle, but never found an answer beyond a vague idea that bad things could happen.

Chapter 3

Amboseli as a Living Laboratory: The Reciprocity of Place and Science

For more than thirty years, David Maitumo has measured plant coverage and made faunal surveys at to the same sites in Amboseli National Park. He first started working with David Western, a biologist who began his own research in 1967, studying the ecology of the Amboseli basin. I joined Maitumo for a day of data collection. He is a quiet man, so this solitary work suits him. When he speaks, he has much knowledge and wisdom to share of his time growing up in Amboseli and the opportunities being part of a long term science project has brought him. Based on a metered grid, Maitumo samples the height, density, and species, measuring and using a wooden frame with wires hanging down. Plants that touch the wires are counted and recorded. Maitumo is a border crosser, crossing between the world of knowledge he was born into, that of being a Maasai from Amboseli, a knowledge that is passed down orally through generations and through personal experience, and he is also part of the scientific world, where knowledge is systematized, theorized, and published.

Amboseli has drawn much attention as an object of scientific inquiry because of the land's geological, biological, and sociological composition. The specific way water emerges in the low lying springs at the foot of Kilimanjaro has had historical implications for where wildlife migrated and where the Maasai brought their livestock. The presence of charismatic mega-fauna brought scientists to study wildlife populations relatively unhabituated to human settlements, but these same species attracted hunters and poachers. The Maasai altered the environment, shaping the ecological composition; this was part of the attraction of Amboseli to many scientists. Even the more recent changes brought about by the creation of Group Ranches, permanent settlement

of the Maasai, and immigration of other ethnic groups for agriculture has its place in their research design, collection of data, and interpretation. Those who came to Amboseli to start long or short term scientific projects had to encounter and address these dynamics.

In this chapter, I examine three long-term research projects in Amboseli. I argue that these examples provide insight into the complex fabric that is the “field” for biologists. Biological processes are part of this landscape, but the social fabric of the land is crucial to understand as well. Local dynamics of outsider scientists living and working with resident communities, national political and economic forces, academic trends, and international interests in conservation and tourism all shaped the trajectory of Amboseli science. David Western began his doctoral research in Amboseli in 1967, studying the ecology of the Ol Tukai area, but has since expanded the focus of his work to the larger ecosystem. Scientists also studied specific species, including baboon researchers Jeanne and Stuart Altmann, who started working in Amboseli in 1963, and Cynthia Moss, along with many other elephant specialists, who began her project on Amboseli's elephants in 1972.

Amboseli's Living Laboratory

Colonialism and science are intimately linked, as Helen Tilley explains in *Africa as a Living Laboratory*. The British were interested in a scientifically backed colonial structure in order to better understand the places they controlled. Some saw value in understanding the ecology of the land and others believed a deeper understanding of the culture and ways of thinking of their African subjects would allow them to govern more effectively. The African Research Survey, carried out from 1929 to 1939, was intended "to master Africa's environment and its human inhabitants through scientific management and planning," but instead widened the

cracks in the colonial endeavor by showing the complexity of the African continent.²²² One goal of the research was to understand the different landscapes and knowledge-scapes of Africa as well as to control the people. By revealing these complexities, politicians, scientists, and others in the colonial apparatus had to come to terms with the fact that African knowledge systems were more relevant than Europeans wanted to believe. Part of this came to light because of the participation of Africans in the research. Ecologists found that African knowledge of the land, although not established in the empirical process of Western science, was still integral to understanding the land. Anthropologists gained prominence through their role in understanding the ethnographic landscape of Africans. This often brought them in conflict with prevailing theories of racial order. Even if the colonial office wanted to understand the nuances of the Protectorate's environment and people, many areas were left out of such investigations. Maasai culture seemed to be of little interest, and their grazing practices were not valued as a way of understanding cattle ranching in a savanna ecosystem. This prejudice would prove important to the decisions made toward management of Amboseli. Had Maasai perspectives been considered, the perceived relationship between humans and the environment may have looked different.²²³

Tilley uses the concept of a “living laboratory” to explain that although the African environment and its human inhabitants were intended to be the subjects of the African Research Survey, the land and people, in fact, transformed the methodology and served as participants. As when the projects highlighted in this chapter first began their work in Amboseli, local residents

²²² Helen Tilley, *Africa as a Living Laboratory: Empire, Development, and the Problem of Scientific Knowledge, 1870-1950* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2011) 4.

²²³ David Western, *In the Dust of Kilimanjaro* (Washington DC: Island Press, 2002); David Lovatt Smith, *Amboseli: A Miracle Too Far?* (Nairobi: Mawenzi Books, 2008). Western and Smith suggested ways Maasai indigenous knowledge could be incorporated into management policies.

did not have a formal role in research. After an improvement in the educational level of the community, the researchers hired them for data collection. Informally, Maasai were important to guiding those who came for research, acquainting them with the land, seasonal cycles, and social networks in the community.²²⁴ This was an underutilized source of knowledge about the land. Although the Ilkisongo Maasai had been inhabitants of Amboseli for more than 400 years, there is evidence, in the form of how the savanna functions as an ecosystem, that pastoralists (and the Wagalulu before the Maasai) have been a part of the seasonal cycles for many hundreds of years.²²⁵ Amboseli is a case study for this. Although it was not part of the original African Research Survey, the land and people, once intended as subjects of research became part of the fabric of knowledge production, engaging and shaping the outcomes and purposes. This began in the mid-1950s, as the colonial government sought to transform Kenyan environments into their most productive purposes.

Borderlands and Scale in Amboseli Science

The history of Amboseli shaped the place of the scientists within the larger community of Amboseli. Robert Kohler has written, "Field biologists use places actively in their work as tools; they do not just work in a place, as lab biologists do, but on it. Places are as much the object of their work as the creatures that live in them."²²⁶ The scientists, their methods, and those who

²²⁴ Mark V Barrow, "On the Trail of the Ivory-Bill: Field Science, Local Knowledge and the Struggle to Save Endangered Species," in *Knowing Global Environments: New Perspectives on the Field Sciences* (Piscataway, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2011), 135–61. Discusses the importance of lay scientists in the field, particularly as research assistants.

²²⁵ D. Western and C. Van Praet, "Cyclical Changes in the Habitat and Climate of an East African Ecosystem," *Nature* 241, no. 5385 (1973): 104–6.

²²⁶ Robert E Kohler, *Landscapes & Labscapes: Exploring the Lab-Field Border in Biology* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002), 6.

work with them could not be separated from the Amboseli landscape. Just as the scientists who came from the outside had to situate their knowledge in the land, the spaces in which generations experienced life and passed on their wisdom, stories, and knowledge to the next generation informed the Maasai's way of knowing the land and interacting with the natural part of their home. Kohler further describes the "field" where science outside of the lab is performed is as just as much part of the research as the specific focus of the thesis. Amboseli is at the same time a laboratory landscape and a lived landscape. He states that:

Natural places are not just neutral stages for measuring and experiment, as laboratories are, but are themselves, the objects of study. Plants and animals are elements of natural environments, along with topography, habitat, and weather; they are not mere passive guests as they are in labs, but actively alter their environments. Thus place must figure quite differently in lab and field practices. Laboratory workers eliminate the element of place from their experiments. ²²⁷

The case studies I examine in this chapter must each be understood in the context of their field "laboratory" or "labscape", which corresponds to the present day "Amboseli Ecosystem" framework. In the complex layers of the Amboseli region's identity as a place, the layer of "labscape" can be added as a way to understand scientists' perspectives and experiences. Through a reading of the scientific literature published from research done in Amboseli and an analysis of the interviews with these scientists, I find that Kohler's "borderlands" framework provides a suitable way to understand the symbiotic relationship between scientists, those who participate in scientific research, and the "labscape" or places of research. I want to push this further, broadening the participation of boundary crossers, such as David Maitumo. Border crossers in Amboseli were not just crossing from lab to field, but between differing systems of knowledge. What makes the study of "labscapes" so interesting is that they are multi-use places. Amboseli is

²²⁷ Kohler, *Landscapes & Labscapes*, 6.

the home of the Ilkisongo Maasai as well as other ethnic groups that have made their way to the ecosystem for historical reasons.²²⁸

As the long-term projects progressed, they had to find ways to integrate more fully in the local community. This served to both have a supply of data collectors who could be a part of the everyday running of the research, but they also had to justify their continued presence in Amboseli. They did this by hiring Kenyans, mostly local Maasai, to be the border-crossers between the scientific research and the community. Although they started out as practical hires to be the on-the-ground presences of the projects, they also added their own insight and experience as people from another culture and way of understanding the natural world. Directors of each project emphasized how hiring locals changed the way they understood their research for the better.²²⁹

The history of Amboseli field science can also be examined in terms of scale. I use the local region of the Amboseli ecosystem as the geographic space in which I examine layers of history and understanding of this area. Jeremy Vetter argues that an important approach in the historiography of field science is exploring the scales on which scientists work through the study of, “the production and circulation of knowledge at a variety of scales beyond the local,

²²⁸ Steven Shapin, “Placing the View from Nowhere: Historical and Sociological Problems in the Location of Science,” *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, New Series, 23, no. 1 (1998): 5–12. Shapin discusses the complexities of the geographies of knowledge and the role of local perspectives.

²²⁹ Kohler, *Landscapes & Labscapes*. Mark V Barrow, “On the Trail of the Ivory-Bill: Field Science, Local Knowledge and the Struggle to Save Endangered Species,” in *Knowing Global Environments: New Perspectives on the Field Sciences* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2011), 135–61. Henrika Kuklick and Robert E. Kohler, “Introduction to the History of Science in the Field,” *Osiris*, 2nd Series, 11 (January 1, 1996): 1–14.

including the region, nation, empire, and globe.”²³⁰ This history of Amboseli is a local one, but it is also a national and international one. The scale of conservation, although situated in a specific place on a map, has global implications, which in Amboseli is apparent by the many different Land Rovers with international NGO names on them working on a multiplicity of conservation issues. These three scientific studies, because of their long tenure in Amboseli, have “scaled up” in their impact. Not only did their research result in conclusions about species or ecology unique to Amboseli, but their implications were much broader. Western’s ecological research was influential for WNNRM policies in Amboseli and Kenya, but his methodology and approach to integrating local knowledge systems in his results has expanded to other areas of Kenya, East Africa, and perhaps globally. The Amboseli Baboon Research Project collected data that is now part a larger body of knowledge regarding primates across the continent through comparative behaviors. With a large scale, primatologists have been able to distinguish which characteristics are uniquely developed in each location and what are more generally associated with all primates.²³¹ This is similar to the Amboseli Elephant Research Project, which studies a popular species in Western culture. Their work has shown the importance of long-range research because of the lifespan of elephants. Their research is also part of a series of elephant studies in Africa and Asia, collating population and ecological data. This has particularly been important in the global conservation movement to stop the ivory trade.

Whether scaling down or up in the geographic scope of field science, the geographic

²³⁰ Jeremy Vetter, “Introduction,” in *Knowing Global Environments: New Perspectives on the Field Sciences*, ed. Jeremy Vetter (New Brunswick, N.J: Rutgers University Press, 2011), 1–16:2.

²³¹ The Jane Goodall Institute Research Centre in Gombe, Tanzania, <http://gombechimpanzees.org/>, Uaso Ngiri Baboon Project, <http://www.baboonsrus.com/index.html>, and Patricia Wright Lab’s research in Ranomafana National Park, Madagascar, <http://www.patwrightlab.net/>.

scope of the study can help refocus causation. For example, in determining the cause of elephant populations, one might look locally and see that depending on an increase or decrease in population, the amount of vegetation available. Human factors such as poaching or urban development have implications of scale. If one were to travel to Amboseli now, it might seem that the elephant population is doing well and is abundant. However, on a regional scale, towns, villages, and agriculture have closed off migration corridors, making the national park and conservancies around it a sanctuary for elephants. With only Amboseli as a case study, it might appear that global populations are doing well, but on a continental and global scale, the ivory trade and poaching have decimated the population. Local and regional studies help contextualize the ecological importance of elephants for conservation and are quite frequently cited in public awareness campaigns.²³²

It is valuable to understand where science in Amboseli stands within the larger contexts of Africa and the world, but I contend, it is equally important to examine the reverse of scale. In what ways does the direction of knowledge flow back into local communities like Amboseli? If data collected in Amboseli is collated with that of a larger set, how does this knowledge interact or work together? Then, how are the results then made useful in their particular contexts? It is perhaps easier to take results to larger political institutions – the state or United Nations, but local communities fail to see the results. This does not mean the science has no impact on the community, but local residents do not see or understand it. A few Maasai in Amboseli are beginning to see the fruits of scientific research, but these people are often in privileged positions as research assistants or leadership, still many are left unaware. Some will see the money some

²³² For example, Save the Elephants, <http://savetheelephants.org/>, Big Life Foundation, <https://biglife.org/>, and Elephant Voices, <http://www.elephantvoices.org/>, to name just a few elephant specific organizations that have depended on local and regional researchers in their conservation campaigns.

conservation and research projects give to development, but knowledge itself moves on to larger scales. This is a problem many local people expressed to me in conversations. Much research is conducted there, but few scientists come back to share their information or implement policies and programs that utilize it. The role of Africans in science of Africa is vitally important for the purposes of communication.

David Western and the Science and Politics of Conservation

The overgrazing controversy that eventually led to the setting-apart of the cattle-free sanctuary around Ol Tukai was not based on any empirical research. The observations managers made did not take into account the complexity of the problem of resource depletion in the greater basin area. Many other factors were at work. The politics of control between the Kajiado County Council and the Game Department frustrated the efforts of Daniel Sindiyo to find a balance between environmental concerns and human livelihood sustainability. The politics of grazing and tourism was bound up in profit and access, but no one had taken a careful survey of the basin area.

Daniel Sindiyo had been the Reserve's warden for several years, and the debate of what to do about the Maasai's cattle in Ol Tukai, which were assumed to be destroying the landscape and interfering with the wildlife, had been brewing for a long time. Sindiyo's protective attitude extended to both wildlife and the Maasai. It was not possible to understand wildlife and their place in the landscape without first understanding the role of the Maasai in the landscape.²³³

This was not what the government wanted to hear. Sindiyo needed to understand why the ecology of Amboseli Reserve was changing so rapidly. Did it have something to do with the

²³³ Daniel M. Sindiyo and David Western, interview; Western, *In the Dust of Kilimanjaro* 91-93.

elephants or with cattle overgrazing? He called upon elders in the community to provide information. They researched no consensus on this issue. He was stuck in a political showdown between cattle owners who wanted to continue to have access to Amboseli's swamps and the government that wanted to ensure wildlife populations, and thus tourism revenue. Science was needed to solve this dispute, and surely it would prove that livestock were incompatible with the conservation of wildlife.²³⁴

This time represents the transition to a more concerted effort to use a science-based approach to managing Amboseli and other protected areas in Kenya. With local and national interest focused on finding a solution to Amboseli's ecological problems, an opportunity opened up for a young scientist working on his doctorate in biology. David Western was a graduate student at the University of Nairobi when he began his research in Amboseli in 1967, studying the grassland ecology and the relationship of the Maasai pastoralist community with the land. His doctoral adviser suggested the site to him as a possible research topic because of the local political tension over the presence of cattle in ecologically sensitive areas of Amboseli Game Reserve. Western went to Amboseli to work with Sindiyo to understand the cause of yellow fever acacia (*Acacia xanthophloea*) tree deaths. Some argued that the cattle were driving away wildlife and tourists were losing interest in the "Jewel of Kenya's Crown". This debate had been raging for more than a decade by the time Western arrived in his canvas tent to study the grasses and trees. He used local contacts to gain deeper understanding of Maasai traditions and their cattle to develop his research plan. It was with the help of men like Parashino ole Purdul and John Marinka that he understood local knowledge about where the trees grew. They told him what areas cattle preferred and where wildlife preferred, which helped him develop his experiments to

²³⁴ Sindiyo and Western, interviews; Western, *In the Dust of Kilimanjaro*.

measure tree growth and death. Contrary to what many other researchers hoped, he concluded that it was elephants, not cattle overgrazing or salinization that were causing tree death. This was not a politically convenient answer at that time.²³⁵

In Amboseli, Western spent the first several weeks observing, taking notes, and discussing with local people what was happening on the land. He recounts much of this story in *In the Dust of Kilimanjaro*, but told me this was when he first began thinking that his research would have to incorporate the Maasai. Just focusing on the biological aspects would not tell the whole story of what was happening to the trees and whether or not removing livestock from Amboseli would have any positive impact.²³⁶ This early research was only the beginning of Western's involvement in the future management of the Amboseli ecosystem. His research had direct impact on the future status of Amboseli as a protected area and how the larger ecosystem would be managed.

A review of Western's research reveals an expansion of his experience as a biologist in Amboseli to a conservationist looking at global issues in species extinction, habitat loss, and problems associated with human development. During the gazettelement process of the national park, Western became fully integrated into the international dynamics of conservation. His later writings center on the community-conservation as an universal framework, global trade, poaching, and management of dual-use landscapes.

Western set up a monitoring station in Amboseli Game Reserve and over the next few years, collected data on the seasonal dynamics of the ecosystem. He collected data each month on the ground and from the air, counting species, marking woodland density, distributions. An

²³⁵ Western, interview; Western, *In the Dust of Kilimanjaro*; David Western, R. Michael Wright, and Shirley C Strum, *Natural Connections: Perspectives in Community-Based Conservation* (Washington, D.C.: Island Press, 1994).

²³⁶ David Western, interview, Western, *In the Dust of Kilimanjaro*.

underlying theme of the research was that the ecosystem should not be examined as if it were devoid of human inhabitants. The local population was an important factor in understanding seasonal change and the importance of the distribution of plant and animal species. His doctoral work was carried out just before Amboseli became a national park, but he anticipated that this would be happening in the future, as he stated in the preface.²³⁷

He contextualized his research in the changing biological and social dynamics of Maasai livelihoods, tourism development, and environmental change. The implications for this were that the Maasai, who had largely been subsistence farmers until then were becoming more sedentary and their use of the landscape was changing. Part of this was out of environmental necessity, but the political issues could not be separated from the ecological ones. Access to water was both a biological and political problem. The central concern of his research was the drastic loss of *Acacia xanthophloea* trees, which in the previous two decades had decline by 90%, but the cause was not known. Many speculated different theories. The decline in these yellowfever acacia trees (a hydrophytic plant that grow in or near water) led to the rise in a halophytic community (plants that grow in salinic soils or salt water). Western and C.L. van Praet carried out the some of this field work together, publishing an article on the issue of woodland loss before Western finished his dissertation.²³⁸

Although his methods of data collection were founded on empirical science, which was alien to the Maasai community, he depended on several individuals who gave him different perspectives on the way the landscape had been changing. Unlike some approaches to

²³⁷ David Western, “The Structure, Dynamics and Changes of the Amboseli Ecosystem” (Doctoral Thesis, University of Nairobi, 1973).

²³⁸ Western and Van Praet, “Cyclical Changes in the Habitat and Climate of an East African Ecosystem.”

understanding ecosystems, he argued that humans are an active part of the ecosystem locally and on larger scales. He wrote, "The human factor cannot be ignored and continue to be regarded as a contaminant."²³⁹

Western saw his research as having larger implications beyond Amboseli. This research, he hoped, would inform research on large mammal ecosystems, management of wildlife as a natural resource, the inclusion of humans in as an important part of ecosystems, and how human-environment dynamics were changing. This research was not an isolated experiment in East Africa. The Serengeti Research Institute, Tsavo Research Project, Miombo Research Centre, and the Nuffield Unit of Tropical Ecology were all exploring some of these issues in various contexts. For all of these projects, an integrated approach was proving the most appropriate way to understand the environment and the human dimensions.²⁴⁰

One of the central ideas of Western's thesis was that local residents' impact on the environment was part of what made the savanna ecosystem function as it did. Cyclical grazing kept grasslands open, and this worked in tandem with wildlife migration and their foraging niches. He counted Maasai livestock and located current and former homesteads by aerial observation. During the observations of livestock, he measured the distance Maasai lived from water and their dispersal in relation to resources. These patterns were predicted by environmental conditions and less so by human factors. Non-geographical factors on distribution and population had to do with selling and consumption of livestock. Typically meat consumption was secondary to milk and blood consumption and goats and sheep were eaten more often than cattle, where most of their household wealth was carried. Those animals that were sold did not usually pass

²³⁹ Western, "The Structure, Dynamics and Changes of the Amboseli Ecosystem," 4.

²⁴⁰ Western, "The Structure, Dynamics and Changes of the Amboseli Ecosystem," 2-3.

through the government market at Illasit because prices were low and the market was often closed because of quarantine. It was more common for the Maasia to sell illegally to the Wachagga in Tanzania.²⁴¹ This would change in the coming years as land adjudication commenced. It was difficult to determine stock numbers broadly over the twentieth century because census data is spotty with inaccuracies. What can be determined has to do with correlating data from 1919 covering all of Maasailand with trends in disease and drought. Up to 1960, livestock increased only slightly. In 1960-1961, during very bad drought, as much as 50% of stock died. Since the introduction of improved veterinary care and boreholes, their population grew. The drought of those years changed the Ilkisongo's relationship with the colonial and international economic system. They had to rely on the introduction of maize meal and powdered milk.²⁴² Many of my interviewees recalled this period as the most difficult in their lives and for several generations back.²⁴³

While taking in factors such as geology and human influences, Western worked through the potential causes of the decline in the *Acacia xanthophloea*. Their decline had been gradual between 1950 and 1961, as evidenced by local informers and photographs, but after 1964, tree deaths sped up. Only the trees in Ol Tukai Orok remained a strong population and neighboring young stands.. In response to one of the most commonly believed causes of tree death, overgrazing by Maasai livestock, he examined the areas where Maasai livestock had been grazed over the previous decade and compared that with locations of most significant tree death. The

²⁴¹ David Western, "The Structure, Dynamics and Changes of the Amboseli Ecosystem," 90-103. This also matches the comments by Ministry of Agriculture, ALDEV, and the Kenya Meat Commission officials in Chapter 2.

²⁴² David Western, "The Structure, Dynamics and Changes of the Amboseli Ecosystem," 130-134.

²⁴³ Moipa Leyian, Olorryoshi Leyian, Nentayia Kidiri, interviews.

two did not correspond. Areas of most significant tree loss were in areas that had been stock-free since 1947, as negotiated by Royal Kenyan National Parks and continued after independence. This was in the 30 acre stock free zone around Ol Tukai. Determining whether elephants were a cause was a trickier process. He did not find a direct one-to-one correlation between the debarking of the trees by elephants and the rate of tree decline. However, there was still significance in the relationship between locations of elephant debarking and tree mortality. He concluded that elephants may have acted as a catalyst in a more complicated process of woodland decline, of which a change in soil salinity was a factor.²⁴⁴

It is important to consider Western's doctoral thesis in the context of the global trend toward the creation of national parks and other protected areas. His work showed that placing rather arbitrary borders on a map and excluding people does not reflect the reality of human-environmental dynamics. His research was complementary to other research being done elsewhere in East Africa, but built on what was being studied in two ways - the inclusion of humans as an important factor in understanding the ecology of the savanna and methodological developments for determining population and distribution of species.

Amboseli Conservation Program

Although David Western started his ecosystem research as a single scientist without the initial intention of making Amboseli a long term research site, his involvement in the protection of Amboseli expanded to the national and international level. His thesis research provided the basis from which he worked on subsequent studies on ecology, the role of local residents in the ecosystem, habitat change, and Amboseli's role in the broader field of conservation biology. The

²⁴⁴ Western, "The Structure, Dynamics and Changes of the Amboseli Ecosystem." 115-129.

establishment of the Amboseli Conservation Program (ACP), originated when he was trying to get attention for his plans for a Maasai Park and the support of the New York Zoological Society.²⁴⁵ The name emphasized the relationship between research and conservation. The goal of understanding Amboseli's ecosystem was to provide better information for management. When the New York Zoological Society became involved in the gazettelement of Amboseli National Park, they funded the ACP as a local form of support for conservation in the region in 1973. At that time, Western was the only member of ACP until David Maitumo joined him in 1977, but he did work with other organizations for funding and research. These relationships expanded into the African Conservation Centre (ACC), which has a national approach to conservation, but still works in Amboseli. Now ACP works under ACC, connected financially and administratively with those who carry on the research.²⁴⁶

As water was always critical to the viability of Amboseli as a homeland, one of Western's early studies was on the availability of water for both wildlife and livestock. His research discussed what was already known by Maasai, that water availability outside of the basin drew wildlife and Maasai to areas outside. The hydrological landscape was significantly altered as a result of the politics of grazing in the Ol Tukai sanctuary. Boreholes were dug, beginning in the 1940s in order to draw the Maasai away from Ol Tukai. If given alternative sources, they agreed to limit their grazing in that area. These sites, once built, were not well maintained or were not located in places that coincided with grazing spaces. Western's research showed that discussions regarding overgrazing did not fully grasp the nuances of utilized land. He found that those who despaired of Maasai overgrazing were comparing land that was heavily grazed during dry

²⁴⁵ Discussed in Chapter 1.

²⁴⁶ Western, personal communication.

seasons with spaces that rarely saw any grazing at all. This was because watering sources were too far away for the cattle to reach in their range of mobility. He recognized the management implications for water placement. Avoiding conflict with pastoralists was important. The Maasai often saw wildlife as "the government's cattle," able to graze in the park, but their own cattle were trespassing for seeking water even during dry season. Even after forty years of this same argument, a livable solution remains elusive. Water availability and seasonal grazing patterns were interconnected from Western's view in that if migration corridors were severed by human habitation, biomass would be reduced in areas with water by 30% in the basin area.²⁴⁷

Another issue that is quite apparent to the Maasai is the choice of settlement sites when they migrated. Western and Dunne studied the location choices of Maasai by doing aerial and ground surveys to find sites that had been previous homesteads. There are unique markers of former sites including the types of grasses that grew. They then consulted with Maasai informants to triangulate their findings with what the Maasai said influenced their choices. They remarked that the Maasai showed "a sophisticated awareness of environmental factors that has not been examined among pastoralist nomads." This was an area of indigenous knowledge that had not received much scholarly attention. They found that there is a set of factors that had to fall into place before a site was deemed suitable to construct an *enkang*, or the buildings comprising the homestead. There needed to be enough grass nearby for a suitable *olopololi*, a grazing zone for the younger animals around the *enkang*. There also needed to be an acceptable distance between the *enkang* and water and grass for larger stock. The area needed to have enough resources to build the *enkang*, including wood for the supports in the houses, *Acacia mellifera*

²⁴⁷ David Western, "Water Availability and Its Influence on the Structure and Dynamics of a Savannah Large Mammal Community," *African Journal of Ecology* 13, no. 3–4 (December 1, 1975): 265–86.

for the fence, and firewood for cooking. Elders who decided on the locations had to consider the slope of the area, which was especially important during the rains. Too much of a slope could injure the cattle if they slid and fell downhill, but it also made building houses difficult, not to mention sleeping on an incline is rather inconvenient. Darker soils were preferred because of the warmth they provided during cool nights, impacting milk production and cattle health. This research revealed the complex factors in decision during migration in Amboseli that had not been considered before by anyone other than the Maasai themselves. The data also included oral testimony from Maasai informants who either confirmed or refuted the researchers' observations. Western and Thresher found that the Maasai were hesitant to share their knowledge with them at first, not because they did not understand what they wanted to know, but because the Maasai did not think they really understood that this was a complex process. Once the Maasai understood that these men really did understand and were interested in the minute details of what constituted an ideal site, did they begin to share openly.²⁴⁸

As Western's research expanded to other ecosystem issues in Amboseli, he hired David Maitumo to assist him with data collection. Maitumo was one of the few local Maasai of his age set that went to school. Now, he is the field officer for the Amboseli Conservation Program. For more than 30 years, Maitumo has collected data on the grasslands of Amboseli where he monitors projects like the one at Olengaiya Swamp. Here, he started monitoring a fenced-in area in 1985. As we drove through it he explained that the way the fences are constructed elephants cannot enter easily but small ungulates can still pass under the fence and graze. As a result, larger trees necessary for holding groundwater year round have grown significantly and few tree

²⁴⁸ David Western and Thomas Dunne, "Environmental Aspects of Settlement Site Decisions among Pastoral Maasai," *Human Ecology* 7, no. 1 (March 1, 1979): 75–98; Parashino Ole Purdul, interview.

deaths have occurred. In 2004, Western and Maitumo published the results of two decades of studying fenced-in areas in the *African Journal of Ecology* and concluded that it was the presence of an abundance of elephants that prevented the regeneration of yellow fever acacias. The result of decades of research and acquired knowledge of how the various parts of the ecological and social landscape worked together showed that tree death was unique to Amboseli. Regional ecological dynamics were the results of the relationship between elephants and Maasai cattle, the presence of a salty alkaline soil, lack of brushfire, and a political climate that drove cattle out of the protected area. Maitumo's second and third authorships are recent events in his scientific career, but his knowledge of botanical species is the result of decades of field work, monitoring seasonal change. Maitumo presents an example of the exclusiveness of the definition of a scientist in modern, Western terms. Although he has never been to university, his knowledge has been instrumental in understanding the co-evolution of wildlife with livestock in Amboseli, which in turn has impacted rangeland management policies throughout pastoralist regions of the developing world.²⁴⁹

One of the main goals of ACP has been to integrate a sustainable ecosystem with a sustainable economic system. After the national park was established, Western continued his involvement in the development of the park and involving Maasai in conservation and tourism. He no longer focused on the role of the Ilkisongo Maasai and Amboseli National Park, but the relationship of all resident people and national parks in the developing world. He argued that parks should benefit local people financially if they were to be viable in the long term and prove to be an investment in the minds of locals. This has always proved a difficult prospect in

²⁴⁹ David Maitumo, interview. David Western and David Maitumo, "Woodland Loss and Restoration in a Savanna Park: A 20-Year Experiment," *African Journal of Ecology* 42, no. 2 (June 2004): 111–21.

Amboseli, which Western and many others struggled with over the decades.²⁵⁰

Island biogeography theory has been a useful concept in understanding what happens to regions that are isolated from larger ecosystems, but MacArthur and Wilson's theory focused on the natural separation of these ecosystems.²⁵¹ Western and Ssemakula argued that this theory does not fully explain what happens in savanna island ecosystems. There were other factors, particularly anthropogenic factors that altered landscapes and affect species equilibrium. East African savanna reserves were created out of artificial, political, and social structures. This is particularly apparent in Amboseli, given the decision making process of creating the Reserve and then the national park. Decisions were not based primarily on the ecological structure of the region, nor of the historical human use. By the 1970s, scientists were applying Island Biogeography Theory to reserve creation, particularly to the appropriate size and location for greater success and biological diversity, but even with more recent application and adaptation of the original theory, Island Biogeography Theory is not a perfect explanation of every situation.²⁵² Western and Ssemakula's article confirms this. For East African savanna reserves, the theory's original equations do not follow what was actually happening in places such as Amboseli, Tsavo, Serengeti, or Samburu. Size and wildlife composition were more complex, even with smaller reserves (Amboseli and Samburu) having a higher percentage of species compared with the larger parks (Tsavo and Seregeti). It is apparent, however, that place is integrally important to

²⁵⁰ Western, interview.

²⁵¹ Robert H. MacArthur, *The Theory of Island Biogeography* (Princeton, N.J: Princeton University Press, 1967).

²⁵² William F. Laurence, "Beyond Island Biogeography Theory: Understanding Habitat Fragmentation in the Real World," in *The Theory of Island Biogeography Revisited*, ed. Robert H. MacArthur, Robert E. Ricklefs, and Jonathan B. Losos (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010), 214–36.

understanding the effects of habitat fragmentation on biomass. Amboseli is a small national park, and after the fragmentation of the original Southern Reserve into smaller and smaller portions, including Masai Mara, it has become more complex in terms of understanding the anthropomorphic changes and what needed to be done to manage them.²⁵³

Species depletion has been a central theme in the discourse of conservation in Kenya, but especially Amboseli. Several studies, including on elephants and baboons, have examined the rates and causes of population decline. There are no longer any rhinos in Amboseli, the last being relocated to Nairobi National Park in 1984. Rhinos faced a significant decline in the 1967, as poaching was on the rise nationwide. Western reported that there were 55 individuals in 1967 and by 1971, the number was down to 35 in the basin with a few in the immediate vicinity. The Amboseli population was distinct from those living in the Chuyulu Hills to the north and around Mt. Kilimanjaro to the south. Rhinos were not being killed by the same outside poachers as elephants. Rather, most rhinos died by spearing by Maasai. Western pointed to two reasons for this. The first was the politics of grazing in the Reserve, and as a form of protest, Maasai killed rhinos. Then, as the economic decline of the Maasai community forced men to find alternative sources of revenue, many turned to poaching. Rhino horn prices had risen from USA\$24 in the 1960s to over US\$300 per kilogram by 1978. This was an enticing, though illegal, business.²⁵⁴ What finally slowed the rate of Maasai poaching (poaching by outsiders continued despite national anti-poaching efforts) was that revenue was finally get to local people in the form of schools, dispensaries, and permanent water sources. As a result, the rhino population rose

²⁵³ David Western and James Ssemakula, "The Future of the Savannah Ecosystems: Ecological Islands or Faunal Enclaves?," *African Journal of Ecology* 19, no. 1–2 (1981): 7–19, doi:10.1111/j.1365-2028.1981.tb00648.x.

²⁵⁴ The story of Ole Turkai, the professional poacher in Amboseli is told in the Hunting and Poaching chapter.

slightly. The WCMD attempted to boost the increase by moving two individuals from Laikipia in north to Amboseli, but they both died within two weeks from anthrax. However, Western argues, conservation of rhinos is a difficult process, particularly in Amboseli. The landscape makes patrols by foot or by car difficult and by nature, rhinos live alone, thus monitoring the species was very difficult.²⁵⁵

One of the main purposes of ACP, which has been a theme behind much of Western's work, whether more biological or social in subject, was to find a way to make the conservation of wildlife and the environment and sustainability of locals' economic lives a connected and mutually beneficial process. In his Maasai Park plan he proposed to integrate the Maasai into the everyday management of the park, but also to create an economic link, thus ensuring a continued interest by the local community in conservation. In his often cited article, "Amboseli National Park: Enlisting Land Owners to Conserve Migratory Wildlife," Western argued that Amboseli was unique in that the management policies regarding the park have sought to make landowners, the resident Ilkisongo Maasai, direct beneficiaries of park revenue. However, the park should not be seen as an island in the midst of cattle ranching; the park needed to be contextualized in its multi-use reality. Wildlife conservation was important, but the migration patterns went beyond the park where, after gazettelement, Maasai grazed their livestock. These two processes needed co-management. Studies by Philip Thresher had shown that the most financially lucrative land use of the Amboseli ecosystem was tourism, with livestock management the second most profitable

²⁵⁵ David Western, "Patterns of Depletion in a Kenya Rhino Population and the Conservation Implications," *Biological Conservation* 24, no. 2 (October 1982): 147–56. David Western and Daniel M. Sindiyo, "The Status of the Amboseli Rhino Population," *African Journal of Ecology* 10, no. 1 (1972): 43–57.

investment.²⁵⁶ However, most of the tourism revenue never went to the Maasai, making livestock the better investment for residents. The government thought the KCC would be the local agent for the management of tourism revenue, but as the decades following their 1961 acquisition of revenue, very little of it made any significant difference in the lives of the Maasai. The question remained: How could the Maasai and wildlife co-exist in the presence of a national park and make wildlife and livestock profitable. Many stakeholders proposed permanent water sites, many of which were built, but in subsequent years, they fell into disrepair, bringing the situation back to where it was if not worse. The Maasai were without dry season water, unable to move into the national park, and with limited mobility with the establishment of group ranches. After the creation of the park, tourism increased rapidly, eventually causing its own environmental damage. The KCC continued to build in Ol Tukai in response to increased need for more beds and a desire to increase revenue, but they had, as explained by Western, little interest in the ecological aspect of park management.²⁵⁷ While Western's research, and the involvement of so many through ACP, focused on larger ecological subjects, other projects narrowly focused on particular species. Each of these long-term projects, however, depended on each other intellectually as well as for the day-today living in the field.

Amboseli Primate Research

At the urging of David Western, Stuart and Jeanne Altmann brought their baboon research to Amboseli. The Altmann's established their research site in 1963 after exploring other East African options. They traveled Manyara, Ngorongoro, and the Serengeti where the baboons

²⁵⁶ KNA, KW/1/1, Philip Thresher, "Income Generating Combinations Wildlife and Livestock Enterprises."

²⁵⁷ David Western, "Amboseli National Park: Enlisting Landowners to Conserve Migratory Wildlife," *Ambio* 11, no. 5 (1982): 302–8.

fled when they approached, but their options for camping were limited. In Kenya, the Masai Mara did not have enough baboons to measure and Nairobi National Park had uneven terrain making it difficult to observe the baboon groups. Ivan DeVore had also been studying Nairobi National Park's baboons, which by 1963 were much habituated to tourists feeding them. Thus, they settled in Masai-Amboseli Game Reserve, which was not simply a last resort, but a very good option. Thomas Struhsaker, who was conducting his own study of vervet monkeys in Amboseli, suggested the site would be their best option.

When they arrived in Amboseli, there was no agriculture and the Maasai way of life did not interfere with baboon habits, although they simply saw them as pests that would take food if possible. The landscape was flat and open, making observation easy. At that time, Amboseli was relatively isolate, despite its proximity to Nairobi. The roads were bad, and during the rainy season, became difficult to navigate. There were no tourists' lodges except a small camp of thatch-roof *bandas*. Jeanne Altmann recalled that Amboseli's landscape was very different during that time.²⁵⁸

What they found in Amboseli was a research site that was unique in its accommodation of a long-term study. In *Baboon Ecology: African Field Research*, Stuart and Jeanne Altmann discussed the findings of their 1963-1964 field work. They went into great detail over the specifics of their findings, which, unknown at the time, was only the first few years of a four decade project. They wrote:

We feel strongly that a study of the population dynamics of Amboseli baboons, based upon repeated censuses of known groups over a long period, is an unusual research

²⁵⁸ Jeanne Altmann, September 27, 2013; For a history of the Amboseli Baboon Project and its context in the history of primatology see Georgina Montgomery, *Primates in the Real World: Escaping Primate Folklore and Creating Primate Science* (Charlottesville, VA: University of Virginia Press, 2015).

opportunity. We know of no other population of nonhuman primates, in a relatively undisturbed natural habitat, that provides better opportunities for direct observations on population dynamics and for relating these processes to underlying social and ecological factors.²⁵⁹

During the one year they spent carrying out initial observations, they collected enough data to write *Baboon Ecology*, which makes generalizations about baboon behavior and socialization, but also points out that this population is highly influenced by its environment. Just as Nairobi baboons lived in an environment with frequent human contact, so were Amboseli baboons used to living without close human contact and had other environmental factors that made them a successful population.²⁶⁰ The Altmann's mapped out a home range of what they called their "Main Group" of baboons. This allowed them to understand factors like daily cycles, seasonal migration, breeding cycles, and feeding practices. Each of these was contingent, they argued, on the unique environment of Amboseli. There were seasonal rain pools that allowed baboons to extend their range during the rainy season, foraging farther from the central area of their dry season areas where there was permanent water. Amboseli's plains were dotted with tree groves, which were the night sleeping places and provided protection from predators. Their range was small enough to allow them to never be more than a day's walk between tree groves. Still, life in Amboseli for these baboons had dangers beyond the presence of leopards, their most frequent attacker. Since the landscape was primarily open grassland, they were always at risk of dehydration if they were beyond reach of water and overheating if not near shade. The permanent waterholes were breeding grounds for mosquito's which carried schistosomiasis and

²⁵⁹ Stuart A Altmann and Jeanne Altmann, *Baboon Ecology: African Field Research* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1973), 39.

²⁶⁰ Altmann and Altmann, *Baboon Ecology*.

coxsackie B2, which was endemic to Amboseli baboons. What made Amboseli beloved by tourists, made it a dangerous landscape for baboons with a diverse population of predators - lions, hyenas, and large eagles.²⁶¹

After this initial period of research, they returned briefly before establishing a permanent research camp in the Ol Tukai area in 1971. Their living situation in Amboseli was partly dictated by where the baboons were located, but also by what was available in the Reserve in a more permanent set up. In 1963, they stayed in the "Asian bandas" reserved for non-white and non-black visitors. By the time they arrived, this was no longer the segregated set up, but Africans never had their own banda during colonialism, either out of racial exclusion or because Africans did not go to Amboseli as tourists. Those who were in Amboseli worked as hired help. When they returned in 1971, there was no hired help and the "White bandas" were used for self-serving tourists. The "Asian banda" were housing for employees of the newly established Amboseli Lodge, the first permanent lodge in Ol Tukai.²⁶²

When I drove through Amboseli National Park during the afternoon, I often saw groups of baboons sitting in the hot sun, searching through the grass, and grooming each other. Then suddenly one would stand up and walk on. Others followed. Stuart Altmann wrote about this progression of a group from one location to another. The Altmann's research revealed how ordering of the members of a baboon group revealed social order and methods of group protection. Amboseli's plains allowed for a broad view of the landscape, thus, they were able to count and categorize each individual's position in the progression. The conclusion of this research was that contrary to previous researcher done by other researchers, baboons' progression

²⁶¹ Altmann and Altmann, *Baboon Ecology*, 200.

²⁶² Jeanne Altmann, interview.

patterns vary more often than expected and were rarely predictable. He explored twelve different hypotheses of how a group progression formed. This had implications for what home range the group had. Many of the variables were related to the environment. The progression formation allowed them to move faster, following one behind another, so as to avoid obstacles, but this changed over the course of the study period. By the time this study was published in 1974, Altmann saw significant biological change, mostly in the form of an increase in xeromorphic and halophytic plants.²⁶³ This fits with others' discussion of tree loss and the ramifications of that process.

The research of the Altmanns and others at the ABRP had become a source for foundational methodological approaches to studying animal behavior. Amboseli became a place for both generalizable and specific results in primatology. Jeanne Altmann published "Observational Study of Behavior: Sampling Methods" in 1974 to explain methods she and Stuart Altmann developed in the field while in Amboseli.²⁶⁴ The techniques she describes were intended to be universal for any animal, including humans, in order to develop objective observational patterns. She advocated focal sampling which broke down movements and tasks for each individual primate in order to avoid predetermined, sexist analysis in order to improve the objectivity of observation. She demonstrated this in *Baboon Mothers and Infants*, distinguishing between individual actions a female primate made toward the infant.²⁶⁵ Although the sampling methods she outlines could be used for any situation, the Amboseli Game Reserve

²⁶³ Xeromorphic plants conserve water in dry areas, and halophytic plants grow in salinic soil.

²⁶⁴ Jeanne Altmann, "Observational Study of Behavior: Sampling Methods," *Behaviour* 49, no. 3/4 (1974): 227–67.

²⁶⁵ Jeanne Altmann, *Baboon Mothers and Infants*, (University Of Chicago Press, 2001); Donna Jeanne Haraway, *Primate Visions: Gender, Race, and Nature in the World of Modern Science* (New York: Routledge, 1989).

and later National Park provided an ideal landscape in which to practice these techniques.

One of the outcomes of the Altmann's research, and those who later worked with them, was to develop scientific inquiry in what Robert Kohler calls the "borderlands" of science between the laboratory and the field.²⁶⁶ In the laboratory, experiments can be controlled and repeatable, but in the field, there are other unpredictable variables. The baboon researchers sought a way to balance internal and external validity, often associated with the strengths of the lab and field respectively. Primatologists have long sought a methodology that would improve the objectivity of observational techniques in the field.²⁶⁷ Jeanne Almann wrote that, "Unless we develop methods for field research that are comparable in sensitivity to those of the laboratory, the behavioral science will become progressively more isolated from the very behavior that their theories are supposed to explain."²⁶⁸ Amboseli's flat open savanna landscape was the ideal place for this type of experiment. This call for consistent research methods in animal behavior came near the beginning of their time in Kenya, and after more than twenty years of research on the same population of baboons, the Altmanns continued to encourage other scientists to search for ways to make more than descriptive analysis of their observation and develop more rigorous, testable hypotheses. Their research showed that Amboseli's female baboons wait longer to bear their first infant than laboratory or zoo-raised baboons. This was possibly due to their foraging

²⁶⁶ Robert E Kohler, *Landscapes & Labscapes: Exploring the Lab-Field Border in Biology* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002).

²⁶⁷ Georgina M. Montgomery, "Place, Practice and Primatology: Clarence Ray Carpenter, Primate Communication and the Development of Field Methodology, 1931–1945," *Journal of the History of Biology* 38, no. 3 (2005): 495–533.

²⁶⁸ Jeanne Altmann, "Observational Study of Behavior: Sampling Methods," *Behaviour* 49, no. 3/4 (January 1, 1974): 227–67, 229.

habits and conditions imposed on them by the environment.²⁶⁹ In "The Transformation of Behavior Field Studies," the Altmanns reflected on their long term project in Amboseli, the state of the field, and how a lowly field like ethology becomes respected and reliable. As scientists tried new methods, theories, and analysis, the field developed a more consisted approach to studying and understanding animal behavior in the field. They likened animal behavior research to changes in the field of history. As history took the social turn, focusing less on prominent political figures, dominant groups, and unusual events and more on the everyday lived experience of the farmer, women, and minorities, so did animal behavior scientists. They pointed to a shift away from studying breeding males of the species as the control group and unusual behaviors to studying from "an animal's eye view." This happened because researchers identified each individual in an effort to understand larger social processes. This was part of a larger trend in the 1980s to move away from ageist and sexist terminology to describe animal behavior. The result was a more thorough understanding of the group. For Amboseli baboon research, this meant that they studied the role of females, mothering, group hierarchy, and home ranges, all of which made a studied group unique and generalizable.²⁷⁰

Amboseli's baboons lives revealed specific and generalizable information about primate behavior. The nature of long-term research allows generational research, discovering the life histories of females, age cohorts, maternal care patterns, foraging habits, and patterns of coalition. These studies were specific to Amboseli baboons, but provide methodological and theoretical frameworks for other locations and species. The question running throughout their

²⁶⁹ Jeanne Altmann et al., "Life History of Yellow Baboons: Physical Development, Reproductive Parameters, and Infant Mortality," *Primates* 18, no. 2 (1977): 315–30.

²⁷⁰ Stuart A. Altmann and Jeanne Altmann, "The Transformation of Behaviour Field Studies," *Animal Behaviour* 65, no. 3 (March 2003): 413–23.

analysis is the degree to which their findings was exclusive to Amboseli or were characteristics of the yellow baboon (*Papio cynocephalus*) or primates generally. They argue for the generalizable nature of these findings, but point to factors that make each case study unique.

Amboseli's environment is one important factor in what makes baboon research specific in findings. Stuart Altmann remarked in his 1979 article, "Baboon Progressions: Order or Chaos? A Study of One-Dimensional Group Geometry" that since they first began research in Amboseli, the environment had undergone remarkable change due possibly to the long-term changes in rainfall.²⁷¹ This impacted baboon behavior and altered their home ranges. In 1996, Anne M. Bronikowski and Jeanne Altmann asked the general question of whether long term weather patterns affected the behavior of nonhuman primates. Data collected for more than ten years revealed that weather changes to impact baboons, but the issue was much more complicated. Rainfall patterns, changed soil composition, plant variance, predator population, and human influence were all variables that impacted the behavior of Amboseli baboons. Their conclusions went further to state that it was too simple to say that this was true for Amboseli's entire baboon population. They focused on three groups: two were wild feeding one depended heavily on dumpsters by a tourist lodge. They found that sub-groups of baboons have variable responses to environmental factors. Each group had its own coping mechanisms for foraging and traveling to areas where food and water could be found.²⁷² Thus, individual animal agency plays a role in the success of a population. As the Amboseli landscape has changed environmentally and socially,

²⁷¹ Stuart A. Altmann, "Baboon Progressions: Order or Chaos? A Study of One-Dimensional Group Geometry," *Animal Behaviour* 27, Part 1 (February 1979): 46–80.

²⁷² Anne M. Bronikowski and Jeanne Altmann, "Foraging in a Variable Environment: Weather Patterns and the Behavioral Ecology of Baboons," *Behavioral Ecology and Sociobiology* 39, no. 1 (January 1, 1996): 11–25.

baboons adapted to these situations. Despite baboons' ability to adapt, their population has declined along with other animal species in Amboseli as a result of environmental change.²⁷³

When the Altmanns arrived to set up a permanent research site in 1971, the political climate was tense because of negotiations over grazing within and who was to have control over the Reserve. The Kajiado County Council and the national government were in negotiations over control of Ol Tukai and managing the tourism industry in Amboseli. As researchers the Altmann's went through the process to get permits for their work and paid their fees to the national government. Even though they were on county council land, the county received no payment for allowing the researchers to live in the Reserve depending on rangers for their security there. Ultimately, they settled into a "neutral relationship" with the KCC through the wardens.

Land adjudication was commencing in full by the time they arrived for full time research, but Jeanne Altmann said they were naive about the process. The days they lived in Ol Tukai, Altmann remarked, were more innocent. They had little understanding of what the creation of group ranches meant for the Maasai of Amboseli or what it meant for the future of the landscape where their research was contextualized. At this time, she was focusing on being a mother to her two young children and starting a field research site. Many said Amboseli was not the place to raise children, and should be in boarding school, but she had "tent schooling" for her children in the bandas. This allowed her to be close to her family and do research, and it gave her children a different experience during their time in Kenya. With the exception of one year, they traveled

²⁷³ Jeanne Altmann et al., "Life History of Yellow Baboons: Physical Development, Reproductive Parameters, and Infant Mortality," *Primates* 18, no. 2 (1977): 315–30.

back and forth between the U.S. and Kenya.²⁷⁴

Politics extended to her hiring of locals as research assistants. Previously, they hired locals to be cooks or for maintenance, but had not hired anyone to collect data or otherwise participate in the scientific process. She pointed to the colonial legacy of not introducing schooling on a large scale in Maasai areas and the lack of professionally trained Maasai in fields like health care that impacted scientists' ability to hire locally. Few students had a secondary level education, but if they were to have continuous long-term data, they needed someone to be there when they returned to the states, as they did not stay in Kenya continuously except for 1975-1976. In 1981, she hired Raphael Mututua, a Maasai, but not from Amboseli. When encouraged to hire a "chief's son," this was who was presented to her. He was eager to work and continues to work with the ABRP. For more than thirty-years, Mututua has gone on daily observation runs to collect data.²⁷⁵

Serei Sayialel was hired a few years later, and at first she collected data, but they trained her on their first transportable computer. She had previous experience working with the Seyfarths. Not just anyone could carry out the necessary work of baboon observations in Amboseli. The work was tedious, identifying individual baboons and knowing how to record data. She was also a woman, and even when she was assisting Philip Muruthi in the field, she brought her two small children along.

By the mid-1990s, they had to move to another location outside of Ol Tukai because a new lodge was being built on that site (connect with Gazetting chapter). This threw them into group ranch politics as they wanted to find a site outside of the center of the park. They

²⁷⁴ Donna Jeanne Haraway, *Primate Visions: Gender, Race, and Nature in the World of Modern Science* (New York: Routledge, 1989), 304-315.

²⁷⁵ Jeanne Altmann, interview.

negotiated a site agreement with the leadership of Ogulului-Olololarashi Group Ranch, situated on the border of the park. Their water came from Ngong Narok. The original agreement was that the group ranch would provide a road, electric fence and water because they were close to a tourist camp run by the group ranch. The campsite was well funded at first, but they had no long-term plans for maintaining infrastructure. When the group ranch failed to provide the agreed upon facilities, ABRP built its own fence for safety and found other means for electricity. On the day of my interview with Jeanne Altmann, the cook was making rice with a box lined with aluminum, directing heat from the sun to the food.

Their research was unlike other Amboseli researchers such as David Western and Cynthia Moss, whose work on local people and elephants respectively were politicized on local, national, and international levels. This changed when they moved to Ogulului. They became more involved in politics and the politics of conservation. Conservation was a component of education and training outreach done by Mututa.²⁷⁶

In baboon behavior research, conservation does not seem like a goal of the research. Jeanne Altmann said that other Amboseli scientists' research was more inherently conservation oriented, but in the beginning theirs was not. Their research focused on evolutionary biology and behavior ecology. It was not until the 1980s that genetics became a part of conservation, as the ABRP work is now. She is optimistic that the research coming from ABRP had an impact locally, at least in the form of hiring, training, and scholarships for local children, but she said, "It is unrealistic to think the research results have had a significant impact." The impact of their research has been broader, in the field of evolutionary and behavior science. For the local community, they saw Maasai involved in research on a daily basis and children went to school as

²⁷⁶ Jeanne Altmann, interview.

a result of their presences. It was her hope that this showed the Maasai that baboons can be a part of the "neutral" relationship with wildlife. As Mututua and Saiyalel said, watching over cattle and baboons are similar. Both are part of the whole in what makes Amboseli unique.²⁷⁷

Ethology factors heavily in animal research in Amboseli. The legacy of Konrad Lorenz and Niko Tinbergen's theories regarding animal behavior continued in Amboseli, where the study of vervet monkeys and baboons led to breakthroughs in understanding the social lives of primates.²⁷⁸ Whether the vervets (*Cercopithecus Aethiops*) had a distinct symbolic language for the type of predator or not was a central issue among ethologists, anthropologists, and other researchers concerned with the role of animal communication and where it fit in the evolution of human languages. The first of these scientists to bring this question to Amboseli was Thomas T. Struhsaker who arrived in 1963 to study communication between vervet monkeys, mentored by Stuart Altmann. Struhsaker's work examined not only the social structure of the Amboseli vervet population, but how they communicated predator warnings. He concluded that the monkeys made different noises according to the predator type, whether leopard, eagle, or snake. He even found they made a distinctive noise when threatened by hyena or Maasai.²⁷⁹ The fact that Struhsaker was conducting these observations in Amboseli is significant. In *Behavior of Vervet Monkeys*, published before his articles on the specifics of symbolic communication, he commented on the role the environment played in this population of vervets. Beyond the

²⁷⁷ Jeanne Altmann, interview.

²⁷⁸ Richard W Burkhardt, *Patterns of Behavior: Konrad Lorenz, Niko Tinbergen, And the Founding of Ethology* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005).

²⁷⁹ Gregory Radick, *The Simian Tongue: The Long Debate About Animal Language* (University of Chicago Press, 2007); Thomas T. Struhsaker, "Auditory Communication among Vervet Monkeys (*Cercopithecus Aethiops*)," in *Social Communication Among Primates*, ed. Stuart Altmann (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1967), 281–324.

visibility afforded by open grassland, the monkey's preferred certain groves of trees. It was these same trees that were in decline that Western studied. He did not mention that this might be a factor in the future population success of these groups of monkeys. For him, there was a higher density of these groves than anywhere else he had studied primates.²⁸⁰ The presence of a wide variety of predators in Amboseli was a central factor in determining the differences between calls if threatened by a leopard or an eagle. Amboseli, he said, was an ideal location to observe species interactions "unmolested by man."²⁸¹ This was perhaps true in comparison to other locations just beyond the Reserve, but it was not entirely true for Amboseli. By the time Struhsaker arrived in 1963, the population of people in the Ol Tukai area had increased, and this was the region where many of the groves the vervets spent their time lived. He did not mention that buildings were being erected and more and more tourists were arriving, but he did point to the commonly cited problem of Maasai overgrazing. For his purposes, however, the benign relationship between the Maasai and vervets was not a problem in his data collection.²⁸² It is difficult to explain the impact of Maasai predator killing on vervets. No one has studied this dynamic, but the high number of lion and leopard deaths, whether for killing for status or for protection of livestock, would have had an impact on the relationship between large cat predators and vervet populations.

As Gregory Radick discusses in *The Simian Tongue*, many primatologists argued that the sounds primates made was more a reflection of their emotional state, but others argued the

²⁸⁰ Thomas T. Struhsaker, "Ecology of Vervet Monkeys (*Cercopithecus Aethiops*) in The Masai-Amboseli Game Reserve, Kenya," *Ecology* 48, no. 6 (November 1967): 891.

²⁸¹ Thomas T. Struhsaker, *Behavior of Vervet Monkeys (Cercopithecus Aethiops)*, University of California Publications in Zoology, v. 82 (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1967), 1.

²⁸² Thomas T. Struhsaker, "Social Structure among Vervet Monkeys (*Cercopithecus Aethiops*)," *Behaviour* 29, no. 2/4 (January 1, 1967): 83–121.

communication was more nuanced and that there were symbolic sounds understood between individuals. It was not until Robert Seyfarth and Dorothy Cheney came to Amboseli that this theory gained academic traction again and public attention.²⁸³ Although determining whether vervet communication was a reflection of emotion or symbolic meaning was secondary to Seyfarth and Cheney, they were able to draw many connections between primate language and social interactions. The Seyfarths evolved in their belief that there was symbolic meaning in the sounds vervets made to distinguish predators, and when this was finally published, they revealed a much more complicated process than previously understood. Not only was the data revealing of predator warnings, but they also explained that the sounds were part of a social network between individual animals. Their work was made more public in 1980, with articles in the *New Scientist*, *Times News* of London, and the *New York Times*.²⁸⁴ Amboseli provided the ideal location for understanding vervet communication. The landscape was open and relatively uninhabited by people, although there were enough resources to make living in Amboseli feasible in the long term. Their research set a precedent for long-term research in the region, although they did not continue as the baboon or elephant researchers have done. Nevertheless, their research placed Amboseli in an important intellectual debate over the evolution of primate communication. Struhsaker, Seyfarth, and Cheney moved primate behavior research from the lab to the field, and it was the combination of environmental, social, and political factors that made

²⁸³ Both Gregory Radick and Jeremy Rich discuss the work of Richard L. Garner. Gregory Radick, *The Simian Tongue: The Long Debate About Animal Language* (University of Chicago Press, 2007); Jeremy Rich, *Missing Links: The African and American Worlds of R.L. Garner, Primate Collector* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2012).

²⁸⁴ Radick, 320-364; Robert M. Seyfarth and Dorothy L. Cheney, "The Ontogeny of Vervet Monkey Alarm Calling Behavior: A Preliminary Report," *Zeitschrift Für Tierpsychologie* 54, no. 1 (January 12, 1980): 37-56; Jeremy Chérifas, "Voices in the Wilderness," *New Scientist*, June 19, 1980.

their research possible and productive. The Amboseli baboon researchers were part of a group of scientists who went to the “field” throughout the world to study animal behavior in the 1960s, some using rather different methodologies.

Amboseli Elephant Research Project

Elephant behavior has long been the subject of discussion, but has serious implications for those who live with them. Maasai and elephants have co-existed for centuries in Amboseli. At times, this has been peaceful, but at other times, one or the other infringes on the space of the other. The day before I left Amboseli after finishing my field work, a local Maasai man, pastor and father, was riding his motorbike through the bush on his way home after dusk, having spent the day at church. Perhaps he startled the elephant feeding among the trees, but the elephant did not let him pass. When a passerby found his body, it appeared as if the elephant had thrown him and then brought him back to the path, as if it understood where another person would locate the deceased man.²⁸⁵ This one event was representative of a host of other such encounters between humans and elephants. The behavior of the elephant after it killed the man is one of many unique patterns that researchers have been studying in Amboseli. Elephants have a rich social life. Geoffrey Lolkingyei, who was once a warden of Amboseli during the transition to a national park, but started as a ranger in the reserve. He recalled his early interest in elephant behavior, growing up in Amboseli. He would follow elephants just to watch them:

I became interested in wildlife as a Maasai, as a young person, always seeing wildlife. We could follow even an elephant for maybe half an hour even when we were young to see how he behaves. And to learn even, you go to the windy direction or windy side. You see them, flapping their ears or making a noise or blowing the wind, but if you go to the other side away from the wind you see them behaving in a normal way. I grew interested when I was young. I

²⁸⁵ This event was relayed to me by Benjamin Tuarare.

learned about wildlife behavior, when I was young, even when I was not thinking of even becoming a wildlife manager. So when I got a chance, I thought this was a wonderful opportunity to learn more. In fact, to protect... So I can tell someone don't kill.²⁸⁶

Behavioral observations took on a more technical methodology when Cynthia Moss and Harvey Croze came to Amboseli in 1972. Moss had previously worked with Iain Douglas-Hamilton at Lake Manyara in Tanzania. She left her job at *Newsweek* to work in the "last great wilderness areas." She wanted to work on her own project in an area that was as "natural as it can get." That is when David Western suggested she and Croze come to Amboseli. The landscape provided as close to "natural" circumstances as could be found anywhere in East Africa. Unlike other areas in Sub-Saharan Africa, Amboseli's elephants had never been culled and were well habituated to humans, both Maasai and tourists. This would allow them to make close observation in vehicles.²⁸⁷ The Amboseli Elephant Research Program (AERP), as the project was named, became one of the most famous long term mammal studies in the world, using their conclusions to influence global ivory trade policies. Their research goal was to establish a baseline understanding of elephant biology and social organization, but on an individual basis. Each elephant had a name, not a number, and families were grouped according to the same first initial.²⁸⁸ When they began their research, the Amboseli region was in the midst of land adjudication, where the land was being placed under group or individual titles. This would

²⁸⁶ Geoffrey Lolkenyei, interview.

²⁸⁷ Cynthia Moss, August 19, 2013; Cynthia J. Moss, Harvey Croze, and Phyllis C. Lee, *The Amboseli Elephants: A Long-Term Perspective on a Long-Lived Mammal* (University Of Chicago Press, 2011), 1-3.

²⁸⁸ Gregg Mitman, "Pachyderm Personalities: The Media of Science, Politics, and Conservation," in *Thinking With Animals: New Perspectives on Anthropomorphism*, ed. Lorraine Daston and Gregg Mitman (New York: Columbia University Press, 2005), 175–95. Mitman argues their methodology of naming each elephant was a medium that connected elephant researchers with animal rights activists and environmental and conservation organizations to make a case for the value of ending the ivory trade and stopping elephant poaching.

eventually have implications for the study of Amboseli's elephants because long-range corridors closed due to permanent Maasai settlement and the introduction of large-scale agriculture. AERP shifted toward conservation, working with locale people, other conservation organizations, and a rotating supply of scientists from various universities. With Croze's departure in 1975, Moss continued with the project, establishing it permanently within the park with assistance from the African Wildlife Foundation. She recalls driving around in her Renault car doing observations every day.²⁸⁹

Croze, a student of Niko Tinbergen, continued his work on elephant migration and relationships that he started in Serengeti National Park and Uganda when he arrived in Amboseli. He and Moss established a systematic observational methodology involving identifying each individual and establishing family trees in each of the groups in Amboseli. They photographed and aged each animal. During his three years in Amboseli, he and Moss did not publish peer reviewed articles based on their short term research. However, Croze went on to work on larger projects in Kenya with regard to management and policies of Kenya's range land, including working with the UNDP and FAO. With the Kenya Wildlife Management Project, he established methodologies and experiments for collecting data on the distribution and population of wildlife in Kajiado District.²⁹⁰ He still serves on the Board of Trustees for AERP and continues to publish on elephant ecology based on the long-term data collected by him and other

²⁸⁹ Cynthia Moss, August 19, 2013; Cynthia Moss, *Elephant Memories: Thirteen Years in the Life of an Elephant Family* (New York : W. Morrow, 1988), 55.

²⁹⁰ Harvey Croze et al., *Aerial Surveys Undertaken by the Kenya Wildlife Management Project: Methodologies and Results* (Wildlife Conservation and Management Department, Ministry of Tourism and Wildlife, and U.N.D.P./F.A.O. Wildlife Management Project, 1978).

researchers.²⁹¹

Joyce Poole was one of AERP's most prolific scientists, arriving in 1975 amidst a season of bad poaching. Poole recalled that the population, which once spread from Tsavo to Kilimanjaro and as far as Mt. Meru and Magadi, was confined to the Reserve. She and Moss decided she would focus on the males, which up to this point, had largely been understudied. Her first big breakthrough was the discovery of physiological signs of males in musth, a periodic sexual cycle of aggression. This had been identified in Asian elephants, but never in African elephants. Her doctoral thesis focused on male behavior, including musth cycles. In addition to observing behavior, she collected urine samples to test hormone levels. Not only did this discovery have implications for understanding elephant social and reproductive dynamics generally, but it also revealed the relationship between group behaviors and local environments.²⁹² She continued to study male behavior and elephant reproduction during her time in Amboseli, but gradually she began to take a broader view of elephants in Africa.

Poole and Moss worked with the African Elephant and Rhino Specialist Group (AERSG), which brought her in contact with the larger implications of understanding elephant behavior in the context of the increase in poaching and the ivory trade. During the late 1980s, as the ivory trade escalated, the political climate of Kenya became less hospitable for researchers. She had difficulty with research permits and harassment from national park authorities. Before

²⁹¹ Cynthia Moss, August 19, 2013; Cynthia J. Moss, Harvey Croze, and Phyllis C. Lee, *The Amboseli Elephants: A Long-Term Perspective on a Long-Lived Mammal* (University Of Chicago Press, 2011).

²⁹² Joyce Poole, interview; Joyce Poole, *Coming of Age with Elephants : A Memoir*, (New York: Hyperion, 1996), 43-107; Joyce H. Poole and Cynthia J. Moss, "Musth in the African Elephant, *Loxodonta Africana*," *Nature* 292, no. 5826 (August 27, 1981): 830–31. Joyce H. Poole, "Musth and Male-Male Competition in the African Elephant" (PhD., University of Cambridge (United Kingdom), 1982).

this time, scientists had been welcomed in Kenya and moved about freely, but the era of President Daniel arap Moi was a time of suspicion. Poole found this time very stressful to conduct research in Amboseli. The Moi regime was suspicious of Western researchers and made it more difficult for them to gain access. At the same time, the politics of ivory was at the forefront of conservationists' agenda.²⁹³ It became impossible to remain an uninvolved scientists "doing science" for the sake of science. Poole left Amboseli as a permanent researcher in 1988. She and Moss had a disagreement on the course of research for AERP, and Poole had a chance to study elephant movement in Tsavo, which was at the center of the Kenyan poaching problem. She left Amboseli, with the backing of AWF and Perez Olindo of the WCMD, to do a survey of Tsavo elephants.²⁹⁴

Keith Lindsay worked on a different layer of the elephant puzzle in Amboseli. As an ecologist, he sought to study the habitat and nutrition of the elephants, as a complement to the ethological work of Moss, Croze, and Poole. He joined AERP in 1977 for his Masters research on elephants' choice of habitat and how that affects the relationship of individuals and groups.²⁹⁵ He returned in 1982 to start his doctoral work, continuing to study the feeding habits of elephants. He found that male and female elephants feed differently in Amboseli at various points in the seasonal cycle. As has been discussed elsewhere, Amboseli's swamps are an integral part of the seasonality of wildlife migration. For elephants, access to the swamps,

²⁹³ Charles Hornsby, *Kenya: A History Since Independence* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2012), 398-465. Hornsby describes the Kenyan state during the later half of the 1980s in which President Moi kept a tight grip on party politics and used a strong hand to control the government.

²⁹⁴ Joyce Poole, interview; Poole, *Coming of Age with Elephants*, 182-214.

²⁹⁵ W. K. Lindsay, "Habitat Selection and Social Group Dynamics of African Elephants in Amboseli, Kenya" (Masters Thesis, University of British Columbia, 1982).

rainfall amounts, and plant growth affected breeding patterns and infant mortality.²⁹⁶ Later research focused on elephants' diets, and he found that to reach optimal nutritional levels, the mammals needed a variety of woodey plants, which were high in vitamins, minerals, and protein, balanced by grassland foraging, which was higher calorie and faster energy. An overabundance of one type impacted reproduction and health. With the changing habitat of the Amboseli ecosystem, maintaining migration routes to provide access to the necessary plant variety was important.²⁹⁷

Over the years, other researchers have joined AERP for shorter and longer term projects, but it was AERP's border crossers that have helped integrate the program into the community and develop its role as an African based organization. AERP's hiring of locals resulted in similar outcomes are extremely active in data collection, but their roles have had to take on more activist roles. Norah Njirani was hired to assist Joyce Poole's research on male elephant behavior. Eventually, they hired Soila Sayaillel, and her sister Katito, to assist with data collection and observations. As Western and Kenyan researchers came through to conduct doctoral research, these women assisted in data collection, as they knew each elephant, their relationships and common behaviors. Their role in scientific research has resulted in being co-authors in peer reviewed articles, but one of their more important roles is as community liaisons. Since their employment at AERP, they have been the face of the scientific community to the surrounding

²⁹⁶ W. K. Lindsay, "Feeding Ecology and Population Demography of African Elephants in Amboseli, Kenya" (Doctoral Thesis, University of Cambridge (United Kingdom), 1994).

²⁹⁷ W. K. Lindsay, "Habitat Use, Diet Choice, and Nutritional Status in Female and Male Amboseli Elephants," in *The Amboseli Elephants: A Long-Term Perspective on a Long-Lived Mammal*, ed. Cynthia J. Moss, Harvey Croze, and Phyllis C. Lee (Chicago: University Of Chicago Press, 2011), 51–73.

Maasai.²⁹⁸ Elephants' protection, which they see as the outcome of their research, has been a highly politicized issue. Locally, farmers and livestock owners come into conflict with elephants, resulting in their killing. Their questions about elephant behavior have impacted local development policies for the past fifteen years in order to protect wildlife corridors. The Kitenden corridor, which the elephants use to cross into Tanzania, was to be subdivided into individual plots, cutting off their movement. Their patterns of migration have been monitored for the past four decades and this research resulted in international donors protecting this corridor.

Over the decades of research, AERP has fought to keep elephant science and conservation at the forefront of the international efforts of protecting endangered and threatened species. Locally, they have also placed themselves as gatekeepers of this large mammal. This has often made them the object of derision, as many locals have become frustrated with the elephants' presence and high level of protection. As will be seen in later chapters, AERP argued that elephants have an integral part of the ecosystem and economics of Amboseli, despite the argument of some that the population is too high for such a small area and that, ultimately, human encroachment will make the population unviable.²⁹⁹ The relationship of elephants to the human community in Amboseli is a complex one, but Croze and Lindsay argue, "Elephants play a catalytic or modifying, rather than determining or controlling, role in the habitat changes of Amboseli."³⁰⁰ Elephant research in Amboseli has itself been a catalytic force. Now any

²⁹⁸ Norah Njirani, personal communication.

²⁹⁹ Cynthia Moss, interview; Cynthia J. Moss, Harvey Croze, and Phyllis C. Lee, *The Amboseli Elephants: A Long-Term Perspective on a Long-Lived Mammal* (University Of Chicago Press, 2011).

³⁰⁰ Harvey Croze and Lisa A Lindsay, W. K., "Amboseli Ecosystem Context: Past and Present," in *Amboseli Elephants: A Long-Term Perspective on a Long-Lived Mammal*, ed. Cynthia J. Moss, Harvey Croze, and Phyllis C. Lee (Chicago: University Of Chicago Press, 2011), 11–28.

conservation organization working on anti-poaching and ivory-trade ban issues use Amboseli as a symbol of the animal, giving them their own individual personalities. This is a way to relate to audiences on the other side of the world. What these audiences do not see is that there are other researchers whose research might be considered less romantic, but is very important to the overall understanding of a changing ecosystem.

Legacy of Science in Amboseli

One hot sunny day in June, 2013, I joined a group of local men who were part of a research project supported by the African Wildlife Foundation (AWF) in the Satao Elerai Conservancy on the Kimana Group Ranch. The research team's task was to measure the plants in one kilometer transects. From early in the morning, until late evening, we walked through thornbush, tall grass, acacia thickets, erosion gullies, and flat plains. They measured the height of trees, the composition of the grasses, and amount of soil erosion. They collected data over several months and provided AWF, their donors, and the Conservancy's lodge with the amount of herbage. This information was collated with data from animal population surveys to better understand the correlation between types of plants and the predominance of certain species in a given area.

These men, some with degrees in science, and others with experience of living in Amboseli, exemplified the way knowledge of the environment has interacted in Amboseli. The place is important in telling the history of science in Amboseli because the human interactions between local Maasai and outside scientists, whether from Europe or the United States or from other parts of Africa, have created a body of knowledge that is both generalizable and extremely specific to this part of East Africa. The universality of the science in Amboseli is evident in the

published work of many Amboseli scientists. Not only has their work helped to explain the ecological and human dynamics of the ecosystem, but it also provides a case study applicable to other areas of the world.

Chapter 4

Hunting and Poaching in Amboseli: Animal Meaning in Maasai Life, Kenyan Politics, and International Conservation

When a hunter's bullet brought Odinga, Amboseli's largest elephant, to the ground in the dry season of 1967, the earth trembled. News of his death traveled the next day to local safari lodges, but within moments the other bulls of his herd knew one of their own was lost. Kajiado District's Game Warden, J. N. Orumoi, went to the site to investigate. In the area where Odinga fell, he saw smaller footprints of other elephants that came by to investigate. It is now well documented that elephants mourn and understand death.³⁰¹ This was a sad day for his herd and for the people who loved Odinga, a gentle elephant who residents and visitors knew by name. He represented one side of wild animals' meaning in Amboseli, that these large species had a place in the community. Odinga's death also shows that animals meant different things to different people.³⁰²

This is a history of hunting animals legally and illegally and how this relationship expresses different meanings of animals to human communities in Amboseli. In Amboseli, an examination of hunting and poaching provides a way to understand the interaction between human and non-human animals, to explore these relationships locally, nationally, and internationally. People's perspectives on animals are contingent on time and space and often have

³⁰¹ Karen McComb, Lucy Baker, and Cynthia Moss, "African Elephants Show High Levels of Interest in the Skulls and Ivory of Their Own Species," *Biology Letters* 2, no. 1 (2006): 26–28, doi:10.1098/rsbl.2005.0400.; Cynthia Moss, *Elephant Memories: Thirteen Years in the Life of an Elephant Family* (New York: W. Morrow, 1988), 271–272.

³⁰² KNA, KW/1/21, letter from Daniel Sindiyo to Chief Game Warden, November 26, 1967.

double or conflicting meaning. All of these complicated interactions make humans see wildlife as foes, companions, commodities, objects of inquiry, fashion, medicine, symbols, or competitors. These labels came from the local Maasai, the Game Department, the international market for wild game trophies, and conservationists who wanted to protect the wildlife. The way in which the animal was killed and the reason it was killed is one way in conceptualizing the meaning of wildlife in the Amboseli landscape. Thus, by understanding the role of wildlife in Amboseli, one can better see the landscape's important place in Kenya's history and the history of conservation globally.

This chapter explores the history of hunting and poaching in Amboseli from the 1950s to the 1980s through local, national, and international perspectives to understand why people killed wildlife and why it was difficult for the government to slow or stop illegal hunting. I also discuss the push and pull from the international community to extract trophies or protect wildlife. Often it was the tension between different conceptualizations of wild animals that resulted in killing. Early in the history of the Kenya colony, Amboseli's wildlife, though hunted, did not suffer the population loss of later decades in the twentieth century. By independence, both rhino and elephants poached at high rates throughout Africa, and by the late 1970s, the global conservation movement used Amboseli as an example of why the trade in ivory and rhino horns needed to be stopped.³⁰³

³⁰³ Cynthia J. Moss, Harvey Croze, and Phyllis C. Lee, *The Amboseli Elephants: A Long-Term Perspective on a Long-Lived Mammal* (University Of Chicago Press, 2011); Joyce Poole, *Coming of Age with Elephants: A Memoir*, 1st ed. (New York: Hyperion, 1996). Moss, et al. and Poole discuss the role of Amboseli elephant researchers in the larger context of an international ivory ban and efforts to stop the killing of rhinos.

Hunting in Amboseli – Maasai Identity and Colonial Sport

In the late nineteenth century, Joseph Thomson and other early explorers passed through Amboseli, using similar routes around Kilimanjaro to get to Lake Victoria or travel through the Rift Valley.³⁰⁴ By the turn of the century, it was well known to hunters that lions were abundant in Amboseli. Arthur Blaney Percival traveled through the region in 1901 on a hunting trip, accompanied by Maasai guides. The group unexpectedly encountered a rhino amid a herd of zebra, and the Maasai wanted to spear it. Percival's rifle was not ready, but he told them not to kill it. Instead, one of the Maasai took two stones and clicked them together twice. This was enough to scare the rhino away, and they passed by in peace.³⁰⁵ This encounter showed several perspectives in that group. The expectation of the Maasai toward Percival was that he would want to kill it, but he did not want to, despite being on a hunting safari. It also shows that the Maasai knew a way to pass by rhinos without having to kill them; they were not something to fear, just behave with caution. Both had the means and will to kill or not kill, and both surprised each other that day.

The Ilkisingo Maasai's identity was more closely connected with cattle than with wildlife. The protection of their herds, or their wealth, was of highest importance. They rarely killed elephants and other game unless for protection of life or property, but lion killing represented an act of honor for the community and for individual *ilmurran*. Although most

³⁰⁴ Joseph Thomson, *Through Masai Land: A Journey of Exploration among the Snowclad Volcanic Mountains and Strange Tribes of Eastern Equatorial Africa* (London: Sampson Low, 1885).

³⁰⁵ Arthur Blaney Percival, *A Game Ranger's Note Book* (New York: George H. Doran, 1924), 91.

Maasai will say they do not kill to eat wildlife, they have done this in extreme cases of famine.³⁰⁶ Although Maasai identity is often associated with cattle and not the consumptive use of wildlife, other neighboring groups, such as the Kamba engaged in consumptive use of wildlife. The Kamba were traditional hunters, killing animals for food and trade. None of these ethnic "traditions" or cultural patterns was unchanging or absolute. Still, the identity the Maasai had of themselves and others had of them was bound with cattle and, other than lion killing, co-existence with wildlife.³⁰⁷ I met individuals in my field work who broke with this mold, either by killing wildlife without reason or who did not own cattle and considered themselves as Maasai as their neighbors. What became clear was that cattle and wildlife are not necessarily at odds with each other in Maasai society, but it is the outside social, economic, and political structures that have made it so.

Two brothers from Itilal, Sikaba Ole Nkoye and Tiamba Ole Nkoye, explained the importance of lion hunting to Maasai society and how the practice has changed in recent decades.³⁰⁸ Even those who did not kill a lion with their own hands enjoyed being a part of the

³⁰⁶ I discussed this with individuals during informal conversations. See also John G. Galaty, "Maasai Expansion and the New East African Pastoralism," in *Being Maasai: Ethnicity and Identity in East Africa* (Athens, OH: Ohio University Press, 1993), 61–86; Joy K. Asiema and Francis D. P. Situma, "Indigenous Peoples and the Environment: The Case of the Pastoral Maasai of Kenya," *Colorado Journal of International Environmental Law and Policy* 5 (1994): 149-172; Collett, "Pastoralists and Wildlife: Image and Reality in Kenya Maasailand."

³⁰⁷ For Maasai identity and culture, see the following selection. John G. Galaty, "Being 'Maasai'; Being 'People-of-Cattle': Ethnic Shifters in East Africa," *American Ethnologist* 9, no. 1 (February 1, 1982): 1–20; Dorothy Hodgson, *Once Intrepid Warriors : Gender, Ethnicity, and the Cultural Politics of Maasai Development* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2001); Dorothy L. Hodgson, *Being Maasai, Becoming Indigenous: Postcolonial Politics in a Neoliberal World* (Indiana University Press, 2011); Katherine Homewood, Patti Kristjanson, and Pippa Chenevix Trench, eds., *Staying Maasai?: Livelihoods, Conservation, and Development in East African Rangelands* (New York: Springer, 2009); Thomas Spear and Richard Waller, eds., *Being Maasai: Ethnicity & Identity in East Africa* (Athens, OH: Ohio University Press, 1993).

³⁰⁸ Itilal is a small village on Kuku Group Ranch located between Amboseli National

process. The disappearance of this practice is something the older age sets have come to associate with development, education, the government, the church, and wildlife conservation. Other factors, such as a decrease in the lion population, contribute as well. Now things are different, they told me. People do not kill lions like they used to. The government prevents them from doing this, whereas before, the game department showed little interest. The men saw this as the national government controlling Maasai culture through laws.³⁰⁹

Brothers Sikabah and Tiamba Nkoye killed lions for prestige as young men, but not just for the prestige of vain youth, but rather, they contend, for a larger purpose in the community. Lion killing was much more than impressing girls or even one-upmanship. This act was a sign of solidarity among the young men, all acting as a unit. The one who first speared a lion was given a special name commemorating the act, but the glory goes to the whole group and to the community. The community gained prestige by being protected by able-bodied and fearless *ilmurran*. The celebrations continued from village to village as the *ilmurran* took the lion's mane, showing the feat.

The Nkoye brothers related the process of lion killing to me, both having taken part in this long ago. After killing the lion, they took the mane, leaving the carcass behind for the *olmotoni*, one of the scavenging birds. The mane stayed with the first to spear the lion who might have been given a name such as Mepukori, or one who will never go hungry. They danced from village to village, greeted by the *noo eeiyo*, their mothers, who poured milk for them and gave them beads. The community recognized that they had *ilmurran* who were courageous and able to protect them. Girls danced and sang in praise of the *ilmurran*. The brothers emphasized that it

Park and Tsavo West National Park.

³⁰⁹ Sikabah Ole Nkoye and Tiamba Ole Nkoye, interviews.

was not he who was the first to spear that was the most celebrated. This was a group effort, and the glory was shared.³¹⁰

Amboseli used to be a place teeming with lions. The palm grove around Ol Tukai Orok, in the center of the National Park, was known to be a lions haven, a place for mating and giving birth. This was the "Dark Forest," presenting danger, but where men gathered for *orpul*. An *orpul* is a sight where Maasai men go to eat meat together. It is a feast where women are not allowed. Ol Tukai Orok used to be more forested than it is now, mostly comprising of palms. This low-lying area attracted lots of wildlife as well as herds. So those who passed through Mpash, had to go near Ol Tukai Orok. Now the palms are fewer and no *orpul* is held there. Eating meat of domestic animals is part of what has defined Maasai identity for generations. The killing of a cow with the purpose to eat is referred to as *ayieng'isho*, or slaughtering.³¹¹

The Maasai I interviewed were quick to tell me that Maasai do not hunt. But they have killed lions historically problem animals. To kill an animal, in the context of self-defense or a non-consumptive way, the verb is *aarr*, as in *aarr olng'atuny*, or to kill a lion. Lions were not hunted, but killed. The encounter was an ambush but a battle, face to face between two enemies. This is why if the lion was not speared, and the *ilmurran* failed in killing the lion, there was no glory in the act of at least encountering the animal. To make a further distinction in killing animals, Maa-speakers use *olamayio* to refer to hunting. Someone would go hunting for consumptive purposes, but the one carrying out the act would not be Maasai. This was used to describe the Kamba, for example, who helped white hunters in the Amboseli/Tsavo region.

³¹⁰ Sikabah Ole Nkoye and Tiamba Ole Nkoye, interviews.

³¹¹ Despite being female, I attended several *orpuls*. They decided that since this was for research, they would make an exception for me.

There was no word for poaching in the sense of its usage today. The Maasai used the phrase *earata oo ng'wesi*, or the killing of wild animals.³¹²

For white hunters, wild animals were an object of sport. Like the *ilmurran*, to kill a lion or elephant was to be a conqueror, but not in protection of their family, instead by dominating nature. Hunting safaris were common in the Amboseli region, and they hired African porters and trackers to assist. In Amboseli, most of the Africans were Kamba, from east of Amboseli, with knowledge of the landscape and whose traditional method of hunting was with bow and arrow.³¹³ In the early decades of the twentieth century, these hunting trips were not for the weak or fearful. Disease was a problem, which is why the Maasai did not stay in some areas during certain seasons of the year. Elite "champagne safaris," as Edward Steinhart describes luxury hunting trip, did not appear to reach the Amboseli areas.³¹⁴ This was because of the shared border with German East Africa in the days before World War I and the higher levels of tsetse flies. The Game Department issued licenses for the legal hunting of a set number of animals. Hunters paid more for an elephant than zebra, of course, but could still make money off any trophies they wished to sell.³¹⁵

Much of Ernest Hemingway's writings reflected the gradual shift in white hunters' mentality toward wildlife conservation. Hemingway came to Amboseli but left little evidence of having been there other than an unpublished journal of the trip. He spent several months in

³¹² Dominic Lekakeny Nang'ea, personal communication.

³¹³ Michael L. Stone, "Organized Poaching in Kitui District: A Failure in District Authority, 1900 to 1960," *The International Journal of African Historical Studies* 5, no. 3 (January 1, 1972): 436–52.

³¹⁴ Edward I. Steinhart, *Black Poachers, White Hunters: A Social History of Hunting in Colonial Kenya*, (Athens: Ohio University, 2006), 199.

³¹⁵ KNA, KW/1/36, "Administration of Game Laws - Poaching," 1958-1963.

Kimana Camp, at the bottom of the slopes of Kilimanjaro with his wife Mary in 1953 and 1954. The safari came near the end of his life and during a time that his own understanding of the relationship of the hunter to the animal shifted. He was less interested in hunting the lions of Amboseli than he was in observing the small birds of the grassland. His wife was the primary hunter of this safari, whose agenda of killing a problematic lion drove the narrative in *Under Kilimanjaro*. His time at Kimana Camp showed the transformation of a man's understanding of his relationship to animals. His commentary sheds light on his own thoughts on the social landscape of Amboseli. He kept close council with many of the Wakamba community, even taking a mistress from there, but he thought little of the Maasai who came and went from his story, treating them as backward and ignorant.³¹⁶

Even as Kenya's emphasis moved toward wildlife conservation, Amboseli remained a popular place for hunting. For the Maasai who saw this happening around them, it was difficult for them to rationalize why the government and outsiders profited from the killing of wildlife on their land. They did not necessarily want to join them, but they did not want to be prosecuted when they killed wildlife to protect life and property. Solutions to this argument extended in two directions. One way of thinking was to gain access to tourism revenue and hunting fees since this was their land and they had to share resources they used to maintain livestock with wildlife.³¹⁷ The other was more direct, that they engage in poaching to sell trophies. Although it was not common, the practices went against how the Maasai identified with wildlife in history and stories.

³¹⁶ Ernest Hemingway, *Under Kilimanjaro* (Kent, Ohio: Kent State University Press, 2005).

³¹⁷ Katherine Homewood, *Ecology of African Pastoralist Societies* (Athens OH: Ohio University Press, 2008).

Colonial Anti-Poaching

Amboseli was a prime target for poachers, crossing over the nearby Tanganyikan border to hunt and bring back trophies or purchase them from locals. In the late nineteenth and early twentieth century Arab hunters traveled through the region hunting for ivory, directly participating in the killing of animals. Networks expanded and Kamba, Kikuyu, Mijikenda, and Maasai hunted wildlife and sold it to black market dealers. Either the trophy continued on the black market to Zanzibar or it was made 'legal' at Mombasa.³¹⁸

Later in the colonial years, when it became obvious that wildlife numbers were dwindling, particularly with the larger carnivores, elephants, and rhinos, it was clear the current state of hunting and poaching could not continue. Poaching surpassed legitimate hunting as ivory and rhino horns were sold as legitimate at market. The meaning of wild animals to the colonial state shifted in the inter-war years, and particularly by the 1950s, wildlife conservation became a colonial priority. Those who hunted for sport wanted to end illegal poaching. Some saw Africans who were hired by ivory traders to collect trophies as the main problem. Africans had a desire to enter into profitable business, and if more and more Africans thought this way, the government would have an uncontrollable problem on their hands, according to P.C. Nancarrow, the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Forest Development, Game, and Fisheries (Game Department).³¹⁹ If poaching could be stopped, then the trade would end at its source. Within the Game Department, some authorities argued that it was best to take away weapons or find alternative employment for them. However, this never proved effective. Then the focus shifted to

³¹⁸ Steinhart, *Black Poachers, White Hunters*; David Western, personal communication.

³¹⁹ KNA, KW/1/36, P.C. Nancarrow, Game Department to Ministry of African Affairs, "Poaching," November 17, 1959.

cutting off buyers and traders at ports and border crossings where illegal trophies passed. This too, was more difficult than arresting a few hunters in the bush with poison arrows. It was not until the days before independence that the government and public started discussing that poaching would continue as long as there was a market for the products abroad.

The colonial government saw the destruction of wildlife populations as a symbol of underdevelopment. Wild animals had a unique relationship with the government of Kenya as a source of pride and potential revenue. Beyond the fact that lions roamed through the suburbs of Nairobi, the meaning of animals to the growth of Kenya as a profitable colony was a complicated one. Wildlife attracted more and more tourists each year, making it one of the most profitable resources in Kenya's economy. However, as the government encouraged more and more Kenyans to build up the agricultural sector, human-wildlife conflict became a serious issue the Game Department had to address in addition to poaching.³²⁰

Poachers wielded the power to kill wildlife outside of the law, and the colonial government had few advantages over the poachers. The individuals who were responsible for the killing were not the only poachers. The dealers, middlemen, product movers, and buyers at the other end should all be considered poachers. The money made from black market trophy sales pushed poaching to higher and higher levels throughout East Africa. Not only were Africans using poisoned arrows, but with the sale of ivory or horn, they could make enough money to buy rifles and vehicles and increase the size of their hunting parties.³²¹

The Game Department increasingly found itself putting wildlife protection over hunting

³²⁰ KNA, KL/7/18, "Poaching," 1959-1968.

³²¹ E. I. Steinhart, "Hunters, Poachers and Gamekeepers: Towards A Social History of Hunting in Colonial Kenya," *The Journal of African History* 30, no. 02 (1989): 247-64.

because it was difficult to distinguish legal from illegal game trophies. One way the Legislative Council sought to bring poaching under control and mediate how animals were used was through the Wild Animals Protection Ordinance in 1951. The Wild Animals Protection Ordinance set up the structure by which hunting and animal protection could be carried out in Kenya. It oversaw legal consumptive hunting for sport, mainly by white hunters who could purchase licenses, and it allowed several government agencies to involve themselves in game management and anti-poaching measures. Game management in agricultural areas meant killing problem animals destroying crops or livestock, but anti-poaching was the more expensive endeavor. Royal Kenyan National Parks protected wildlife within national park borders and the Game Department, under the Ministry of Forest Development, Game and Fisheries, dealt with poaching outside parks.³²²

Despite game laws in place to protect wildlife and manage a profitable population for tourism and consumptive hunting, people continued to hunt and export illegally. The colony lost revenue from the passing of ivory and other animal products through smuggling across Kenya's borders. Garissa, in the north of Kenya, and the coast were active points of departure for smugglers to take goods, but so was Namanga, the border town in the Amboseli Reserve. But by the late 1950s, the poachers were not white hunters who overused their licenses. Africans were hunting because profits were high and options few for many. Even after the animals had been killed, the government sought ways to apprehend the ivory and rhino horn before it left the colony. One way to do this was to catch the product in Voi, near Tsavo, where hunters could off load. The other was in Mombasa as the cargo was loaded onto ships. To do this, the Criminal

³²² W. K. Lindsay, "Integrating Parks and Pastoralists: Some Lessons from Amboseli," in *Conservation in Africa: Peoples, Policies and Practices* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 149–67.

Investigation Department often used informers who needed incentive to reveal their information and sources. Thus, there was need for more money from the government for intelligence gathering. The intelligence often paid off. There was a series of arrests in Mombasa, two Arabs, two Indians, and several Mijikenda arrested and convicted for illegal possession of ivory during 1957-1958. This was remarkable because it was not just the African hunters; they were able to catch some of the local dealers who were buying and exporting. Intelligence from local people was the best way to find ivory. Morris-Smith, who oversaw the Ivory Room in Mombasa, said that, it appeared that enough rhino horn was leaving Mombasa illegally to amount to about ten rhinos killed per week. He could continue to be successful in catching smugglers on dhows headed toward Zanzibar if he could get the funds to pay informers. Otherwise, this would have to stop, and smuggling would go on unabated. Even if the Kenyan government implemented plans to pay informers and regulate trade, they had another problem looming. Zanzibar Legislative Council was planning to increase import taxes. This shifted trade to Kenya, and the amount of illegal hunting and trading increased.³²³

Amboseli Wildlife Hunted

In the wake of Mau Mau and a search for identity as the Kenya colony, the government formed the Game Policy Committee in 1956 in response to the Wild Animals Protection Ordinance. One of the government's goals was to protect wildlife for the sake of the increasing tourism industry. The committee, made up of individuals from the Game Department, Royal Kenya National Parks, and other related ministries and organizations gathered on a regular basis for several years. Their main purpose was to find ways to protect Kenya's wildlife, and poaching

³²³ KNA, KL/7/18, "Poaching," 1959-1968.

was one of the main problems endangering wildlife. Their recommendation for poaching was to set up two mobile units, each with two Europeans and thirty Africans. The focus was to assist in the southern area. Within protected areas, it was easier to track the movement of people, even in Tsavo's vastness. In Amboseli, with a rather small protected area for wildlife around Ol Tukai, Amboseli had few problems at first, but beyond those borders, rates of poaching were remarkably high. The Game Policy Committee recommended that the government pass an amendment to the Wild Animals Protection Ordinance increasing the penalty for poaching.³²⁴ For a while, this policy worked. Two mobile units were enough to suppress poaching near the Tanganyikan border, and many African poachers were convicted.

The bureaucratic limitations placed on the Game Department, plus the high expectations to tackle poaching presented Grimwood and Sandeman, head and assistant game wardens, with a difficult situation. Regional wardens from all over the colony asked for more personnel, more equipment, and more money, but the department did not have the means to provide for any of this. Dennis R. P. Zaphiro, Kajiado District's game warden, had to deal with both poaching and killing due to human-wildlife conflict. The 1955 drought made matters worse and the Maasai had taken to killing rhinos, elephants, lions, and leopards. He found that, "This behavior is unusual," speculating that these could be retaliatory killings for a letter to the press raising issues of the number of cattle in Amboseli.³²⁵ The Maasai of Amboseli were in a difficult position, they were criticized for owning too many cattle, but struggling to maintain a living in the midst of a drought. Livelihoods tied to cattle grazing were growing increasingly precarious and less

³²⁴ "KNA, KW/7/18, J.J. Colin, Permanent Secretary, Game Department to Permanent Secretary of the Treasury, "Anti-Poaching Teams".

³²⁵ *Game Department Annual Report*. Nairobi, Kenya, 1955, 36.

profitable if one wanted to defend against drought. They sought ways to diversify their income by selling rhino horns black market in Namanga, the largest border town with Tanganyika. Zaphiro suspected they were using the excuse of self-defense against rhino for a justified killing, then selling the horn to Tanganyikan traders. In Mombasa, many were mixing legal with illegal trophies, making it impossible to distinguish. Eventually, these horns made their way to Zanzibar. He argued that unless the government outlawed the production of the poison manufactured by the Kamba and sold to hunters, that Amboseli's animals would be hunted to extinction. The Maasai wanted to protect themselves from those traveling through who carried poison and bows and arrows. The Game Department concluded it was best to find a way to limit or outlaw poison and bows and arrows, thus decreasing the poaching of large game. Still, there was resistance because outlawing weapons for self-defense was a problematic issue if one wanted to have the support of the African population for wildlife conservation.³²⁶

By 1958, poaching was on the increase again. Northern areas had to deal with an increase in poaching and trafficking of trophies, but the southern border was also faced with a level of poaching never before seen. Rhino horns were the prized commodity, as well as leopard skins. The black market prices for rhino horn in Tanganyika was attractive to those for whom herding failed or was less than sufficient to sustain their needs. Since poaching was increasing in the north, one of the mobile units moved up there. Leopard skins were now passing through Ethiopia, and Somalia held the market on the northern increase in elephant poaching.³²⁷ The cause for the rise in poaching in the intervening three years was an increase in prices for wildlife

³²⁶ KNA, KW/1/36, "Notes of a meeting held in the Ministry of Forest Development, Game and Fisheries at 9:30AM on Thursday, 30th September 1959, on the subject of poaching."

³²⁷ N. Thomas Håkansson, "The Human Ecology of World Systems in East Africa: The Impact of the Ivory Trade," *Human Ecology* 32, no. 5 (October 1, 2004): 561–91.

products, including, ivory, rhino horn, and bushmeat. The Somalis were purchasing the ivory to sell to the United States, partially driven by the fashion industry touting furs from East Africa, and the Tanganyika market was driving rhino horn and meat sales. There was little hope that the Tanganyikan government would assist, but they did have hope that Somalia would assist their anti-poaching efforts.³²⁸

Some thought that legal hunting licenses should be controlled more by the Nairobi Game Department Headquarters, rather than at regional out posts. The government could control the number of total animals kill and closely monitor hunters rather than on a site by site basis. It was believed that this would reduce fraudulent licenses. Zaphiro did not like the idea, nor did he appreciate one proposal that regional Game Wardens should be sent out on anti-poaching patrols. He spent much of his time dealing with a wide range of issues in wildlife management, that to have to do patrols. From his experience in Kajiado, this was an unwise use of their time. And the proposed occasional visitations of mobile units were useless as poaching increased. Massey, who made these proposals, thought that the wardens could be more involved, and give over some of the more day to day management of wildlife to the ADCs. Zaphiro feared that if the Kajiado ADC were given this power, then all game would be allowed to go and open up protected areas to grazing.³²⁹

The committee's final recommendations were turned into policy in 1959. However, not all agreed with its determinations, but this was mostly because the government passed the resolution without financial support or increase in personnel. They were already at a crisis point. Zaphrio personally saw eighteen dead rhinos in eighteen months. At that time, the 30 square mile

³²⁸ KNA, KL/7/18, Game Department memo, November 3, 1959.

³²⁹ KNA, KL/7/18, Game Department memo, November 11, 1959.

protected area Ol Tukai was safe, but he worried that without any support, no place would be safe for rhinos. Despite the complicated issues such as underfunding and overworked staff being raised at the Game Committee meetings, the EAWS called for an increase in patrols, funding, and the engagement of police.³³⁰ These would be appropriate temporary solutions. The long term solution was to change the way Africans viewed wildlife, as owned by all and none, thus supporting hunting at will. What needed to be done was to instill a sense of direct ownership in wildlife. Licensing fees should remain local, thus supporting a viable wildlife population would be in the best interests of the local community. Poaching would decrease local revenue, so people would self-govern poaching. The response to EAWS's draft article was that they disregarded some of the most important issues - primarily funding and who was engaged in hunting. As with more current issues related to poaching in Kenya, external demand is a much stronger factor in the trade than local perceptions of the role of wildlife in people's lives.³³¹

The drought of 1961 hit Amboseli causing problems for wildlife and for anti-poaching efforts. Animals moved into areas with water and grass that were occupied by farmers, creating conflict. Others were dying of diseases related to drought. Often game control officers had to kill suffering wildlife. The Game Department was receiving information that many rhinos were dying of disease in Tsavo Royal National Park. Because of the close proximity of animals to people, there was an increasing number of snares found, even in suburban areas like Karen and Langata in Nairobi. Killing for bushmeat increased because people were desperate for food. Some suspected that it was not only the fact that animals and people were now living closer together that was driving the increase in poaching, but that the middlemen of the trade were

³³⁰ The EAWS, introduced in Chapter 2 was pushing for prioritization of wildlife protection by the Kenyan government.

³³¹ KNA, KL/7/18, Noel Simon, EAWS to P.S. of Game Department, October 6, 1959.

unsure about *Uhuru*. Independence could mean many things for the profitability of ivory, rhino horn, and skins. This uncertainty spread to the hunters, resulting in "battles" between hunters and game scouts and police. Game scouts were usually out in pairs, tearing down snares and traps, when they would encounter poachers armed with spears, bows, and arrows.³³² Drought and an uncertain political future threatened to drive poaching to an extreme, making criminals out of people who would not otherwise have taken this route.

In 1960, Taberer' report to Chief Game Warden Grimwood on the levels of poaching in the Amboseli Reserve, "Casualties Since 1st January 1960 Known to Have Been Killed by Masai," explained the numbers of wildlife death were rising rapidly as drought set in throughout the ecosystem. The warden and rangers used the presence of spears to indicate that the killing was done by Maasai. The Kamba weapon of choice was bow and poisoned arrow. The significance of the killings was that they occurred throughout the Reserve, at the less inhabited periphery and in Olodare and Ol Tukai, areas where tourists spent much time observing wildlife. On occasion, the horns were recovered by game scouts, but it was difficult to determine who did it and prosecute the poachers. Taberer blamed the Maasai for killings because they had knowledge of the landscape and had intimate knowledge of their common locations. The rhinos of Amboseli had become so accustomed to humans and vehicles that they rarely ran from people. In the 200 square miles around Ol Tukai, Taberer had estimated that there were 143 rhinos in 1957, but by 1961 there were 89 known to be living within the vicinity. As rhino numbers decreased in Ol Tukai, elephant numbers rose. They were driven into the area because of increased human presence in Kimana and Namelok. Taberer confirmed that three lions were killed during that year. The population had totaled 49, but within eighteen months the number

³³² Mervyn Cowie, *Royal National Parks of Kenya Report* (Nairobi, Kenya: Royal National Parks of Kenya, June 30, 1961-December 31, 1962), 4w.

was 30. In an effort to prevent killings, when a lion pride was sighted, he sent rangers in Land Rovers to cattle routes to warn herders of lions, so that killings could be avoided. If they failed to heed the warning, they could be prosecuted. But with drought and increased threat from Maasai spears, some prides split and the tame ones became more afraid of humans than before.³³³

The Maasai who sold off their cattle or lost them to disease and lack of water and grass had to find other ways to buy food. One way to buy maize meal, was to sell rhino horns, which were fetching high prices just across the border in Tanganyika. Black market prices were tempting to impoverished Ikisongo, approached by Wachagga dealers from Tanganyika. Well known rhinos, many of whom had been named and were quite famous in Amboseli, had been killed or had gone missing.³³⁴ Two of the famous ones were given names, Gladys and Gertie, both of whom were poached.³³⁵

Local elders also wanted to stop the killings, but local politics inhibited their willingness to collaborate with the Game Department. The KADC wanted to stop the rhino poaching, as they were likely to lose revenue from legal hunting licenses. However, the warden bemoaned the fact that once they were in Nairobi, they lost interest in anti-poaching measures. Taberer wanted to get enough money to gain the interest of the local people, including elders, by giving financial incentives for intelligence leading to convictions of poachers or dealers, both in Kenya and Tanganyika. He was supported by John Keen, an important Maasai leader in Kajiado and

³³³ KNA, KL/7/18, "Poaching," 1959-1968.

³³⁴ KNA, KL/7/18, "Poaching," 1959-1968.

³³⁵ David Western, personal communication.

influential in promoting pastoralists in the constitutional negotiations at Lancaster House.³³⁶

The drought just before independence stands out in the mind of many Maasai who lived through that time. The *Olengruma* stands out in their minds because of the desperation to survive. Olengruma was the term the Maasai gave to this drought because they had no source of food. Ole Leyian recalled that Americans flew their planes over Amboseli and dropped maize flour and powdered milk.³³⁷ They knew many people who died. Their livestock died and the market collapsed.³³⁸ For some, the logical step was hunting wildlife, but according to Kenyan law, they were criminal poachers. This drought brought to the debate over African hunting for subsistence to the forefront of game management discourse. In regions where there are protected areas for wildlife, local inhabitants are kept from wildlife utilization by laws, policies, or practices. In Amboseli, it was no different in the early 1960s, where Africans were prohibited, even in desperate times, from using wildlife for meat.³³⁹ The tone of Taberer's report shows that he had some sympathy for their plight, but he was equally worried about the stability of the wildlife populations during the drought too. Within the Ol Tukai sanctuary, the KADC and Game Warden were trying to keep cattle out of the swamps, further exacerbating human and livestock. The Maasai saw wildlife as competition for life. The colonial government sought to

³³⁶ KNA, KW/1/21, "Administration of Game Laws," 1961-1968; Hornsby, Charles. *Kenya: A History Since Independence*. London: I. B. Tauris, 2012, 60-62; Keen, John, November 10, 2013.

³³⁷ Olorruoshi Leyian, interview.

³³⁸ Moipa Leyian, interview.

³³⁹ John M. MacKenzie, *The Empire of Nature: Hunting, Conservation, and British Imperialism* (Manchester Univ Pr, 1988); Anders Skonhoft and Jan Tore Solstad, "Wildlife Management, Illegal Hunting and Conflicts. A Bioeconomic Analysis," *Environment and Development Economics* 1, no. 02 (May 1996): 165-81, 577.

protect the wildlife from Maasai poachers and the broader effects of ill-managed hunting and poaching.³⁴⁰

African Hearts and Minds

Colonial and international efforts to change the attitudes of local people reflect the need to control the meaning of animals in society was part of the larger imperial endeavor to exert hegemony over indigenous people.³⁴¹ At this time, not only was the government trying to get Maasai to co-exist with wildlife on their terms, but they hoped to encourage development. At odds with wildlife protection in Amboseli, was the hope to establish large scale cattle ranching. However, if Maasai chose ranching, or even agriculture, it would be a preferable alternative to poaching and mitigate human-wildlife conflict.

By the end of 1959, a new Sessional Paper had been approved by the Government, titled "A Game Policy for Kenya." It advocated altering African attitudes rather than investing in the infrastructure of anti-poaching measures on the ground. It stated, "As the future of game will depend mainly on the attitude of the people of Kenya towards it, the Government recognizes that it has a prime duty and responsibility to convince the people of Kenya that wild animals are a unique asset and a possession most valuable to themselves and to the world at large." However, the Game Department did not want to "antagonize African opinion." In carrying out this directive, the Chief Game Warden told provincial wardens not to conduct house to house investigations for poison or arrows, and any serious anti-poaching initiatives had to be passed by the District Commissioners. The focus should stay on large animals and skins. P.C. Nancarrow,

³⁴⁰ KNA, KL/7/18, "Poaching," 1959-1968.

³⁴¹ Porter, Bernard. *The Lion's Share: A History of British Imperialism, 1850 to the Present*. 5th ed. Harlow, England ; New York: Pearson, 2012.

the Minister of Forest Development, Game, and Fisheries either could not or would not assist the Game Department, with anything more than words. The best approach, he believed was to change hearts and minds of the Africans. He wrote, "The African villager is now being affected for the Game Department cannot give the necessary protection to *shambas* for it has to spend too much time on anti-poaching activities. Control area fees will decrease for there will be fewer animals shot under license."³⁴²

The Game Committee of the KADC met on April 17, 1962, with many councilors present, including Lenku Ole Mpaa, who had served as local chief for many years, and Ole Muturi, who helped Taberer investigate Maasai poaching. This meeting reflected local politician's attitudes toward animals in Amboseli. The KADC's priorities were to collect funds from Amboseli, and the recovery of wildlife was essential to this. They were disappointed that, due to Taberer's long-term sick leave, the accounts did not show whether Amboseli was "wealthy financially."³⁴³ The meeting minutes pointed out that the killing spree had abated. This was attributed to heavy punishments on those convicted and sudden change of heart of local people towards wildlife. Zaphrio's insistence that attitudes were changing among the Maasai is an interesting interpretation of the circumstances, as most Maasai did not see a daily change in benefits from wildlife. His conclusion was, perhaps supported by Maasai elites, who were benefiting from wildlife and hunting and had the ability to speak for the Ikisongo Maasai of Amboseli as a whole. Therefore, this shows that the meaning of wildlife to the colonial state was different from the Maasai, in part because as the colonial exerted its power over Maasai livelihoods and how people accessed wildlife and how wildlife fit in with the landscape. For the

³⁴² KNA, KL/7/18, "Poaching," 1959-1968.

³⁴³ KNA, KW/1/21, correspondence between Taberer and Grimwood, Game Warden.

Maasai, recovery from drought meant they could rebuild their herds and return to a normal way of life.

A small minority, led by George Adamson, who was a warden in the Northern Frontier Province, in the Game Committee meeting supported a different approach. Perhaps the mindset of the African toward wildlife might be changed through education.³⁴⁴ This was a laughable suggestion to many. The problem needed a stronger approach – able and equipped anti-poaching units. But without funds, there was little practical effort that would produce results. Adamson thought African attitudes could be shifted by the authority of the African District Councils, who exerted more local control. Zaphiro did not believe this was possible unless there was real financial incentive to support wildlife preservation. The Game Policy Committee, Royal Kenya National Parks, nor other game-related ministries had any authority over the ADCs, which were overseen by the Ministry of African Affairs. If there was any local influence, it would have to be through local political and economic structures. In Kajiado, the District Commissioner allowed the ADC to collect fees from hunting concession areas. This might have changed the hearts and minds of the councilmen, but local perceptions were not swayed. However, there were local changes in how people responded to illegal hunting. Elders exerted control over the *ilmurrans'* behavior. They disciplined those who killed without cause or who were engaging in consumptive hunting. Taberer believed this might be a more productive way to alter the behavior of Africans, using the generational systems already in place and that held great power. The punishment inflicted by elders on those who hunted was more severe than the punishment they would receive

³⁴⁴ Joy Adamson and Norah Woollard, *Born Free* (London: Nelson, 1992). Adamson was best known through his wife's book, highlighting their work with lions.

in Kenyan courts.³⁴⁵

As long as the KADC prioritized financial gain over providing accessible healthcare, education, and water infrastructure for the community, the Maasai continued to see themselves in competition with wildlife for economic improvement. The KADC's financial and political agenda to benefit from tourism was oppressive as well. Some saw members of the KADC, which by 1962, had become the Kajiado County Council, as seeking to benefit at the expense of their own people. This made people more cynical, that they should protect wildlife when those who were supposed to represent them did not treat them fairly. This attitude only deepened after independence. Internationally, pressure grew to protect Amboseli's wildlife. Eventually, many non-Kenyans pursued gazettement of Amboseli in order for its wildlife to be permanently protected.

Poaching at Uhuru

By 1963, when Kenya gained its independence from Great Britain, poaching was just as much of a problem as before. Jomo Kenyatta became president, and the government largely "Africanized," but the Game Department stayed in the hands of the same white wardens who worked there before. This was the case for several years. At independence, Kenya also had to find its own voice in the global conservation discourse. Still, this was a period of transition, but independence did not mark a clear division between colonized and free. As with the process of gazettement and management policy, parts of decolonization began well before independence.³⁴⁶

Kenyatta pledged, in absentia, that Kenya prioritized the protection of natural resources, including wildlife. He pointed out that at present, Kenya was unable to carry out the conservation

³⁴⁵ KNA, KW/1/21, "Administration of Game Laws," 1961-1968.

³⁴⁶ Hornsby, *Kenya*, 57-92.

efforts required to protect wildlife without the help of other countries, asking "lovers of nature" to provide personnel and money to protect Kenya's wildlife. The Minister of State, Joseph Murumbi spoke to the General Assembly for Kenyatta, stating that Kenya's wildlife was a "world heritage" but the killing of wildlife had become such a problem, extending beyond the young nation's ability to stop it. He said:

During those early years of independence, Amboseli continued to have rhino poaching as a source of great trouble. Within ten years, elephant populations would also see the same declines. The Kajiado game warden asked Chief Game Warden D. W. J. Brown in Nairobi for more firearms for the Amboseli rangers. They faced a greater threat from poachers by 1966. Poachers who had been focusing in the Loitokitok and Kilimanjaro area moved into the Amboseli basin because they knew the Reserve was understaffed and had few firearms. Brown told him that because of the irresponsible accounting of firearms by the previous warden and because the Reserve itself was over 1000 square miles did not convince him of the economy of departmental resources. The thirty square miles of Ol Tukai was overrun with Maasai livestock so he did not see any reason to loan rifles to Amboseli's rangers. Brown recommended he write to the KCC for extra men to help with anti-poaching efforts.³⁴⁷

More resources were being placed on anti-poaching efforts for several reasons including international media attention and scientific data reflecting reduced animal numbers. This was being done even as high ranking officials in the government were taking payoffs to alter records and give out more licenses. The focus of much of this was on the Tsavo region. This area is vast and was largely uninhabited, and most of it was within the Tsavo National Parks and Amboseli National Reserve. Aerial surveillance done in the early 1970s showed that there were 160,000

³⁴⁷ KNA, KW/14/1, "Game Trophies, General Policy," 1957-1968.

elephants, of which 50,000 were counted in national parks and reserves. In reality, whether the elephant was in a PA or not, had little to do with the likelihood of poaching. Animals roamed migration corridors, and at any location, could be killed. It is just that in the vastness of Tsavo and Amboseli, there was a lot of territory to cover with few anti-poaching units. However, it was becoming apparent to the media that the guiltiest poachers were hiding in Nairobi, Mombasa, Dar es Salaam, Shanghai, and Hong Kong.³⁴⁸

Anthony Cullen wrote about the rampant killing of animals by both African poachers and white hunters, drawing on several issues pointing to the seeming inevitability that Kenya's wildlife will be hunted to extinction. He cited reports by Kenyan colonial authorities about the amount of wildlife products seized, but the demand for these products was driven by Asian markets. Between 1955 and 1962, numbers of wildlife were high enough to demand a change in policy. It was apparent that the colonial government had no desire to make serious changes, so the new government should prepare itself for work ahead. He said that in one incident 1,200 elephant carcasses had been found by an anti-poaching unit. Lorries traveling Kenya's roads were often found to be hauling rhino horn, ivory, and leopard skins with the regular cargo. One year, he wrote, had figures totaling 440 rhino, 300 giraffe, 100 elephant, 60 leopards, 40 lions, ten cheetahs, 40 buffalo, 50 oryx, 25 eland, ten ostrich, and 600 head of "miscellaneous game." These numbers were far too low compared to what was actually being killed.

At the local level, he blamed Kenyans for engaging in killing that caused long suffering before death, finding that small traps were inhumane and killed indiscriminately. He cited documents that quoted groups of 200 poachers traveling together threatening game scouts and police. This is tremendous number of people to be hunting together for anything more than

³⁴⁸ Keen, John, interview; Don Cook, "Elephant Hunting Banned: Black Market Has an Ivory Tint in Africa," *Los Angeles Times (1923-Current File)*, October 25, 1973, sec. PART III.

recreational hunting, since more than two or three discreet hunters would scare away wildlife. Cullen thought that greed for money was loathsome, but at the same time, he thought that finding a way to make Africans see the monetary value was important. Wild animals were property of the state, held in trust for the people. The problem was that the people saw them as nuisance, dangerous and just as well dead and gone. This was how the Ilkisongo Maasai had come to see wildlife as they were caught between a government that was promoting national unity over individual ethnic groups, which was ironic given national politics during independence. The Maasai, who continually felt ignored in national politics, also saw the needs of wildlife trump their development requests.³⁴⁹ Jomo Kenyatta inherited an enormous problem, one that white colonial politicians and hunters started. Cullen believed that Kenyatta, although he had much to work through to make Kenya a strong and prosperous nation, would follow through on promises to make wildlife a priority as a way for nation building. Internationally, poaching was threatening wildlife as well. Tanganyika and Uganda had a similar situation, with poaching and the potential for great gain from tourism. He called for other nations to take this problem seriously. He did not discuss what other African countries were part of the trade, specifically Ethiopia and Somalia.³⁵⁰

The price of ivory rose between 1972 and 1973. In early 1972, Kenya's legal exports totaled about \$285,000. One year later, the number was \$2,235,000, but projections for the next year were \$1.5 million per month. Asian demand put a lot of money in the hands of a few people, leading to corruption of the law and decimation of animal populations. The total of sales

³⁴⁹ Keen, John, interview.

³⁵⁰ Anthony Cullen, "Poachers Threaten Game Destruction," *East African Standard*, August 27, 1963.

did not reflect the market price given the number of hunting licenses given by the Game Department. Even though Kenya placed a ban on the sale of ivory in all stores and warehouses and raised the price of an elephant hunting license, as many as 1,000 elephants were killed each month in 1972-1973. The tone of how to discuss blame shifted from the poor individuals in the bush killing the animals to examining the cause of the trade. Insiders must have been creating post-dated licenses for elephants killed. Documents at the Mombasa were frequently forged. Payoffs happened top to bottom in the trade. In 1973, two wives of government officials, one of which worked as an assistant minister for tourism and wildlife, were fined for possession of elephant tusks and rhino horns. But in general penalties for possession were light, especially for the well connected. This case also showed how profitable the black market was. In 1968 currency, the prices of ivory, as recorded by the Game Department, was \$5.50 per kilo, but by 1973, the price rose to \$60 per kilo. Even if there were laws in place, it was easy to maneuver around them. At the same time, Tanzania put a ban on hunting, but made an agreement with the Chinese government exchanging several years' worth of ivory for the railway system the Chinese were building. It is not clear whether this ivory is what was confiscated from the black market or legally sold in some way.³⁵¹

Amboseli Wildlife – Animal Death after Independence

Post-colonial anti-poaching had mixed results in its effectiveness and breadth of national coverage. This was for reasons having nothing to do with efficiency of policy or policing, but rather international demand. In the days between independence and land adjudication, Amboseli

³⁵¹ Don Cook, "Elephant Hunting Banned: Black Market Has an Ivory Tint in Africa," *Los Angeles Times (1923-Current File)*, October 25, 1973, sec. PART III.

was a vast land with a much lower population than other regions of Kenya. Elephants and other wildlife were roaming a larger area, but were still legally hunted. Over time, this became mixed with an increase in poaching from outside groups like the Somalis.³⁵²

Lack of transparency has been a trademark characteristic of local governance in Kajiado. The Principal Registrar of Titles wrote to the Commissioner of Lands about the Kajiado County Council meeting on January 8, 1966 about the issuing of hunting permits on Trust Land. He was concerned the council was giving out titles to individual Maasai. This was illegal according to Kenyan law. Even though the land was held in Trust by the council for the people who lived there, the Maasai, the land ultimately belonged to the government. Eventually, under Land Adjudication, the problem of who owned the land changed as Group Ranches were created and individual titles given. In the meeting, the Registrar observed that shooting on the Trust Land was rather extensive, though those who did it believed they were on private property. He told those present that the legality of hunting was a moot point, as the land was not theirs to give away. Stanley Oloitiptip, John Keen, Senator Kipury, Moses Kinna, and others present at the meeting disagreed with this interpretation of the law. They were adamant that they had every right to give titles and hunt on the land without interference from the Government.³⁵³

In 1967, Mr. J. M. Kekanay was the acting Game Warden in the Amboseli Reserve during Sindiyo's absences. The Game Committee asked that he begin keeping records of trophies sold from licensed hunts. They also wanted to point out to the Game Department that overall, the revenue had dropped from the sale of skins, which was a solid source of revenue. The County Council requested that the Ministry of Tourism and Wildlife give 70% of revenue accrued from

³⁵² Richard Bonham, interview.

³⁵³ KNA, BN/81/108, "Tourist Development in the Amboseli Area, 1968-1970.

the sale of trophies to the Kajiado District. The Count Council based its argument on the wildlife being on land held in trust by the council for the people. It is perhaps because so much land was given to individuals by the KCC that they began to see a decline in revenue from game. Then they asked the Ministry of Tourism and Wildlife to compensate them with 70%.³⁵⁴

The acting Game Warden, N. Nganga, felt he had his hands tied on this issue. Although the KCC's land allocations were not legal, and it is possible there were no deeds, they were *de facto*, and thus regarded as legitimate by the government. Those given land by the KCC were prominent people. It was Game Department policy that wildlife killed on private property for the protection of people or property was acceptable. They could keep the trophies as their compensation. In Kajiado district, many private ranchers accrued an enlarging number of firearms for "game control" and many more animals were killed than appeared to have been for protection against damages. The ranchers then sold the trophies for money, as was their legal right. Although the KCC was the giving-out institution, they were later asking for compensation for revenue now lost from the land they gave out. They did not properly inform the ranchers of their extra-legal position. They were not title-holders. The land was still held by the KCC as trust land. Nganga believed the only way they could get their revenue back was to reestablish their control over the land they misallocated and work with the central government on employing Game Scouts to patrol for poachers. This responsibility should be taken away from the individual ranchers who were merely using this right as a way to hunt on their land.³⁵⁵

The disorganized controlled area hunting resulted in the death of one of the most famous elephants in Kenya. Odinga was Amboseli's most famous elephant traveling on the

³⁵⁴ KNA, BN/81/108, "Tourist Development in the Amboseli Area, 1968-1970.

³⁵⁵ KNA, BN/81/108, "Tourist Development in the Amboseli Area, 1968-1970.

advertisement for East African Airlines, when one day in November 1967, the bull was shot by white hunters. Reports of Odinga's death shocked the staff of those who worked in Amboseli. Douglas Collins, of Kenya Safaris, Ltd., led his group to a group of elephant bulls in Ilmokitani, south of the Eselenkei Game Out-Post, and not far from the Amboseli Game Reserve. The herd was not afraid of the vehicles and the men took photographs for a while. When they had enough photography, they turned to the rifle. Aiming for the largest bull, which Collins had to have recognized by the broken tusk and sheer size, the paying guest, Charles Mapes took a shot, but not well enough to kill the elephant. Collins had to do the kill shot. As required, they reported to the out post that they had killed a large bull and suspected it to be Odinga. The scouts, shocked that they killed Amboseli's most famous bull, wanted to know why they had done it. Collins replied, "I have shot it because it came out of the reserve." He agreed to give them a ride to the site so they could identify the animal before the tusks were taken the next morning. The following day, the hunting party went out to collect the tusks, and when they returned the game scouts were waiting at their camp. Nzoika Ngwele, one of the game scouts, weighed and measured the lengths of the tusks. The broken tusk was 106 pounds and the other was 129 pounds. Ngwele knew that one of Odinga's tusks was broken, thus further confirming the identity of the animal.³⁵⁶

Collins had been working in Kenya as a professional hunting guide for decades. It was not uncommon for him to work with the Game Department and National Parks before independence in their efforts at anti-poaching. He tried to find alternative employment for Waliungulu hunters who had served prison sentences for poaching by employing them in his

³⁵⁶ Mapes was the owner of Mapes Hotel Casino in Reno, NV, which was the first hotel in the city to have a night club. Mella Harmon, "Mapes Hotel (site)," *Reno Historical*, accessed August 13, 2015, <http://renohistorical.org/items/show/9>.

own legal hunting parties. He was a member of the East African Professional Hunters' Association, which worked to make "game hunting clean and wholesome." Hunters were expected to respect the animals and not engaged in "unsportsmanlike disturbance." For many, the death of Odinga, though legally killed, did not constitute good sportsmanship.³⁵⁷ It was difficult for the community to reconcile what happened, although it was not the first named animal to be killed in Amboseli.

J.N. Orumoi, the Kajiado Game Warden went to the site later, identifying the footprints of the smaller bulls around the place where Odinga fell. The site was a well-known elephant corridor between Sultan Hamud, a town between Nairobi and Amboseli. Orumoi met local people who were very angry over Collins' actions, and he bemoaned what this would mean for local wildlife appreciation. He thought locals were beginning to have an attitude shift, appreciating that wildlife could bring financial benefit to locals, but wealthy white hunters could pay large amounts to take iconic animals. Daniel Sindiyo, Amboseli Game Reserve's warden at that time, was furious over what happened and reported to headquarters that three hunters from the Eselenkei controlled area hunting zone reported themselves to have shot Odinga. As in so many hunting photographs from the colonial era, the hunters posed with the dead animal, their new trophy (See Figure 4). Still there was some dispute over the identity of the animal.

³⁵⁷ KNA, KW/5/10, "East Africa Professional Hunters Association Correspondence," 1956-1974.



Figure 4. Photograph of Collins and Mapes posing over Odinga, KNA.

On November 24, the hunters paraded into Amboseli Lodge in Ol Tukai, asking for photographs of Odinga. The hunter's thrilled with their achievement, pointed to the photographs of the elephant on the walls of the lodge, saying, "That is no more. I have shot him dead." The Maasai workers at the lodge and the rangers were terribly upset, and as Sindiyo stated, they "They saw no purpose in preserving game for the Europeans to come and shoot as they see fit." They would rather go home. Some elders were making purchases in the general shop and overheard the hunters. They asked if the news was true, because he was part of their own community. One said, "An animal which our children have come to love so much and is friendly to everybody why should it be killed?"³⁵⁸

³⁵⁸ KNA, KW/1/21, correspondence from Daniel Sindiyo, Mugoro, PS, for Ministry of

Mapes and Collins's act aggravated deep resentment over the ability of the wealthy individuals to buy the right to hunt. Phillip Andega, a worker at the lodge, said one of the hunters mentioned key physical characteristics of Odinga, the broken tusk and ear marks, so they knew it was Odinga. Mapes sat down with his beer, bragging he was going on to Tsavo next to take down the other large well-known bull and go back to America. Collins came back to the room and whisked him away from the audience before he could say anything else. At the same time Odinga was killed, three Amboseli lions killed two head of cattle belonging to local Maasai. The Maasai did not kill the lions because they headed into the Reserve. Sindiyo was afraid that the Maasai, seeing the double-standard of white hunters buying a permit to kill a famous elephant, causing no harm to them, would retaliate. They were not allowed to kill predators of their own livestock if they moved into the protected thirty square miles of Ol Tukai.³⁵⁹

Anger and sadness flowed locally and nationally. Sindiyo felt this event deeply. He sought to have Odinga's tusks held by the Game Department, and not taken by the hunters. For him, wild animals were part of his identity since birth, being Maasai himself. When his mother was heavily pregnant with him, his family was moving around with herds as they typically did, but because *bomas* were temporary they were not secure. One night a leopard broke into the homestead to take one of the goats. She ran out of the hut with a flaming piece of wood and hit the leopard with it, and the leopard attacked. She was badly mauled. Sindiyo said, "She was injured on her legs and thighs, and all over except where I was hiding." Other women raised him

Tourism and Wildlife, Orumoi, Kajiado Game Warden, N. Nganga, Chief Game Warden, and Douglas Collins, 1967.

³⁵⁹ KNA, KW/1/21, correspondence from Daniel Sindiyo, Mugoro, PS, for Ministry of Tourism and Wildlife, Orumoi, Kajiado Game Warden, and N. Nganga, Chief Game Warden, 1967.

in those early days and he was named Daniel, because he escaped from the “lion’s den.” He said that his mother was bitter for years, but, “As she got older, that particular leopard may have been a good animal. ‘It did not kill my baby.’” Eventually, because of his interest in science, he joined the Game Department.³⁶⁰ Sindiyo’s protective attitude extended to both wildlife and the Maasai.

Perez Olindo, the director of Kenya National Parks, flew to Amboseli to do an aerial survey, looking for Odinga in case he was alive, but this was unsuccessful. The Ministry of Tourism and Wildlife requested that the Game Department revoke their hunting licenses, but the damage was done, but the Chief Game Warden saw no legal platform on which to do this. The Permanent Secretary did prohibit the exportation of large tusks for a temporary period of time. However, it appears that the tusks were exported by plane. Orumoi suggested that Collins be banned from further hunting in the district. Furthermore, the Amboseli Game Reserve wished to buy the tusks back for their Museum since they had more sentimental value for the local community. What is remarkable about the local response is that the Maasai themselves had such a strong personal connection to this individual.

It took several weeks before Sindiyo later learned that a game scout, who had only been there four months before the hunting safari was posted at Amboseli that day. During the uproar among employees and locals over the death, this scout kept quiet, never engaging in conversation about Odinga. After a few days, he went to the Kajiado Game Department and asked for leave to go home. He never said anything and did not come back. Sindiyo was suspicious of his role in identifying the identity and location of Odinga. N. Nganga, the Chief Game Warden wrote to Collins, demanding he give an account of events. He even notified the East African Professional Hunters Association of the event. Although Collins and his hunting group did nothing illegal in

³⁶⁰ Sindiyo, Daniel M., interview.

killing Odinga, their attitudes toward the event offended both local and national sensibilities. He acted unprofessionally. People believed he should have had more respect for the social dynamics surrounding Odinga's presence. He asked Sindiyo to gather all testimony from people who heard Collins' groups' boasting at the lodge that day, to see if there was anything amiss. W. M. Mugoro, the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Tourism and Wildlife confirmed that if Sindiyo collected signed statements of poor behavior by the hunting group, he would have his hunting license revoked.³⁶¹

Collins replied to Nganga regarding the details of the hunting, but he denied that the elephant was Odinga, because, according to his own decades' of experience, he knew that Odinga's tusks were much smaller. He denied having ever photographed or been aware that he saw Odinga in the Amboseli Reserve when he was there. He conferred with other experts who knew Odinga, including Ker & Downey owners, themselves, and John Sutton and John Fletcher, prominent hunters in the area. All concurred that Odinga's tusks were much smaller, but Collins and his group had not been honest about the entire trip. They did not openly report all their kills, leaving some out, but when the game scouts discovered unreported animals, they had to concede. The reporting officer said that Collins, "Forgets to be honest." This put the largest legal killing on record in 1967. Mapes recorded with the Game Department that he killed the elephant on November 15, but Collins reported to Nganga in his letter that it was on the 12th. The significance is that the group ended their safari early. Major Wright, who worked for the Game Department in the Ivory Room, went with Mapes to Nairobi with the tusks to register, acquired export permits and freighted the tusks to the United States by November 17. Typically, the safari

³⁶¹ KNA, KW/1/21, correspondence between Daniel Sindiyo, and N. Nganga, Chief Game Warden, December 8, 1967.

waited until the end to return to Nairobi with the entire collection of animals shot, and they shot a high number of game, but in this case, there was a rush. Once rumors they killed Odinga began to spread, they wanted to get the tusks out of the country. Mapes returned to his safari and did not leave Kenya until December 12. Major Wright denied that this was Odinga. He was hesitant to provide information when Sindiyo asked him to hand over photographs. Wright, the day after the kill came down from Nairobi, to delivered the tusks himself to T.W.A. for export to the U.S., although at first he said he never saw the tusks. Furthermore, Sindiyo was suspect of the fact that no newspapers were reporting on the death of one of Kenya's largest elephants. Nganga was still suspicious as to why none of Collins's hunting assistants warned him of the famous elephant, asking him to leave it alone. He suspected that upon his recommendation Mapes not be allowed to hunt in Kenya again, even if there was a backlash from Collins's firm and from the East African Professional Hunters Association. Additionally, Collins was leading this trip on an expired Assistants Permit.³⁶²

The local and national mourning over Odinga was apparent in the press release, confirming with near certainty that the elephant was Odinga. The Maasai, Amboseli Game Reserve employees, and the Ministry of Tourism and Wildlife determined that because of the behavior of the hunters and the sacredness of the elephant, the hunter Mapes and the professional hunter assistant Collins would not be allowed to hunt in Kenya again.³⁶³ The Ministry reasoned that, even though this was a legal kill, the Kenyan government was committed to conserving wildlife and this meant involving the local people. The people of Kajiado were terribly upset and

³⁶² KNA, KW/1/21, letter from Collins to Nganga, December 14, 1967.

³⁶³ For insight into the complicated relationship between humans and elephants see Christen M. Wemmer and Catherine Ann Christen, *Elephants and Ethics: Toward a Morality of Coexistence* (Johns Hopkins University Press, 2008).

the government wanted to show good faith in their support of wildlife because, "If the new unique animals which symbolize this co-operation in conservation are allowed to be killed in this way, all the conservation efforts of the Government cannot but fail. It can only be hoped that the people of Kajiado and other supporters of conservation will accept and forget this serious loss which is fully shared by this Ministry." Nganga, who wrote the press release, had reservations about its contents and publicity. He did not include the hunters' names because he feared some trouble. Primarily, he did not want to bring ridicule to the Department because it was probably that the game scouts tipped them off as to the location of the bull heard.³⁶⁴ Odinga's death was indicative of the multifaceted meaning placed on elephants in Amboseli. As I discuss in other chapters, elephants were important for research and as a keystone species of the ecosystem, but for the Maasai, they were not only enemies. They were part of their vision of the landscape, even if they caused damage, and for outsiders to take what belonged to the Maasai was disrespectful and angering. Even though they speared elephants at times, there was just cause, whether for destruction or in protest against the government. Elephants' had an advantage over rhinos because their population was high.

A month after the death of Odinga, just outside of the 30 square mile reserve, a rhino was found, horn taken, and speared to death. Two days later, on December 12th, another rhino in the similar condition was found in the same area near the Tanganyikan border. Daniel Sindiyo's efforts to curb rhino poaching in Amboseli were the first serious attempt to combine national and local resources to combat poaching. As Amboseli's warden, he reached out to the Game Department for more weapons and personnel. Nganga, sensitive to his request, though constrained by a tight budget, sent him a temporary contingency of rangers. Sindiyo's

³⁶⁴ KNA, KW/1/21, Nganga press release draft, "Death of Amboseli Elephant (Odinga), February 1, 1968.

investigations into the deaths caused him to suspect an "old criminal" living in the area. People reported to have seen him crossing the border to sell his horns. His spear was recovered as evidence. A year before, this man entered the business of rhino poaching and over the years, killed many of Amboseli's rhinos. Ole Turkei, as he was known, was arrested for a few short months and then went back to work as soon as he was released. Sindiyo wanted help in combating not only this individual but the larger poaching trade in Amboseli. The proximity to a profitable market made this very difficult. He asked for more scouts and firearms. Orumoi came from Kajiado to take part in a "thorough anti-poaching campaign." The campaign was to last for twenty days, but without the help of more full-time scouts at the gates.³⁶⁵

David Western recalled that Ole Turkei, from Loitokitok, one of the Amboseli border towns, poached for years in Amboseli. He would strip naked and cover himself with rhino dung, enabling him to get close to a rhino and kill it. If he seemed in danger of arrest, he could easily cross the border into Tanzania. Youth saw him as a hero, particularly as they lost faith in the Kajiado County Council and national government. He may have taken some under his tutelage.³⁶⁶ Sindiyo, who struggled to keep him in prison, continually sought evidence to arrest him. He collected a file on him, paying locals to provide intelligence. There was finally enough evidence to take Ole Turkei to trial again, which should have kept him there for many years, Sindiyo hoped. The trial was supposed to take place in February, 1971, but the day before the trial, he received a call from headquarters telling him that he had to report to Amboseli for an environmental assessment for the translocation of waterbuck. The District Commissioner knew this was the date of the trial, but said that he was unable reschedule the assessment, besides the

³⁶⁵ KNA, KW/1/21, "Administration of Game Laws," 1961-1968.

³⁶⁶ David Western, personal communication.

assistant minister was going to be there. Sindiyo asked that the trial be postponed to the following week, to which they agreed. When he came home very late that night, he heard that Ole Turkei had been acquitted because Sindiyo was not there. He felt betrayed by the government and lost trust in the administrations since personal politics let a guilty criminal go free.³⁶⁷

Decline of the Pachyderms – CITES and Amboseli

The 1970s and 1980s were difficult years for the rhino and elephant populations of Amboseli. The international calls for greater emphasis on wildlife conservation grew and Kenya responded in various ways, some were effective and others less so. For Amboseli, this meant transitioning into a national park, which was not favored locally. At gazettelement in 1974, there was rash of retaliatory killings of rhinos and elephants by Maasai.³⁶⁸ During these decades, many conservation organizations focused on elephants and rhinos as species that needed special international protection because they were so close to population collapse. For Amboseli's elephants, their meaning, to both locals and internationals, was used to shape the political and scientific discourse around wildlife protection.³⁶⁹

³⁶⁷ Sindiyo, Daniel M., June 28, 2013. Sindiyo was reluctant to go further into the specifics of what the personal political attack at him meant or where it originated, but they knew the way to damage his effectiveness at Amboseli was to release his poaching enemy to continue to cause harm.

³⁶⁸ Ole Kumpau, March 21, 2013; Parashino Ole Purdul, March 25, 2013; Stephen Korinko, June 16, 2013. The post-gazettelement killings was a common story to hear. This was usually discussed in the context of the baraza held by Stanley Oloittip and subsequent government gazettelement.

³⁶⁹ Charis Thompson, "When Elephants Stand for Competing Philosophies of Nature: Amboseli National Park, Kenya," in *Complexities: Social Studies of Knowledge Practices*, ed. John Law and Annemarie Mol (Durham, N.C: Duke University Press, 2002), 166–90.

The use of retaliatory killings has been a common occurrence in Amboseli in the past few decades. When the communities began to see the wildlife as the "government's cattle," they thought the best way to get their land back was to kill the wildlife. This made wild animals a pawn in the power dynamics between the state and local communities. Even as the role of the *ilmurran* in the community changes, the elders' ability to use that power and control community events and politics shifts away from the village to the county and nation.

David Western, along with Daniel Sindiyo, researched the reasons for rhino decline in the early 1970s. They determined that the Maasai killed rhinos because of competition for grazing areas and water, and as the environment changed and human population increased, conflict was more likely. Prior to independence, drought often played a role in the involvement of some in horn collection. Poaching continued, with a significant degree of professionalization, and Western and Sindiyo found that about 30% of the rhinos killed by humans were killed by poachers. The factor that the colonial Game Department did not discuss was the role of local politics in killing wildlife. In the case of gazettement, it was not a simple case of locals verses the state. Many Maasai saw their local leaders as part of the problem and colluding with the government to profit from their land.³⁷⁰ In a follow-up study in 1982, Western concluded that the Amboseli rhino population was in continued danger and would become extinct if the global demand was not stopped. After gazettement, rhino killings by Maasai decreased because they were no longer coming into direct contact in Ol Tukai. Unfortunately, even with a decrease in poaching, the numbers dropped too low to be self-reproducing.³⁷¹ In 1984, the Wildlife

³⁷⁰ David Western and Daniel M. Sindiyo, "The Status of the Amboseli Rhino Population," *African Journal of Ecology* 10, no. 1 (1972): 43–57.

³⁷¹ David Western, "Patterns of Depletion in a Kenya Rhino Population and the Conservation Implications," *Biological Conservation* 24, no. 2 (October 1982): 147–56.

Conservation Management Department (the Game Department and National Parks having merged into one agency in 1976) translocated the last Amboseli rhino to Nairobi National Park.³⁷² Global and local politics of wildlife eventually resulted in the demise of Amboseli's rhinos.

Furthermore, inter-agency politics may have contributed to further poaching. The Game Department and Kenya National Parks often had territorial disputes, particularly when it came to poaching. The acting director of KNP in May 1975 was driving from Namanga to Nairobi, passing through Amboseli National Park when he met two men in a Police Land Rover that morning.³⁷³ They were disheveled, tired looking and one held a .303 rifle. One identified himself as Corporal Njoroge with the Game Department and the other was the Assistant Warden of the park. Njoroge at first said he was a policeman, as they were in a police vehicle, but then later admitted to being in the Game Department. Mutinda suspected them of being up to no good, involved in illegal hunting, but he did not question them as to whether they were on duty or not. The situation looked suspicious. Mutinda replied with adamant support for the Game Department employees, confirming they were on duty and performing their responsibilities. Their condition reflected that they had been in the bush throughout the night and were cold, hungry, and tired, but not poaching.

This incident in Amboseli was part of a longer air of tension between the Game Department and KNP. A few months later, in August some hunters killed a collared elephant that was part of monitoring research of Tsavo's elephants. Mutinda promised that the hunters would compensate KNP for the cost of the collar, but the hunters failed to do so. When Olindo

³⁷² David Western and Richard Bonham, interviews.

³⁷³ Olindo appears to have been on leave.

confronted Mutinda about this, he took offense to the *Daily Nation's* publication of a letter to the editor on the incident, suspecting Olindo to have been behind it, believing this should have been handled between the two departments. Olindo said the author of the letter, Mr. E.T. Monks, found out about the incident before did and acted on his own accord. Internationally, the decline in numbers of elephants and rhinos grabbed headlines and was a prime agenda for the IUCN and other conservation organizations. Primarily, their focus was on elephants.³⁷⁴

Poaching was not only a problem in East Africa. It was problematic throughout sub-Saharan Africa and the trade was getting more complex and prices of ivory and rhino horns increased dramatically in the 1970s. From this crisis, several signatories of the United Nations' CITES (Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species) agreement, which governed the sale of animal products including ivory, horns, skins, and products made from wild animals pressed for the buying and selling of elephant and rhino products to be made illegal in international law. CITES came out of voluntary bans on the trade of wild animal products from several countries including the UK and the US. The IUCN met in 1972 in Stockholm to discuss international treaties for conservation. This discussion began at the 1963 meeting in Nairobi , but the process was not completed for nine years. A species listed on Appendix I of the agreement that the signatory counties agreed that it was threatened with extinction. In 1977, elephants were placed on Appendix II, which recognized that if the trade in these animal products was not regulated, the species could become endangered.³⁷⁵ One of the main problems with CITES was that it had no governing body with which to enforce the agreement. It was up to each signatory to

³⁷⁴ KNA, KW/1/7, "Game Department," 1974-1976.

³⁷⁵ Richard E. Leakey and Virginia Morell, *Wildlife Wars: My Fight to Save Africa's Natural Treasures* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2002), 41-45.

self-police.³⁷⁶

This was particularly important for those involved in elephant conservation in Kenya and especially in Amboseli. The decade saw a drastic increase in elephant poaching. Joyce Poole recalled that when she first came to Amboseli in 1972, the number of elephant poached was astonishing. The elephant population was typically spread from Kilimanjaro to Tsavo, Mt. Meru in Tanzania, and Magadi to the west, but as poaching increased and land was taken up by permanent settlement, elephants sought refuge in Amboseli National Park. Joyce Poole and Cynthia Moss, researchers with the Amboseli Elephant Research Program, joined the African Elephant and Rhino Specialist Group (AERSG), and after a 1989 meeting in Nyeri, Poole determined that CITES was really a way to protect wildlife trade from conservationists. She pointed to her knowledge of elephant behavior and close encounters with them to give her the ability to speak for the species. Her perspective on elephants differed greatly from the others in AERSG and who were arguing against an Appendix I listing. They did not want to list elephants on Appendix I and did not recognize them as really endangered. She and Moss started a media campaign using Amboseli elephants as a way to show the public that they are unique animals and deserve an Appendix I listing. Poole worked with Jorgen and Iain Douglas-Hamilton to write a proposal for the A1 listing of elephants. Olindo would not send it to the CITES secretariat. I needed to be submitted in time for the April meeting. They found support in Tanzania, who submitted it to the CITES Secretariat. By October 1989, elephants were Appendix 1 listed. 1989.³⁷⁷

³⁷⁶ William Mark Adams, *Against Extinction: The Story of Conservation* (London; Sterling, VA: Earthscan, 2004), 197; Ronald I Orenstein, *Ivory, Horn and Blood: Behind the Elephant and Rhinoceros Poaching Crisis*, 2013, 54.

³⁷⁷ Joyce Poole, personal communication and *Coming of Age with Elephants*, 192-233.

Conclusion

Richard Bonham, hunter turned conservationist, came to the Mbirikani Group Ranch in 1985, wanting to build a small lodge. Once there, he found trouble between the Maasai and their wildlife and between the Maasai and the outside world. He came to an agreement with the Group Ranch leadership to leave a portion of land alone for wildlife. In exchange, the Group Ranch received money which they could use on development, building a clinic or schools. Because of its location between Tsavo West National Park and Amboseli National Park, they struggled with poachers travelling through, killing elephants and bushmeat, and their rhino population was non-existent except near the Chyulu Hills. He saw what could be done, to make wildlife pay and protect it at the same time with people from Mbirikani. He started a small game scout program on the group ranch which grew into a program that stretches throughout the entire Amboseli Ecosystem. It is funded by Big Life, an international conservation organization, but employs Maasai game rangers to patrol the ecosystem looking for poachers. This project, at least on the financial level, has convinced many Maasai that the wild animals are more than the government's cattle. They can benefit them too. This attitude developed over the last half of the twentieth century as the government and international conservationists pushed their own meaning of wildlife on them. This vision was to the Maasai, one dimensional.

The meaning of wildlife to the Maasai was multi-dimensional, encompassing both livestock and wildlife. For the Maasai, the meaning of animals remains a shifting idea. Of course, they will always be people of the cattle, even if they do not own any, but wildlife has always been a part of their identity too, even if a troubled one. Unlike Nairobi officials and members of conservation organizations, wildlife is a part of the daily experience for Il Ikisongo

Poole discusses her involvement with the process of getting elephants listed on Appendix I.

Maasai in Amboseli. Conservationists' efforts to prevent them from killing, even in retaliation for life or property, loss have had mixed results, but have led to a shift in the younger generation's conceptualizations of the role of wildlife in the lives. It is rare to hear of lion killing with the Lion Guardians presence in the ecosystem. They employ *ilmurran* to track and collect data on lions. This has allowed them to prevent lion killings, and the ecosystem has seen a dramatic increase in the lion population as a result. It is not without changing the meaning of lions to the Maasai, however. The idea was that rather than gaining honor from the community by killing lions, they gain that respect through protecting them.³⁷⁸

Poaching is now part of the landscape in Amboseli, but how residents and conservationists address it is an amalgamation of many perspectives on the meaning of animals, both wild and domesticated. With the shift toward community-based conservation and finding ways to make wildlife pay, programs such as the Big Life game rangers and Lion Guardians have had success in mitigating human-wildlife conflict. The top-down approach of the colonial era proved unable to stop poachers. The lack of effort on their part, limited by political and financial will, led to the rapid depletion of rhinos. As a nation, they saw wildlife as natural heritage to be preserved, but it should be profitable if it was to have a place in a developing nation. Hunting saw its last days in the 1970s, even with hunting bans, the national and international appreciation with large game safaris waned. Amboseli's place in the history of hunting and poaching is a story of human and non-human animals' relationship that is unique to its landscape but indicative of its complexities.

³⁷⁸ Hazzah, Leelah, interview.

Chapter 5

Beyond the Park: Range Management, Livestock Development, and Community

Conservation in Amboseli

I traveled all throughout the Amboseli Ecosystem during my field work, and of all these varied terrains, the best place to see the greatest diversity of wildlife was in the Kimana Community Wildlife Sanctuary. Since so few people visit this area, it is easier, for example, to see a mother giraffe caressing her baby or to find the den of a family of hyenas. Even the track of a very large python remained visible in the dusty path. This sanctuary was a project started by the members of Kimana Group Ranch as the first community wildlife sanctuary in Kenya in 1996. Community-based conservation was supposed to be an alternative to the protectionist strategies of national parks and reserves. With the control of the sanctuary in the hands of the local community and not the state, the revenue was supposed to directly go to the people for mutually beneficial projects. International donors, conservationists, and other pastoralist communities looked toward Kimana Sanctuary as a future model to expand throughout Africa and the developing world to share the wealth of tourism and share the responsibility of conservation.

Amboseli has often been used as an example of where community-based conservation (CBC) has worked. The path to successful CBC projects has been uneven with many failures, but should still be examined as a case study of why some projects fail, the extent to which CBC is actually based in the community, and what historical factors, locally, nationally, and internationally, have shaped the evolution of conservation and wildlife and natural resource management in Amboseli.

In this chapter, I examine the history behind the current course of conservation in the region around Amboseli National Park. It was quite obvious early, that once the national park was gazetted, it would be important to protect the land around the park as wildlife habitat. However, to do this meant engaging with local communities through rangeland management. The question looming over Amboseli after independence was what would make the land most profitable for Kenya and for the Maasai who lived there? There were many opinions about land use priorities, and many different groups had a stake in the course of events and the direction of management policies. None had more to lose or gain than the Ilkisongo.

Between 1963 and the present, there were four trajectories of wildlife and natural resource management. Immediately after independence, the government embarked upon a national campaign to improve the economy and develop its agriculture and livestock sector. For Amboseli, the Kenya Development Plan emphasized livestock development and the improvement of marketing and breeding. The Kenya Range Management Project was aimed at turning the vast land around Amboseli National Park into highly productive cattle ranches. The arid land was deemed unsuitable for large scale agriculture, but the most "natural" use of the land was livestock production, which the Maasai had been engaged in for centuries, but, according to the government, were doing very inefficiently. Starting in 1968, the government land placed land under titles through land adjudication, or the establishing of communally owned ranches in pastoral areas. This had serious implications for the Maasai and the environment. Land grabbing created large rifts between the haves and have-nots and pointed out the social inequalities among the Maasai themselves.

With the failure of successful range management by the state and confusion created by the group Ranches, the introduction of international engagement with development and

management strategies was welcomed. The United Nations Development Program and Food and Agriculture Organization established the Wildlife Management Project to help local people gain more from allowing wildlife to exist on their land. This project then shifted focus in the mid-1970s to providing direct funding to individual families through Wildlife Utilization Fees.

By the 1990s, range management schemes had failed and gave way to conservation oriented policies aimed at bringing local communities into the process of establishing their conservancies. Since the 1950, conservationists and the state wanted to turn public opinion in Kenya toward appreciating the value of wildlife. This was difficult with such high rates of poverty. The Kenya Wildlife Service took a large scale approach toward managing wildlife. Led by David Western, "Parks Beyond Parks" was a way to protect wildlife outside the boundaries of national parks and reserves and to bring financial benefit to local communities by empowering them to take charge of wildlife conservation. Since wildlife tourism had proved to be the most profitable form of land use in Amboseli, some hoped to encourage group ranch members and those who owned individual property to allow wildlife to live freely. The establishment of Kimana Sanctuary was the first of such projects in the Amboseli region.

Using archival sources and oral history interviews, this chapter argues that range management and wildlife conservation were not entirely incompatible in theory, but the planning and implementation of how the land should be used, who should participate, and who would benefit failed to account for the traditions and culture of the Maasai and did not seek to engage them in an honest way. By the time projects were implemented that would involve their active participation, much had been done to alter the social structures that unified the Ilkisongo. Land adjudication and subdivision changed how the Maasai interacted with each other and the land making it more difficult to establish large scale conservation and management projects that

would benefit local communities, economic development, and conservation.

Maasai and their Cattle

The Maasai and their cattle cannot be fully explained without understanding their cultural evolution in the context of the development of pastoralism throughout the Rift Valley for the past 3,000 years. The British encountered a highly specialized pastoralism in the Maasai when they first began their encroachment in East Africa. This might have seemed like the most "natural" form of land use in the dry savanna landscape, but as researchers in pastoral ecology have explained, the landscape was a product of pastoralism as much as pastoralists were a product of the landscape.

The management of resources throughout the Maasai region was contingent on relationships between *iloshon* (sections), *ilikutot*, (neighborhoods), and *inkang'iti* (multi-family homesteads). Seasonal movement was important and thus, relationships with neighbors either opened or closed access to water or pasture. At times throughout Maasai history, force was used to gain access to resources. This dynamic has undergone change throughout the colonial and post-colonial eras, with relationships being greatly altered by land adjudication and shifting production to agriculture.³⁷⁹

Just as the colonial state based their natural resource management in pastoralist areas on ill-conceived notions of what it meant to be a pastoralist or the meaning of cattle in the Maasai sense, so too did the independent government of Kenya. They continued to perpetuate myths about pastoralism through the planning and implementation of their policies. These myths,

³⁷⁹ John G Galaty, "Pastoral Orbits and Deadly Jousts: Factors in the Maasai Expansion," in *Herders, Warriors, and Traders: Pastoralism in Africa*, ed. John G. Galaty and Pierre Bonte (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1991), 171–98.

according to Pierre Bonte and John Galaty, portrayed African pastoralists as irrational in their accumulation of livestock herds, putting cultural priorities over "rational" or economic importance, and they kept their production system closed to outsiders. In a somewhat contradictory sense, they perceived pastoralists as engaging in the most "natural" form of land use in the arid rangelands. As pastoralists seeking to enlarge their herds and grazing range, they become "predatory" toward neighboring groups. Their political systems were chaotic without a clear leader or head of state. However, as this chapter will demonstrate, the reality of the experiences of the Ilkisono and other *iloshon* of Kajiado District were much more complex.³⁸⁰

Range Management

At the outset of independence, Kenya embarked on a massive development plan of which one component was the improvement of the semi-arid and arid rangelands that made up such a large portion of the country. These rangelands would produce an abundance of livestock for local consumption and export. The Ministry of Agriculture established the Range Management Division in 1964, which was tasked with developing these rangelands. In theory, the Range Management Division was supposed to work with the Kenya Meat Commission to get more livestock to market efficiently, but as before independence, the Commission did not work well with the less developed areas in Kenya. In the Maasai areas, Kajiado and Narok Districts, the government planned to establish land rehabilitation and then institute grazing schemes and install water supplies, cattle dips, and holding ground for cattle. Plans were also in place to help the Maasai recover from the 1961-1962 drought by providing them with cattle to reestablish their

³⁸⁰ Pierre Bonte and John G. Galaty, "Introduction," in *Herdsmen, Warriors, and Traders: Pastoralism in Africa*, ed. John G. Galaty and Pierre Bonte (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1991), 3–30.

herds.³⁸¹

The term rangeland has its roots in the American West, where cattle owners held large tracts of open grassland, either through ownership or lease. The land was vast and inhabited, or at least alienated through Indian reservation creation. Often the land was owned by the government. In Kenya, where the majority of land is considered rangeland, the situation is somewhat different. In ecological terms, the range is often thick, thorn-filled 'bushland,' but in sociological terms, the landscape is utilized by pastoralists on Trust Land.³⁸²

Kenya's effort to modernize the Maasai through sedentarization and integration into the market economy through livestock sales was largely unsuccessful. By the end of the twentieth century, the Ilkisongo had moved significantly toward sedentarization in Amboseli, but the sociological, economic, and environmental results were not as planned. The policy makers, both national and international, failed to recognize the importance of understanding and involving the local communities who would be the ones to make the lifestyle changes. James Scott argued that this is a common problem of states' planning in national development. The, "imperial or hegemonic planning mentality" of the Kenyan state did not attempt to fully understand the importance of local knowledge and experience of living in the Amboseli ecosystem, nor their cultural conceptualizations of livestock, nomadism, or social and political structures.³⁸³ This has had serious consequences for the Ilkisongo Maasai.

In 1968, Kenya's rangeland encompassed 190,000 square miles, of which the Amboseli

³⁸¹ Government of Kenya, "Development Plan: For the Period from 1st July, 1964 to 30th June 1970" (Nairobi, Kenya, 1964).

³⁸² D. J. Pratt and M. D. Gwynne, eds., *Rangeland Management and Ecology in East Africa* (Toronto: Hodder and Stoughton, 1977), 1-2.

³⁸³ James C Scott, *Seeing Like a State: How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition Have Failed* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998), 6.

ecosystem was a small part. Divided into four categories, Amboseli was in the subsistence rangeland group, the largest category, where traditionally pastoralist had right of occupancy, but the land was owned by the state and held in trust by local authorities (in this case, the Kajiado County Council). Other categories included commercial ranching lands already under title, National Parks and Game Reserves, and unoccupied and unallocated lands where there was no right of occupancy existing mostly in the coastal hinterlands. The plan of the Range Management Division was to turn the subsistence rangelands into scientifically managed profitable rangelands. In order to do this, the land had to be divided into titles. Some were to be leased by companies or groups of individuals where there were no traditional rights claims or titles could be bought by companies, commercial cooperative societies (no traditional rights can be claimed by others and they did not have to have previously occupied the land), or by communal cooperatives societies who occupied the land but did not have traditional claims to the land. Most of the research on grazing capacity, financial statistics for investment, income from wildlife, and development were carried out in the Kaputiei section of Kajiado District, where group ranches first formed and were in close proximity to Nairobi.³⁸⁴ I am most concerned with the final two options for these rangelands: Group and individual ranches. Group ranches were established where definite groups of people claimed exclusive rights to a certain area of land. Individual ranches were formed out of group ranches. Titles or leases were given by the local authority or

³⁸⁴ KNA, KW /1/2, D.J. Pratt's "Summary Statistics, Projection Re-calculation procedures, and further recommendations for sixteen proposed group ranches, Ilkaputiei Section, Kajiado District, Kenya". Preliminary research for rangeland management includes, D. J. Pratt, "A Note on the Overgrazing of Burned Grassland by Wildlife," *African Journal of Ecology* 5, no. 1 (August 1, 1967): 178–79, and later, D. J. Pratt, "Management of Arid Rangeland in Kenya," *Journal of the British Grassland Society* 24, no. 2 (June 1969): 151–57.

the State.³⁸⁵

Rangeland management policy had several components in arid lands which had to be addressed in policies and legislation, including the ecological systems. Amboseli was considered to be in the semi-arid to arid climatic zone, where there was minimal to marginal agricultural potential and mostly suited to cattle production, and dominated by acacia woodlands, thorn-bushland, and grassland.³⁸⁶ The biological basis of pastoralist production was also important, considering whether the environment shaped cultural practices or whether cultural practices shaped the environment. Social organization was important to transforming the rangelands because this governed grazing patterns and land use and how people interacted with each other and the land. Ensuring customary and legal land tenure for these people was important for compliance and development. These cultural dynamics were recognized by the Ministry of Agriculture and Animal Husbandry to being important to formulating a successful management plan. Furthermore, the Range Management Division (RMD), comprised entirely of white employees, sought to develop livestock populations and markets in these regions. The zebu breeds were the most numerous and hearty enough to withstand severe droughts and long periods without water, but they fetched low prices at market. Management of herds meant finding a balance between survivability and marketability. Furthermore, markets needed to be located at reasonable distances for herding the livestock to market. No policy would be effective in these savanna ecosystems without water, which was the primary push/pull factor in pastoralists' migrations.

³⁸⁵ KNA, KW/1/2, "Development Plan, 1968/69-1972/73".

³⁸⁶ D. J. Pratt, P. J. Greenway, and M. D. Gwynne, "A Classification of East African Rangeland, with an Appendix on Terminology," *The Journal of Applied Ecology* 3, no. 2 (November 1966): 369-382.

Permanent water sources needed to be installed to keep livestock out of sensitive wildlife areas, such as Ol Tukai. At the same time, stock numbers needed to be limited to the carrying capacity of the land, but what the government considered carrying capacity was a loosely held idea, determined by a few in the Ministry of Agriculture.³⁸⁷ Wildlife and tourism were vitally important in these rangelands beyond the boundaries of national parks and reserves. The department believed that an integrated approach to rangelands for the coexistence of wildlife and livestock was of the utmost importance, but this was often not possible, thus making PA's an important component of range management. David Western conducted wildlife seasonal movement studies in 1968. The animals were monitored by radio collar and by aerial observations, although this proved rather difficult to maintain accurate counts.³⁸⁸ When it was not possible to have both or wildlife, it was sometimes necessary to allow wildlife to be excluded. Finally, finance and development should be written into the management plan of the area, as infrastructure and educational facilities are lacking in these arid places.³⁸⁹

Amboseli was considered a subsistence rangeland, which should be converted into commercial ranching lands. While improving herds, the goal was to also protect wildlife within these areas and rehabilitate degraded lands. Its potential for tourism and hunting was also important. Thus the RMD sought ways to improve both commercial husbandry and protect wildlife populations. Although national parks and game reserves would bring in the most revenue, it was not the most accessible for local communities, as had been seen in the

³⁸⁷ Christian Curtis Young, *In the Absence of Predators: Conservation and Controversy on the Kaibab Plateau* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2002). Young discusses that the concept of carrying capacity has a complicated history.

³⁸⁸ KNA, KW/1/2, "Survey of Current Rangeland Research Projects in East Africa - 1968".

³⁸⁹ KNA, KW/1/2, report by D.J. Pratt "Rangeland Development in Kenya, 1968".

management by the Kajiado County Council. By 1968, most land was either set aside for the sole protection of the wildlife or had been taken over entirely by the livestock industry in these semi-arid lands. Where livestock were most productive, the landscape was devoid of wildlife, but the Ministry of Agriculture wanted to find a way to have both. These "subsistence rangelands", as the RMD called them, were the areas with the largest populations of wildlife, even beyond PAs. At the same time, they supported half the range livestock in Kenya. Group ranches, they hoped, would provide a framework for the management of both. Sport hunting would be vital to making wildlife profitable for local people in these areas since they received no compensation from tourism in the parks and reserves. The RMD plans promoted the involvement of local communities in tourism, establishing camps in the Group Ranches. Thus, the wildlife census carried out by Western was important for understanding the distribution of animals and the best locations for either tourism or sport hunting.³⁹⁰

The RMD's plan included a rotational system of grazing in the rangelands. Their plan was a rephrasing of the Maasai's traditional grazing system, infused with concept of carrying capacity and a precise time line for grazing and fallowing, although dependent on the particular conditions of each ranch. They constructed charts to show how the land should be utilized over a four year rotation. The Maasai continuously moved, following grass and water, but the restrictions placed on their use of OI Tukai and the eventual establishment of group and individual ranches changed this. The RMD wanted to ensure that continuous grazing did not happen on the ranches. They planned to control grazing patterns and use bush burning when appropriate. Who would monitor this was not suggested in their plans. The goal was sustainable rangeland and quality cattle for market. But the RMD did not account for variables such as

³⁹⁰ KNA, KW /1/2, KNA, memo by D.J. Pratt "Range News: The Official Newsletter of the Kenya Range Management Division".

drought, fluctuations in animal numbers, or redrawing of ranch boundaries. The process was not new to the Maasai, who did not use charts to monitor their grazing. Rather, they depended on communication between different communities, visual observation of meteorological signs, and social interactions to structure their grazing patterns.

Land Adjudication (Group Ranches) Act

Land adjudication was the process of issuing land titles to groups of owners on previous untitled lands. The vast areas of the Southern Reserve were considered held in trust for the local people by the government or its representatives. When African District Councils were formed and took official powers of management in 1961, they were the former holders of the land in trust for the people in those districts. This did not mean they could do with the land what they wanted, but were considered representatives of those who lived on and used the land. After the formation of the Southern Reserve and the moving of the Maasai to the south and before independence, the Maasai enjoyed a relative sense of security with their tenure on the land. It was considered marginal land by white settlers and most suited to pastoralists and wildlife.³⁹¹

The history of Trust Lands in Kenya must first be traced back to the establishment of Kenya as a Protectorate of the British Empire, when the British reconfigured customary land tenure to suit the settler economy. Through the formation of Native Reserves, Africans were forced to alienate land to be taken over by white settlers willing to undertake agricultural development through the Crown Lands Ordinance of 1915 and the Government Lands Act of 1915. This reshuffling of ethnic boundaries led to resistance, which precipitated the creation of a

³⁹¹ See also for discussion on Maasai and African customary land rights: John G. Galaty, “The Rhetoric of Rights: Construing Maasai Land Claims” (Kampala, Uganda: The Arid Lands and Resource Management Network in Eastern Africa (ALARM), 1999).

series of Native Lands Trust Ordinances ensuring the land to Africans, that it would not be taken away from them again. This did not ensure peace over land, and the government began to issue individual titles in much of central Kenya, the Southern and Northern Reserves largely excepted. After independence, these individual titles were to be consolidated into tracts of land more suitable for the intensification of agriculture; pastoralist land remained consolidated but not adjudicated, or placed under title. Through the Land Adjudication Act of 1968 and the Land (Group Representatives) Act of 1968, Group Ranches were placed under titles held collectively by the ethnic groups, who could claim rights through the colonial Land Trust Ordinance. For Kajiado, this meant the various Maasai sections could claim these rights for adjudication.³⁹² The 1968 Act had four distinct purposes: 1) to assist pastoralists in the productivity of the land through improved management of livestock and rangelands, 2) to prevent landlessness among the Maasai, 3) to provide a mechanism for pastoralists to increase their earning capacity, and 4) to stop environmental damage resulting from overgrazing.³⁹³

After independence, land tenure was a contentious issue, as the new government had to sort out the legacies of displacement and landlessness while pursuing economic and social development. The government wanted to place unregistered lands under titles, but existing legislation only allowed collective holdings for a registered company, cooperative, or a maximum of five individuals. Thus the Land Act (Group Representatives Act) of 1968 allowed for the collective holding of land titles through a group of representatives on Group Ranches (GR), inhabited by people who had customary land rights. These areas were predominantly in

³⁹² Gordon Wayumba, “A Historical Review of Land Tenure Reforms in Kenya,” *International Journal of Scientific Research and Engineering Studies* 2, no. 1 (2015): 45–51.

³⁹³ Paul Ntiati, “Group Ranch Subdivision Study in Loitokitok Division of Kajiado District, Kenya,” LUCID Working Paper (Nairobi, Kenya: International Livestock Research Institute, 2002).

regions where pastoralism was the primary mode of production, which included Maasailand, but also regions in Samburu and Turkana in the north and Kilifi, Tana River, and Taiveta. The Group Ranch concept was a product of local, national, and international negotiations. Many young Maasai of Kajiado favored individual titles, but Maasai elders opposed individualization. The Kajiado County Council aligned with the youth. However, the Lawrence Mission of 1965, a group of delegates from Britain, surveyed the land and economic situation, and recommended group ownership. In the end, the World Bank put its support behind the Group Ranch initiative.³⁹⁴

Ezekiel Idwasi was a land adjudication officer in the Ministry of Agriculture during the formation of Group Ranches in Kajiado District. He was quite familiar with the area, having been the District Officer (D.O) in Loitokitok from 1965 and the Kajiado District Commissioner from 1967-1968, as adjudication began. During that time, his main focus was on security and development in the area, building schools, helping establish agriculture as an alternative livelihood, and ensuring safety for the Maasai against the porous border with Tanzania.³⁹⁵ He provided context for the national process of land adjudication and the specifics of the process in Amboseli. The Ministry of Agriculture wanted to improve the productivity of land in all the arid and semi-arid places, which included the Northern Province, the coastal hinterlands. In some places, it was difficult, he said, to adjudicate because of social unrest and violence. The Tana River area was particularly difficult because of cattle raiding and disputes among the Galana,

³⁹⁴ Ezekiel Idwasi, interview, Marcel Rutten, “The Tragedy of Individualizing the Commons: The Outcome of Subdividing the Maasai Pastoralist Group Ranches in Kajiado District, Kenya,” in *Reinventing the Commons* (IASCP Fifth Common Property Conference, Bodo, Norway, 1995).

³⁹⁵ He was particularly adamant about the exploitation of the Maasai by Tanzanian Wachagga who often crossed into Kenya.

Pokomo, and Oromo.³⁹⁶

The process of adjudication started from the local level. Before any boundary drawing or plans were made, the local county councils had the right to refuse the adjudication process, as the Tana River council did. The Kajiado County Council agreed to adjudication. The first stage involved determining the boundaries of each Group Ranch. The boundaries were based primarily on the sub-sections of the Ilkisongo section of Maasai. They looked at the extent to which they grazed, drawing boundaries around their grazing system. However, from my interviews, people seemed to move much farther than the actual grazing patterns explained to me by individuals, but they still aligned with where people saw themselves as having originated.³⁹⁷ Even now people do not necessarily live on the Group Ranch of which they are members, especially with the recent subdivision of some of the Group Ranches. They also used geographic markers like hill tops or streams to help connect the boundaries.

Once the Land Adjudication Committee determined that the Group Ranch was completed, they passed the records to the Commissioner of Lands. It was here that the registrar made an official record of the land title. Then the registration was sent back to Kajiado where the Kajiado land registrar, in this case Idwasi, recorded the members and passed on notification to members that their certification was complete. The first Group Ranch was registered in 1970.

Each clan or sub-section then selected twelve elders to work with the Land Adjudication Committee on determining who were members of each ranch. Only the names of adult men were then recorded and publicized for sixty days. Women, although considered members, did not have

³⁹⁶ Ezekiel Idwasi, interview.

³⁹⁷ For example, interviews with Lele Kayie, Nentayia Kidiri, and Neyio Kuperia, interviews.

their names on the rolls unless they were a widow. Women did not traditionally engage in active participation of group ranch decisions.³⁹⁸ During this period, the Land Adjudication Committee received objections to the list, which might dispute the legitimate membership of individuals. Idwasi recalled that some Kikuyu tried to assert that they were members because they lived there, but only Maasai were allowed to be listed as members. Members had to have indigenous rights of ownership. After the sixty days were over, the remaining names were listed as the official members of the Group Ranch.³⁹⁹

Once certified, Idwasi, as the district registrar, and the D.O., and local government chief, held meetings in each Group Ranch where they chose among themselves three to seven members to serve as trustees or group representatives for the Group Ranch. The chosen representatives received the title in the name of the Group Ranch, holding the land in trust for the other members. These representatives included a chairman, vice-chairman, and treasurer. The responsibilities of the representatives were to oversee development and infrastructure, manage the money of the Group Ranch, and oversee grazing blocks. In the Amboseli ecosystem, there are seven group ranches including Eselenkei, Kimana-Tikondo (hereafter Kimana), Kuku A, Kuku B, Mbirikani, and Ogulului-Olalarrashi (hereafter Ogulului), and Rombo.

Each Group Ranch had different needs, particularly with regards to the development of water sources. Kimana Group Ranch, for example, had ample and reliable sources of water from the springs and streams that flowed throughout. Ogulului-Ololarashi Group Ranch had no permanent water source beyond their historical access to Ol Tukai in Amboseli National Park.

³⁹⁸ Paul Ntati, “Group Ranch Subdivision Study in Loitokitok Division of Kajiado District, Kenya,” LUCID Working Paper (Nairobi, Kenya: International Livestock Research Institute, 2002), 6.

³⁹⁹ Ezekiel Idwasi, October 31, 2013.

Members of the Mbirikani Group Ranch had to travel far north to the Chyulu Hills to access reliable water. The Group Representatives also oversaw the management of grazing schemes, ensuring the availability of grass for all members so that herds would be profitable.

All this required money, of which each Group Ranch had little. There was no allocation of yearly funds from the government, but each Group Ranch had to find their own source of revenue. In the beginning, Group Ranches were able to use their newly acquired land titles to get loans from the Agricultural Finance Corporation. Group Ranches used these loans for projects like digging boreholes or purchasing Boran or Sahiwal bulls to improve the marketability of the zebu cattle so ubiquitous in Maasai areas. The Group Representatives oversaw the allocation of funds for all these projects to ensure the equitable sharing of revenue for all members. Money intended for development often ended up profiting a few individuals on a group ranch. The goal of Group Ranches to equitably divide the commons failed despite the hopes of the Ministry of Agriculture to improve the land and lives of those who lived there. But some were more equal than others, particularly the Group Representatives. Even as adjudication was carried out, wealthy and influential individuals "grabbed" the best land for themselves and got individual titles at the expense of poorer members.⁴⁰⁰

Marcel Rutten's research confirms Idwasi's frustration about the problems of Group Ranches. Development was slow, few agreed to abide by destocking rules, and individuals and groups of Maasai failed to fully benefit from integration into the market economy. However, Rutten pointed out that it did help abate fears of land loss. By slowing the process of wealthy Maasai acquiring individual titles and the immigration of non-Maasai into the region, it prevented the complete dissolution of communal lands. It also brought some development of

⁴⁰⁰ Idwasi made an astute comparison to *Animal Farm* while discussing the tactics of local politicians to take advantage of their power.

permanent water supplies, schools, shops, and clinics, although some have argued this is a double-edged sword. The creation of Group Ranches also preserved wildlife corridors, keeping much of Kajiado open and barrier free.⁴⁰¹ This was all a temporary stop-gap, as changes would come in the mid-1980s with rapid subdivision.

Group Ranch creation was a separate process from the Rangeland Development plan, but was closely linked in planning. D.J. Pratt discussed the interconnectivity of the two in his outline of rangeland management for the Rangeland Management Division of the Ministry of Agriculture and Animal Husbandry. He stated:

The Kenya range development programme centres upon the ratification of the rights of the pastoral people to their traditional grazing areas. This is seen as the means of encouraging the social change necessary in order to translate subsistence pastoralism into commercial livestock production and to combat the present overgrazing and deterioration in range condition...The failure of previous attempts at effecting (sic) change in pastoral societies is certainly due in part to ignorance of the biological basis of pastoralism, but it must also be acknowledge that there has been little attempt to understand the sociological constraints or the fears and aspirations of the people. It is quite clear in Kenya today that most pastoral societies feel most strongly the insecurity of their present position. It is unfortunate, but also true, that many societies now see the preservation of wildlife as a major reason why land title has been withheld.⁴⁰²

He continues with this critique of previous attempts at conservation and utilizing wildlife in the semi-arid regions. The government was pressured to implement conservation programs and policies that emphasized biomass but did not take into account the needs of the pastoralists or livestock.

⁴⁰¹ Rutten, "The Tragedy of Individualizing the Commons".

⁴⁰² KNA, KW /1/2, D.J. Pratt's "Rangeland Development in Kenya, 19". Interestingly, he attributes the ideology of this program to African socialism, although he does not go into further detail about that. It could be inferred that because of the collective engagement required, rather than individual involvement, the socialist approach to land management is built around African social formations and culture.

There was confusion (whether deliberate or not) around the allocation of individual titles while land adjudication was being carried out in Kajiado District. The Kajiado County Council, holding the land in trust for the people, believed it was within their rights as those trustees to give out private holdings to individuals. This was based on the colonial Lands Trust Act, which was carried over by the independent government. This was done both on large and small scales to those who had influence with the council, according to Idwasi. He said there was no legal justification for this, just political persuasion.⁴⁰³ It is not apparent that anyone paid for any land; at least no funds were given to the County Council's account. More likely, these transactions were based on social and political economics between title holders and council members.

Individual land titles went to both local Maasai and those from Ngong or as far away as Narok, taking the most valuable parcels of land. Most titles were located in the foothills of Kilimanjaro where water was abundant and the soils were good for crop cultivation. Some of the smaller holdings ranged from a few dozen acres to several hundred acres. A wealthy man from Narok came to plant fifty acres of coffee, which had been successful on the Tanzanian side of the border of Kilimanjaro. Sometimes outsiders got their children's names put on the membership rolls of Amboseli Group Ranches. People from Magadi or Ngong sent relatives to Amboseli to register. During the sixty day comment period, no one objected to their membership, so the final lists went through. Councilors knew of the corruption of membership lists, even placing themselves on Group Ranch rolls where they had to prior claim. This often brought the councilors and Group Representatives into conflict with each other because everyone was clamoring for the best land and the best means through which they could raise cattle or plant

⁴⁰³ Ezekiel Idwasi, interview.

farms.⁴⁰⁴ The passing out of individual titles went against the national policy of consolidation, a policy continued from the colonial Swynnerton Plan. Perhaps this is why some holdings were so large, but some where not. Additionally, later subdivision is also contrary to consolidation and is in fact the precise problem the government hoped to prevent.⁴⁰⁵ Figure 5 shows the group and individual ranches in Kajiado County.

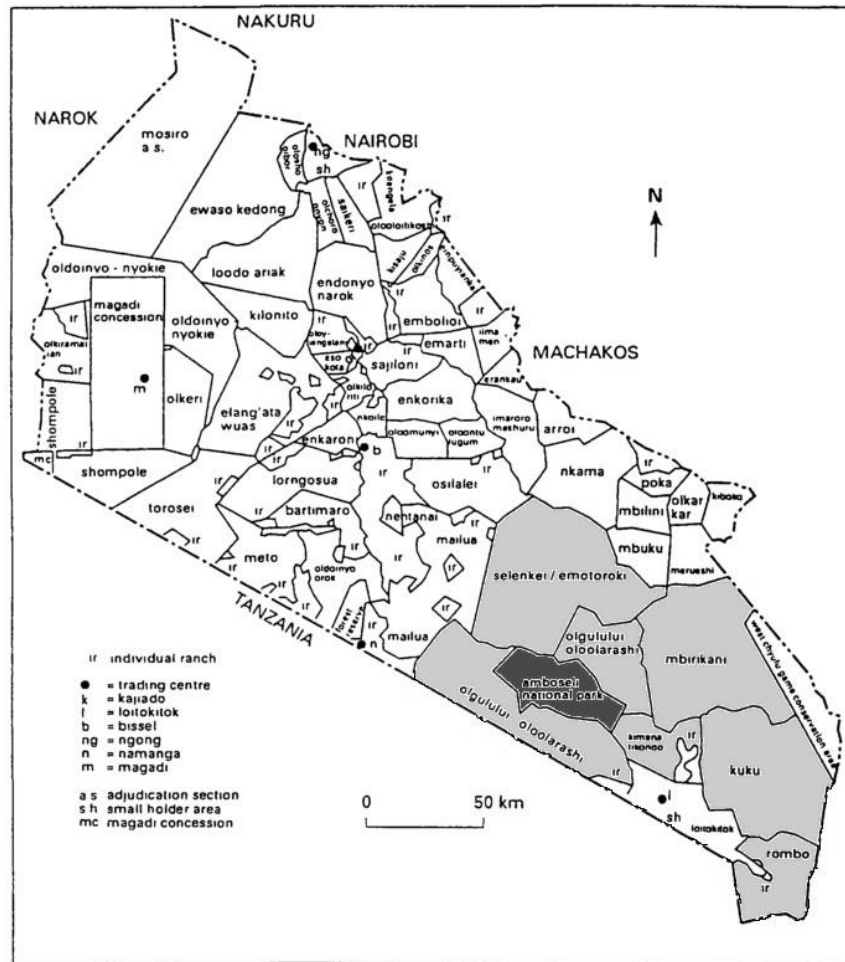


Figure 5. Group and Individual Ranches of Kajiado County. Group Ranches of Amboseli are in lighter shade, Amboseli National Park in darker shade. From Rutten (1995).

⁴⁰⁴ Ezekiel Idwasi, interview.

⁴⁰⁵ See government's policy of consolidation. But it seems that land adjudication of Group Ranches does not fall into the same category or regions of consolidation. I think it may just be the Highlands where this was the policy. Government of Kenya, "Development Plan: For the Period from 1st July, 1964, to 30th June 1970" (Nairobi, Kenya, 1964).

Francis Ole Legis, who was the chairman of the KCC since independence, received a large portion of land in Loitokitok. It is interesting to compare the perspectives on how he acquired his land. He recalled that he had only asked for ten acres of land, but because the council appreciated his service, the local chief gave him much more. Now he said he holds 829 acres.⁴⁰⁶ Idwasi, who was very critical of the land grabbing that occurred prior to adjudication, argued that in fact, Ole Legis had demanded an allotment of land from the council. Despite his skills as a leader, he was corrupt.⁴⁰⁷

The most influential Kajiado Maasai politician Stanly Oloiptip acquired the most land near Amboseli. He held a title for 10,000 acres, the size of a small Group Ranch. Idwasi said since he was a friend of the president, he simply went to the Minister of Lands to get his title, bypassing the Kajiado County Council. He ensured his parcel had plenty of water. The land he was given abutted Oguglului-Olololarashi Group Ranch and a Kaputiei Group Ranch, both of which were water-scarce. Not only did he have a large ranch, he also had as many as 4000 head of cattle, but rather than using his own resources, Idwasi said he was notorious for sending his cattle to neighboring Group Ranches without paying grazing fees. The government installed a borehole pump on his land, but when the rains came, flooding washed it away. He used this as an excuse to go to other Group Ranches.⁴⁰⁸

For at least nine years, the Kajiado County Council parceled out land to individuals, under the impression that they were the owners of the land because of the Trust Lands Act. O'Loughlin, the Commissioner of Lands, was aware of the Council's practices from at least 1965

⁴⁰⁶ Francis Ole Legis, interview.

⁴⁰⁷ Ezekiel Idwasi, interview.

⁴⁰⁸ Ezekiel Idwasi, interview.

to 1973 and had repeated contact with the Council over this matter. For reasons not apparent in the sources, the Department of Lands did not push the issue with the Kajiado County Council. Although O'Loughlin repeatedly told them it was illegal, they did nothing to stop them.

After an initial allocation of land in 1965, the County Council finally contacted the Department of Land Adjudication for clarification on their right to allocate land to individuals in March 1966. The Council's letter states, "Persistent ugly (but veiled) rumors have been circulating in this district to the effect that all the land in Kajiado belongs to the Government and not to the Masai and also that nobody, therefore, owns any piece of land here!⁴⁰⁹" What brought the matter to the point that the council sought an opinion on the matter was because the Agricultural Finance Corporation would not give loans to anyone in Kajiado District because the council did not have power to give away land that belonged to the Government. They preferred to wait until the Lawrence Commission finished their assessment of the adjudication process. The interpretation that the land on which the Maasai lived was owned by the government did not satisfy the council. As trustees, they were the "owners" of the land, invested with this authority by the Constitution.

O'Loughlin replied that nowhere did he refer to the land as being owned by the central government. The constitution gave the council the responsibility to hold the land in trust for its residents and protect their rights. The council could only work within what was considered African customary law, which did not include land titles. They were to ensure that those who were entitled to occupation through tradition had these rights protected. By the new laws being passed, the council had to seek the permission of the Commissioner of Lands before making any changes to these terms. Furthermore, the government's interpretation of African customary law

⁴⁰⁹ KNA, JG/2/86, KCC letter to Commissioner of Lands, March 11, 1966.

prevented land from being placed under individual title, except as allowed by the new Land Adjudication Act. O'Loughlin exhorted them to wait for the Lawrence Commission to finish and submit their recommendations on the process of adjudication. Then they would know the best way to divide the land according to customary group ownership.⁴¹⁰

The Chief Land Registrar held a meeting in Kajiado in October 1966 where he and several members of the Land Adjudication Committee and the Department of Lands addressed "the Maasai" on the matter telling them, "That it was the Government's intention that adjudication should ensure that the Masai as a whole benefited from the scheme and that adjudication did not create a landless problem among the poorer or less influential tribesmen." Since so much allocation had already taken place, the Rift Valley Provincial Commissioner "to some extent promised that those people who had already been allocated land by either County or Area Council would be allowed by the Land Adjudication Committee to carry on but should there e a dispute the Committee would look into the matter. He also advised them that on allocating land they should be very careful not to cause problems."⁴¹¹

What problems might arise from giving out land to elites? Some perhaps feared the problems of the northern Rift Valley, of the resettlement of landless people in areas previously inhabited by white settlers. O'Loughlin felt trapped between the intention of the law and what was actually being supported by the government's representatives. This does show that there was disagreement or nonalignment on policies regarding the allocation of individual titles. Where much of Kenya was being placed under individual title, pastoralist areas were being collectively

⁴¹⁰ KNA, BN/81/108, Letter from O'Loughlin to Kajiado County Council, April 13, 1966.

⁴¹¹ KNA, BN/81/108, Letter from O'Loughlin to J. Adamba, Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Lands, January 28, 1974.

titled. He saw that the Kajiado County Council saw the Provincial Commissioner's statement, not as a warning to stop or be more discrete, but as agreement that what they were doing was acceptable to the government, regardless of the law.⁴¹²

Subdivision of Group Ranches

Almost as soon as group ranches were created, members began dismantling them. This was especially true in the Group Ranches outside the Ilkisongo areas.⁴¹³ Subdivision picked up speed in the late 1980s. John Galaty examined the process of subdivision that had been going on for several years. He analyzed the reasons the Ilkaputiei and Ilkeekonyokie sections of Kajiado County subdivided or not. Although the Ilkisongo were largely left out of his discussion, patterns were similar. Part of the problem of the Group Ranch concept was the shifting notions of "common property." The Maasai had one understanding, but the government had another. As Galaty describes it, non-exclusive access to grass, water, minerals, and wood were open to all in the community, but were excluded from use by outsiders, non-Ilkisongo, in this case, or non-Maasai. Use was open to negotiation with outsiders, but use by force periodically resulted in violence, particularly over the use of water during dry seasons.⁴¹⁴

The Maasai concept of the "commons" conflicts with Garret Hardin's definition when

⁴¹² The ongoing issue of the council's management of Amboseli Game Reserve and the leasing of Ol Tukai lodge was running concurrently with these disputes. O'Loughlin believed the government's disparity between law and practice undermined the authority of the Trust Lands Act.

⁴¹³ A group ranch could be unincorporated through a written agreement to the Land Registrar, signed by a majority of group ranch members if sixty percent of members are present at a meeting called for the purpose of dissolving the group ranch.

⁴¹⁴ John G Galaty, "'This Land Is Yours': Social and Economic Factors in the Privatization, Sub-Division and Sale of Maasai Ranches," *Nomadic Peoples* 30 (1992): 26–40.

examined closely on the local level because the common property of the range was managed through negotiation of all members. No one held private property, but could have a piece of the common property for a season. He used the proverb "Sons and land cannot be given out," to explain that it was inconceivable that a single person could have exclusive access to land. Before subdivision, and even before Group Ranch creation, each family had an *olokeri*, which was the area adjacent to the *enkang'* (homestead), which was for the sole use of young, sick, or small livestock. The sizes varied according to the needs of the greater community, allowing herds to pass through. When a family moved on to the next site, their *olokeri* then might belong to the next family that moved there. The notion of property was shifting and temporary and divided according to the needs of the larger community. Some sites were left to recover from grazing for periods of time, and the negotiations ensured that wealthier community members did not have exclusive access to the best grass and water.⁴¹⁵

This mentality shifted after Group Ranches were created. Subdivision highlighted the confusion and disorganization of previous conceptualizations of property and commons. Fearing land insecurity, members sought individual titles to protect themselves from loss. They remembered the land grabbing by individuals in the 1960s, the Group Ranches were established, and with the possibility of mass subdivision, each member sought their own. How to divide was a problem. Who was considered a member? Chronological age was often difficult to determine, although 18 was the legal age for membership on a GR. Was the new age set to qualify? What did owning private property mean to the Maasai? In Galaty's explanation, which was based on surveys of households in two Group Ranches, he points to two important factors that promoted ownership: level of education and employment beyond herding. Both of these were slow in

⁴¹⁵ Galaty, "“This Land Is Yours””.

coming to the Ilkisongo section, which might explain why subdivision was later and slower. He argues that those who did not have a formal education or work experience sought ways to show their pursuit of "modernity." The symbols they viewed as modern included owning cars, store-bought products, block or *mabati* (corrugated iron) homes, or food and alcohol bought in restaurants or bars. The sale of their individual title could give them access to these things. Education and employment were indicators of whether the individual used the profit from the sale of property wisely or not. Many who sold their land did not understand the full value of land in Kenya because they had not traveled beyond their home to see that, for example, the Kikuyu were struggling with landlessness. Often, the individual was then worse off than before owning private property than before.

Initially, the government did not have a clear policy on subdivision when they began the process of adjudication. Officially, it was built into the law, but there was no clear process for dividing up the land. At first, many in the government did not support subdivision arguing that haphazard boundaries could create unviable allotments unable to support agriculture or livestock.⁴¹⁶ In 1989, President Jomo Kenyatta told residents of Kajiado to subdivide the Group Ranches, which he believed were ill-run and counter to his mantra that all Kenyans had the right to own property. The goals of the Group Ranches had not been met. The Maasai had failed to turn their livestock into a successful economic system as a whole, thus the best way would be to encourage the individual titling of land and thus having the possibility to sell. In theory, through the sale of land, they could find other ways to integrate themselves into Kenya's economy. Some believed Group Ranches inhibited the incentives for Maasai to sell or improve their livestock.

⁴¹⁶ Kamau Kimani and John Pickard, "Recent Trends and Implications of Group Ranch Sub-Division and Fragmentation in Kajiado District, Kenya," *The Geographical Journal* 164, no. 2 (1998): 202-213.

Having a title would allow them to get loans to this. If the land was still held in common no one would want to invest in the improvement of their stock. Making cattle more of a commodity in the minds of the Maasai would bring them into the "modern" world. Most importantly in the minds of those who supported subdivision, the sale of titles would put property in the hands of those who would be most inclined to make the land productive. The Maasai were seen as unable or unwilling to improve their land and livestock, perpetuating their own poverty. This did not often work so well. Kikuyu sometimes bought land simply to have a title so they could get loans for their businesses elsewhere in Kenya. They did not live or work the land that they bought.⁴¹⁷ Rutton attributes the push for individual titles to Western pressure for individual title deeds as a form of economic planning in developing countries. This neoliberal push to make the Maasai self-sufficient meant that traditional ways of communal life had to change.⁴¹⁸ The consequences of subdivision were what many feared when communities in Kajiado District were debating whether to accept Group Ranch creation or not.

Kimana Group Ranch, for example, was the first in Loitokitok Division to subdivide. There was an initial economic boom for those who joined the buying and selling of titles. Soon, however, many ended up landless, as so many feared if they did not get an individual title. A few became wealthy in their sales, but most were later seen as failures by the community, categorized as drunkards, *irikirikor* (wanderer/loiters), or "the childless". Those who bought the land were primarily Kikuyu and Kamba agriculturalists. Kimana was unique because it had more permanent water than the other group ranches. The tragedy of individualizing the commons, according to Rutton, are that ultimately the land intended for Maasai pastoralist use and the

⁴¹⁷ Galaty, "This Land Is Yours".

⁴¹⁸ Marcel Rutton, "The Tragedy of Individualizing the Commons".

improvement of their economic lives, was conscripted for other purposes. Group Ranch committee members used group funds to enrich themselves in land and material wealth. Land speculators, both Maasai and not, bought land from the Group Ranches, raising prices beyond the reach of common Maasai. Kenyan and international businesspeople and politicians bought land at cheap prices. Non-Maasai were able to find jobs in the growing agricultural sector in Kajiado. Unfortunately, this tragedy prevented many from getting anything out of the subdivision process, particularly women. Poor Maasai families sold their small portions in order to get money for subsistence purposes, not to invest. Those who did take out loans on their title often had to sell because they were unable to pay loans.⁴¹⁹

Rutton discusses the problems associated with overgrazing and subdivision in the context of Hardin's use of common grazing lands to explain the exploitation of the commons by individuals. In his example, Hardin refers to northern Europe, not arid rangelands of equatorial Africa. This is a significant difference because scale and climate are not comparable between these two places.⁴²⁰ It is important to point out that Ostrom argues that communities that were part of commons often had their own system of management, as the Maasai did in Kajiado before development, veterinary and health services, Group Ranch creation and subdivision, and population increases.⁴²¹

Idwasi despaired of the failures of the Land Adjudication Act in Kajiado. He set out to help the Maasai develop, but only watched as corruption and subdivision increased the level of poverty. Leaders, he argued, had a great responsibility and potential for doing good, but politics

⁴¹⁹ Marcel Rutten, "The Tragedy of Individualizing the Commons".

⁴²⁰ Marcel Rutten, "The Tragedy of Individualizing the Commons".

⁴²¹ Ostrom, *Governing the Commons*.

interfered. The politically connected profited at the expense of the poor. Revenue that was supposed to trickle down to Group Ranch members was skimmed off at the top before projects could be finished. Even efforts to improve livestock had uneven success. Only those with means were able to produce more marketable cattle or had the ability to get their animals to markets by vehicle, improving their market value. The rest have to sell locally at lower prices. Idwasi argued that lack of transparency has made it easy for Group Representatives to give themselves an unfair advantage and the Kajiado County Council did not live up to their mandate of being trustees of the land for the people.⁴²² There was little to show economically for all the effort that went into developing the rangelands in Kajiado during the 1970s and 1980s. These drylands remain a marginalized section of Kenya and East Africa. Despite producing as much as 60% of the nation's livestock and being the main location for ecotourism, which is one of the country's primary sources of revenue, and is over 80% of Kenya's landmass, Abass and Mwaura argue the region has been forgotten by the state in their development planning for the future. Part of what perpetuates this marginalization is the old stereotypes of the pastoralists who live there.⁴²³

One of the most significant problems on the Amboseli group ranches since their creation has been access to water. Water was one of the greatest concerns among local Maasai I interviewed. Women in particular told me they have to walk farther and farther than they did when they were younger to find water. An extreme example of the water problems in Amboseli is located near Loitokitok. The Nolturesh pipeline, originating on the slopes of Kilimanjaro, pipeline extends from the Nolturesh River to the outlying areas of Nairobi. It passes through

⁴²² Ezekiel Idwasi, interview.

⁴²³ Abdirahman Maalim Abass and Francis Mwaura, "Re-Membering the Drylands of Kenya: Integrating ASAL Economies in Vision 2030," in *(Re)membering Kenya: Interrogating Marginalization and Governance* (Nairobi, Kenya: Twaweza Communications, 2013), 88–110.

Kuku and Mbirikani Group Ranches. People settled along the pipeline, piercing the line at points to extract water for cattle and irrigation. The river dies up 33 kilometers from its source.⁴²⁴

Not all changes have been bad. Education opportunities have increased and the number of medical clinics has improved health care access, although these are not direct consequences of conservation or the creation/subdivision of group ranches. Gender roles have shifted as well. Women, who do not traditionally own livestock, have had access to wage labor and markets through the agriculture sector. For some Maasai, particularly women, agriculture has been a good thing. They have been given a greater level of individual independence, able to buy things for their home or pay school fees for children. Some women work as day laborers, but many have their own small *shamba* (garden) on their individual plot of land where they grow vegetables. Elizabeth Meoshi said that it has given her constructive work and she likes doing it despite the long trips she has to make for water.⁴²⁵ For many women, however, it is difficult to get their own title to individual plots because it is more difficult for them to navigate the public spaces where they could get a title deed because of their lack of education or fear of entering these spaces as a woman.⁴²⁶

Through subdivision and cultivation, the once open landscape has gradually closed off, inhibiting wildlife migration. The earlier call to make wildlife pay grew more and more contentious as politics over land use became more complicated. The simpler efforts of the WMP

⁴²⁴ Kathleen A. Galvin et al., “Humans and Wildlife as Ecosystems Components in Integrated Assessments,” in *Wildlife and Society: The Science of Human Dimensions*, ed. Michael J. Manfredo et al. (Washington, D.C: Island Press, 2009), 129–42; Paul Ntiati, “Group Ranch Subdivision Study in Loitokitok Division of Kajiado District, Kenya,” LUCID Working Paper (Nairobi, Kenya: International Livestock Research Institute, 2002).

⁴²⁵ Elizabeth Meoshi, interview.

⁴²⁶ Jocenta Kindi, interview.

to turn wildlife into cash failed to make headway. Although the group ranches have attempted to supplement their incomes and preserve sections of the ecosystem through conservancies, wildlife populations continued to decline as human population increased. Competition for forage and water increased; this was particularly apparent during droughts. The competition for space has led to an increase in illegal killing of wildlife, both as a result of direct conflict, preventing damages, or for bushmeat.

Poor management of grasslands and water, overgrazing, and agriculture have decreased the vegetation coverage in many areas. As a consequence, many of the medicinal herbs and plants for maladies ranging from malaria to indigestion are getting harder to find, as Nalepo Eleshenge explained.⁴²⁷ Women have found that since subdivision, trees are more difficult to find. Trees are important for building homes, but gradually the larger trees were used up and now women must travel farther to find large enough branches for the support poles.⁴²⁸ Some have hope that the new law against tree felling will help replenish the trees.

The loss of grazing lands throughout Amboseli had significant effects on the seasonal grazing patterns the Maasai used throughout the year prior to the creation of the Group Ranches. This impacted how people related to each other in the community. The Group Ranches sped up institutional changes in Maasai social order through the use of group ranch committees. The traditional elders' authority was undermined. Subdivision altered the way individual Ilkisongo interacted. Both Netanayia Kidiri and Nalepo Eleshenge saw the demarkation of individual property as having brought hatred between the people that was not there before. These women

⁴²⁷ Nalepo Eleshenge, August 16, 2013; Paul Ntiati, "Group Ranch Subdivision Study in Loitokitok Division of Kajiado District, Kenya," LUCID Working Paper (Nairobi, Kenya: International Livestock Research Institute, 2002).

⁴²⁸ Elizabeth Meoshi, interview.

saw the breakdown of social cohesion during times of drought as a consequence of each family keeping to their own land. People became used to guarding their crops for their own families and not part of communal resources.⁴²⁹

School has been a vector of significant change in the lives of the Amboseli Maasai. Before the development emphasis, for most families, the only children who went to school were the ones who were not promising herdsman or middle children who might not have much of a prospect for marriage. These excess children sometimes became the family's strongest link to survival when drought came and a source of cash was needed. They were also the connection to a modernized world when they needed a cultural translator to engage in business in Nairobi. It is difficult for many families to send their children to school, but the subdivision of land has made education both possible and necessary. Lele Kayie, a woman who lives in one of the driest parts of Kimana Group Ranch, explained the relationship between cattle, education, and land: "Earlier on no one knew about school. Some kids would take care of goats and cows. None went to school. But drought might come and finish off the livestock, and no one had gone to school. Then the idea that school was a good thing spread. Early on it was difficult to sell a cow for a child to go to school. Now people even sell land to send kids to school."⁴³⁰ She said many of those who went to school learned the value of land, and those are the ones who now own large ranches of their own. They thought the land would always be there as long as they lived, but now selling it brought in outsiders and the loss of the land.

⁴²⁹ Nentayia Kidiri and Nalepo Eleshenge, interview.

⁴³⁰ Lele Kayie cites several names of individuals who are well known to be large property owners around Kimana.

Multi-Use Landscape

The government hoped to find a way to "make wildlife pay" its way in the Amboseli ecosystem in order to justify its existence. If the Maasai could be convinced they should co-exist with wildlife, then the best way was for them to benefit financially since they were sharing grass and water and having to deal with the problems associated with wildlife. Pratt and Gwynne phrased one key problem with rangeland development and Kenya's effort to involve the Maasai and other pastoralists in the process in their 1977 manual on range management. "The real misfortune," they wrote:

of the situation is that it is only because of the tolerance of the pastoralist to wild animals that substantial populations still exist. It is almost as though the sector of society which has shown most tolerance is now expected to maintain what has become a national asset at its own personal expense. In this situation, it is insufficient merely to refer the pastoralist to the extent to which wildlife and tourism have benefited the national economy and local councils. Although it is true that the roads, dispensaries and schools of the pastoral areas are funded in large measure by the revenue from wildlife, these facilities are found also in areas where wildlife does not occur; even, sometimes built to better standards. A return in the form of community services can never be the same as a direct return to the group of individuals on whose land the wildlife subsists.⁴³¹

The Maasai, and pastoralists in other regions with large wildlife populations, were told that if they engaged in wildlife conservation and the tourist sector, the returns would be beneficial and improve their lives. In reality, only a few have gained more than a token profit from the resources and funds used to support conservation and attract tourists. They could look to their fellow Kenyans in agricultural areas and see the greater profits of growing crops. Wildlife did not pay them what they were promised by the government in the early days of independence or now.

Lee M. Talbot was an early proponent of wildlife utilization in Africa, particularly of

⁴³¹ D. J. Pratt and M. D. Gwynne, eds., *Rangeland Management and Ecology in East Africa* (Toronto: Hodder and Stoughton, 1977), 222-223.

wildebeest in Maasailand. He summarized his conclusions in a 1965 report with the Commonwealth Agricultural Bureaux in which he and the contributing authors suggested that a common sense solution to the food shortage in sub-Saharan Africa and for optimal land management for the vast unused land on the continent was to harvest game. He points to the difficulties of transforming bushland into grazing land for domestic livestock, which could be bypassed if the land was left for wildlife. Overgrazing by cattle was lowering the carrying capacity of the land for not only domestic animals but for wildlife as well. Agricultural development in drier places was causing severe degradation to the environment. With proper management, a certain portion of wildlife populations could be culled for consumption. Alternatively, some species may be suitable for domestication, such as the eland, which at certain times has been temporarily domesticated in the past. They bred well and were more manageable than cattle. He cited research that explained the nutritional benefits of elephant, kongoni, wildebeest, and zebra, all of which were as protein and vitamin rich, if not more, than cattle, sheep, or pigs.⁴³² What was entirely missing from Talbot's suggestion was the human aspect. Would the Maasai be interested in this and would it be feasible considering the landscape of Amboseli? The savanna is not continuous grassland; it is varied and used unevenly by humans, livestock, and wildlife.

In 1970, the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) and the U.N. Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) partnered with the government of Kenya through the Kenya Wildlife Management Project (WMP). The WMP funded projects throughout Kenya to help

⁴³² Lee M. Talbot, *The Wildebeest in Western Masailand, East Africa*, Wildlife Monographs, no. 12 (Washington: Wildlife Society, 1963); Lee M. Talbot et al., "The Meat Production Potential of Wild Animals in Africa: A Review of Biological Knowledge" (Edinburgh: Commonwealth Agricultural Bureaux, 1965).

manage wildlife both in and around protected areas. One of the projects first implement was in Kajiado District where the Kenya Development Plan was already working on issues related to wildlife and natural resource issues as well as livestock development. Their goal was to maximize returns from wildlife revenue to local landowners, not the Kajiado County Council. Up to this point, the Kajiado County Council had taken in more from Controlled Area Hunting Fees than any other district council in rangeland areas, including Narok, between 1959 and 1969.⁴³³ This new revenue would largely come from hunting fees paid for game shot on hunting blocks in the group and individual ranches and were to be used on the development of public facilities.

The project personnel were comprised of a group of "FAO Experts" including scientists, a veterinarian, economist, and a graduate student researcher, and Kenyan "counterparts, including Daniel Sindiyo, former warden of Amboseli Game Reserve as the Project co-manager, several scientists, a veterinary, and an economist. Throughout 1973, the project managers led several *baraza* meetings with Kajiado elders regarding the WMP's work in the district. The Ministry of Wildlife and Tourism were going to work directly with land owners on the ranches of Kajiado to establish hunting concessions and tourism facilities that would generate revenue separate from what was being done through the Ministry of Agriculture. Perhaps the elders were confused by the apparently similar policy of the Ministry of Agriculture that returned funds from hunting fees to the Kajiado County Council for development.⁴³⁴ One of the goals was to help the Group Ranches and private ranchers set up hunting concessions, mapping out boundaries, setting

⁴³³ UNDP/FAO Mission, "Wildlife Management in Kenya" (Rome, Italy: United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization, June 1970), 27.

⁴³⁴ KNA, KW/6/1, "Meetings - Kajiado District General," 1973-1977.

quotas, and establishing relationships with safari companies and hunting groups. Some of these *barazas* were poorly attended because of the drought that was plaguing the region. Many had gone far away to find grass. This drought must have made hunting concessions much more appealing as later *barazas* were more amenable to the plans than earlier ones.

By July 1976, members of Kimana and Mbirikani Group Ranches and local chiefs met with J.O. Nairi, the WMP Extension Officer for Kajiado at the Kimana Trading Centre to discuss the matter of revenue dispersal. The Group Ranch Representatives, led by R. Kibore, the chairman of Kimana-Tikondo Group Ranch, wanted to know when the wananchi (citizens) were going to see any of the money taken by the hunting concessions on their land. He asked Nairi to explain how the fees were being used because all the people had were promises. They were supposed to get compensation for the people and livestock killed by wild animals and no petitions were fulfilled.⁴³⁵

Nairi explained that a few months previous the WMP personnel had met and decided that all money from hunting fees would be paid to each Maasai section rather than to individual group ranches. Funds were being kept at the District Development Committee's office in Kajiado town, where group ranches could file proposals for funds to be used on development projects. Each section, whether Ilkisongo, Matapato, or Kaputiei, should form Development Committees. These Committees comprised of the Location Chief, Group Ranch chairmen, a district council member, KANU representative, and other prominent people such as teachers or religious leaders, would make proposals on behalf of the group ranches. In this way, money could be used in larger sums for projects benefiting greater numbers of people. This was also supposed to prevent

⁴³⁵ This was a problem the UNDP/FAO administrators understood, but had only vague ideas on how to address it. See UNDP/FAO Mission, "Wildlife Management in Kenya" (Rome, Italy: United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization, June 1970), 7.

jealous between group ranches, some of which might have collected more fees than others because of size of concession or distribution of wildlife. For example, he explained the Ilkaputiei had proposed that money be given to a school in Mashuuru for a dining hall, headmaster office, and staffroom. As for the compensations, due to personnel in the Nairobi office, there was some delay, but he believed that it would be forthcoming. To the Maasai, this must have sounded like more promises that were made that were unlikely to be enacted. In the time being, however, he asked that some present make proposals for projects on the group ranches.

Councillor Philip Singaru, speaking for the Group Ranch representatives said that as required, they opened a bank account. Therefore, money should be deposited there. They had petitioned the District Development Committee for funds for several projects including Kimana Primary School and several cattle dips throughout. He gave to examples of where money had been given to the D.C. and allocated for projects, but there was no evidence of where the money was being used. Where had this money gone? Singaru was right. Between 1971 and August 1976, no more than a few cattle dips had been built in the Ilkisongo section. When F.O. Oyoo, the District Development Officer inquired as to why funds had only been disbursed to two of the thirteen proposed projects, he was told that some applications were poorly budgeted and those related to water projects were on hold because one previous water project was over budget and needed to be settled before further water supply projects would be funded. By September, the DDC had allocated several projects including a Kimana irrigation project, bush clearing in Loitokitok, and road building in Loitokitok and Rombo. Problems arose with the hunting concession. First, there were conflicting boundaries with the Group Ranches, the WMP having used old maps to set their boundaries. Rombo and Kuku Group Ranches came into conflict with the WMP over the renewal of concessions with Ker & Downey, who had continued to operate

without the consent of the group ranch. Apparently, the WMP had renewed the concession without consulting with Rombo and Kuku representatives.⁴³⁶

Cropping wildlife for sale to meat and hide markets was central to the plans of the WMP. Much discussion and research went into determining whether and to what extent wildlife could be killed and sold in various markets in Kenya and abroad. Many were skeptical, including Daniel Sindiyo, who wrote early in the program that there was no domestic market for wild game meat. Likewise, the research of the Margaret Hampson, the graduate student working with the program, showed that there would be very little benefit from wild game meat in her report "An Analysis of the Potential Revenue from Sustained Wildebeest Cropping in Kajiado District." Philip Thresher, the wildlife ecologist on the WMP went even further in his critique of the plan.⁴³⁷

Thresher critiqued the work of previous policies and programs, particularly of Lee Talbot, stating:

The results of this development work have largely contributed to long term deterioration of the range resources, culminating in a catastrophic famine in the 1960s in which 'most Masai livestock and many Masai died.' The basic error has been that improvements of water supplies and other forms of development have been carried out separately, not as a part of comprehensive resource management programme taking account of the ecology of the whole area.⁴³⁸

The government of Kenya officially promoted economic development of its lands with large-scale planning, but often in areas where wildlife were heavily concentrated and ecosystems were threatened by development. It apparently fell on the shoulders of the planners

⁴³⁶ KNA, KW/6/1, "Meetings - Kajiado District General," 1973-1977.

⁴³⁷ KNA, KW/1/1, Philip Thresher "An Analysis of the Potential Revenue from Sustained Wildebeest Cropping in Kajiado District."

⁴³⁸ KNA, KW/1/1, "Wildlife Economics," 1972- 1977.

of the WMP, but Thresher worried that, "Any attempt to alter the utilization of one niche by a species (such as through intensive hunting or cropping) will affect the performance of other species that happen to utilize part of the same niche. Hence wildlife plans which ignore livestock dynamics are constricted by assumptions which are simply invalid."⁴³⁹ Wildlife and livestock management had to be considered together, but heretofore, all planning had only focused on one or the other.

Even if wildlife and livestock were factored into rangeland management plans, the local people would always be the most unpredictable variable. Changes in administration or responses to incentives could help or hurt approaches to management. Thresher argued that this had to be brought down to the ground level, and the Maasai must be made to see that an 'income transfer' from livestock to wildlife would bring in the most revenue to Kajiado District. In his opinion as an economist, the best option for revenue to individual Maasai families was not livestock, as most believed, but through tourism. Not even wildlife utilization through hunting and culling came close to wildlife tourism. But the local people held the power to change the land in ways that could diminish tourism revenue through the subdivision of lands, fencing, overgrazing and overstocking, and the cultivation of crops. The Amboseli ecosystem was highly sensitive to change, as research on rangeland ecology and wildlife was revealing.

The UNDP and FAO were funding the WMP at \$2.5 million to investigate these matters, ranging from species dispersal to livestock grazing patterns, to human development needs. Thresher believed the WMP should begin this research in Kajiado because it was an underutilized landscape with high potential for significant economic development. The World Bank had already pledged \$150 million to help Kenya develop its livestock industry, and

⁴³⁹ KNA, KW/1/1, "Wildlife Economics," 1972- 1977.

Kajiado District was included in this plan, but any planning they undertook without considering wildlife management would decrease its effectiveness. The creation of group ranches had the potential to give the Maasai more control over both wildlife and livestock, and thus balance the utilization of each.

Some argued that wildlife cropping was the best way to utilize wildlife, particularly those who owned private ranches. They argued if you replaced all the wildlife with cattle, one could increase herd size and productivity because there would be no competition between domestic and wild animals for water and grass. This argument did not factor in the relationship of different species at differing niche levels. Thresher, in fact, argued the complete opposite; if one or the other should be eliminated, cattle should go, as the less financially profitable resource. Research on this had been conducted in Gilgil, north of Nairobi, where researchers determined impala and Thomson's gazelles produced 10 to 20% more meat than cattle on the same amount of forage consumed.⁴⁴⁰

But many in the government criticized the Maasai for not being economic minded when it came to their cattle. Their decisions to stock at high levels and not sell until the animal was near death made no sense in the marketplace. Tourism was the most profitable use of their land. Thresher recognized that if all the discussion of national economic development failed to recognize the economic development of Kajiado residents, no plan would succeed. This is why he advocated direct payments to individuals. This would be particularly important to remember, if the process of individuation of common lands continued, landowners needed to be shown the value of sharing the land with wildlife. The great experiment of the WMP was to see if the

⁴⁴⁰ KNA, KW/1/1, "Wildlife Economics," 1972- 1977.

Maasai would respond to financial incentives according to "normal" expectations.⁴⁴¹

Thresher had little hope the WMP would maximize the potential of Group Ranches for wildlife management. Maasai traditions and the group ranch idea was communal, and thus potentially able to protect large enough spaces for biodiversity. There was also the great potential for a "tragedy of the commons" scenario in which individuals who could use their portion of the WUF payment to exploit the other members. They might buy more livestock, taking resources from others, and increasing their own herds. More cattle could mean more wives and children as well as increased political power in the group ranch and district. Certain individuals, perhaps those with more education or exposure to the outside world would take this advantage. Thus, a close monitoring of livestock herd sizes was important to the success and sustainability of the WMP.⁴⁴²

One of the FAO legal advisers had the most astute discussion of understanding the commons as it related to the Maasai, development, and the WMP. Most might assume that the Maasai, as other people in Hardin's context, would respond to financial incentives to preserve the commons. However, L.C. Christy argued that no one was asking how the Maasai conceptualized the income they received from cattle. Most assumed the group ranches would be run to maximize cash gains from cattle production, or with the WMP from wildlife, but no one was asking what made the Maasai unique. Most research on people's responses to incentives or coercion did not apply to the Maasai context. Cattle and the land must have an entirely different meaning, and either the WMP and Kenyan government policies had to conform to Maasai society or the Maasai had to adapt to the free market system. Understanding this might help managers best

⁴⁴¹ KNA, KW/1/1, "Wildlife Economics," 1972- 1977.

⁴⁴² KNA, KW/1/1, "Wildlife Economics," 1972- 1977.

approach stocking issues, poaching problems, and fair treatment of all group ranch members. Researchers simply failed to do their ethnographic research, and perhaps the Kenyan government did not care to, preferring the Maasai just modernize and conform to their development agenda.

Ultimately, it was the belief by many working on the WMP that the group ranch idea was only a temporary stage between Trust land and individual ownership of the rangeland. Whatever might be gained in the short term would be lost in the long run. Did he think individual owners might be more likely to support wildlife utilization or minimizing stock for wildlife management than the group? The Kitenden corridor in Ogulului might be an example of that actually working, but the problem is that was in 2013, after the Maasai had become more acclimated and responsive to market forces.

Later phases of the WPM shifted to monitoring wildlife populations. The later phase, overseen now by Philip Thresher, who had served in earlier phases as the wildlife ecologist, took a different approach to wildlife management in Kajiado. Where previous approaches focused on hunting, or as Harvey Croze explained, a "shoot 'em and can 'em" approach.⁴⁴³ This new approach, with Wildlife Utilization Fees (WUF) being the central component to encourage group ranch compliance, aimed to get money directly in the hands of registered families. The goal of WUF was to, "Reward ranchers, essential group ranchers, who control by title, large tracts of rangeland and are willing to permit wild herbivores freely to graze their land."⁴⁴⁴ Poaching was a serious problem by 1977, and wildlife populations were suffering. The WUF plan sought to minimize the number of cattle by paying individuals to not own cattle. Group Ranches were compensated according to their adherence to the parameters. For example, if any ranch applied for a permit to

⁴⁴³ Harvey Croze, personal communication.

⁴⁴⁴ KNA, KW/6/1, "Wildlife Unitization Fees (WUF) for Amboseli and Athi-Kapiti Ecosystems Only" 1973-1977.

kill wildlife, they would receive a 25% reduction in WUF benefits or 1% reduction per kilometer of fencing preventing the easy passage of wildlife. Watering points fenced off could bring a 25% reduction, but where allowed to use artificial watering points built for cattle, could receive a 5% bonus. If any ranch engaged in crop cultivation, they would be ineligible for any WUF funds. They had to adhere to the yearly stocking level of herds. It was to their benefit to leave more grass for wildlife because more wildlife meant more money. Ranchers were also promised compensation for predation losses and losses by disease transferred by wildlife. Under the WMP, wildlife utilization came in several forms: conservation, recreation and tourism, live capture, trophy hunting, commercial hunting, or cropping offtake.

By the end of the decade, it was apparent the WUF and WMP were not going to work. It was not because of lack of effort on the part of its managers, but by 1976, with the merger of the Game Department and Kenya National Parks, as well as readjusted agendas within other parts of the government, the program collapsed. The newly formed Wildlife Conservation and Management Department (WCMD) was corrupt and poorly managed, now that they had control over both national parks and reserves as well as all the game outside of protected areas.⁴⁴⁵ Wildlife conservation and livestock management were not well coordinated from the state level. This opened the door for more direct involvement by international conservation organizations.

The 1980s were consumed by a focus on anti-poaching on the WCMD, while many group ranches subdivided. Both threatened wildlife beyond the borders of the national parks and reserves. When the WCMD proved incapable of efficient and transparent management of poaching and human development encroaching on wildlife habitats, President Moi appointed Richard Leakey, famous for his archaeological discoveries, as the head of a newly formed Kenya

⁴⁴⁵ Harvey Croze, personal communication.

Wildlife Service (KWS). The KWS as given great autonomy to act on behalf of wildlife, but his tenure, begun in 1989, ended in the midst of scandals in the media. Moi appointed David Western as his replacement, in hopes of restoring dwindling wildlife populations.⁴⁴⁶

Parks Beyond Parks

When David Western took over as director of the KWS in 1994, he promoted a plan called "Parks Beyond Parks" in which he hoped to involve local communities in contiguous areas of national parks. The plan was to create buffer zones for wildlife to move outside of parks where they had complete protection into areas where people lived. Western developed this idea during his time in Amboseli, and when he took over at KWS, he wanted to apply the same theory that communities should be involved in conservation to reduce human-wildlife conflict and to bring financial benefit to these communities that shared space with animals. His placement as director was controversial move on the part of President Daniel arap Moi, who replaced the even more controversial Richard Leakey. Leakey first proposed the idea of the Kenya Wildlife Service as a replacement for the corrupt WCMD. Western's approach to managing parks and wildlife was vastly different from Leakey, who promoted a militarized traditional "fortress" approach to conservation of the national parks.⁴⁴⁷

This is a strong support for what is most commonly referred to as community-based

⁴⁴⁶ David Western, *In the Dust of Kilimanjaro* (Washington DC: Island Press, 2002); Richard E Leakey and Virginia Morell, *Wildlife Wars: My Fight to Save Africa's Natural Treasures* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2002).

⁴⁴⁷ See two memoirs for the contentious dynamics of Western, Leakey, Moi, and the most recent history of wildlife management in Kenya. David Western, *In the Dust of Kilimanjaro* (Washington DC: Island Press, 2002); Richard E Leakey and Virginia Morell, *Wildlife Wars: My Fight to Save Africa's Natural Treasures* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2002).

conservation (CBC), an idea that has gained popular support over the past twenty-five years as an alternative to fortress conservation. It is not without its critics, with many justifiably critical of its failures. The creation of Amboseli National Park excluded the Maasai from a dry season grazing area and its promised revenue did not trickle down to the people. CBC was an attempt to alleviate the inequalities. The WMP was supposed to provide these benefits through rangeland management and financial incentives to protect wildlife on their lands, but inefficiency and lack of understanding between the involved parties prevented its success. Subdivision could jeopardize any potential benefits from collective rangeland management or financial profit from tourism and conservation. Even as some of the group ranches divided, and even those that did not, the members moved toward CBC with the support of Western and several international conservation donors and investors.

One of the earliest efforts by one of the group ranches to become actively involved in conservation was the creation of the Kimana Community Wildlife Sanctuary. This was an area of the Kimana Group Ranch near the swamp that was well known as a place for wildlife viewing. It had been a popular area for luxury camping because of the easy access to water, large trees, and the best place for wildlife outside the national park.⁴⁴⁸ However, it attracted more than wildlife; agriculturalists were keen to get access to its year-round water supply. Since, the group ranch had already begun subdividing; it was a target for individual titling.

Since the founding of Kimana Group Ranch, the Group Ranch Representatives had been allowing hunters and tourists to set up camp in Kimana Sanctuary, only charging them a small amount. Stephen Korinko, who served as the Group Ranch Treasurer in the 1990s recalled their efforts to get more money for the group ranch through tourism. Some members wanted to take

⁴⁴⁸ KNA, KW/1/21, “Administration of Game Laws,” 1961-1968.

advantage of the number of tourists coming to the region for Amboseli National Park. Why not make it another stop on their circuit? The older group ranch committee members had little interest in setting up a community-run conservancy. But the next group ranch elections brought in a younger cohort who set out to do just that.

The opening ceremony in 1996 was a grand event in the community, with the unveiling of the opening gate commemorating the first community owned wildlife sanctuary in Kenya. Hundreds of people attended the ceremony, including the US Director of USAID, David Western, who was then the director of the Kenya Wildlife Service, and many local people. There was much hope for the success of the Kimana Sanctuary. Sixteen rangers were hired to protect against poachers and illegal grazing or cultivation.

For the first few years, they attempted to run it themselves, but they had no knowledge or experience in marketing and had little success in attracting clients. They then sought an investor and leased the land to African Safari Club (ASC). With a ten year lease, the ASC built a safari lodge along the Kimana River. The stipulations in the contract, however, were that they could hire experienced tourism managers, but they had to employ Kimana Group Ranch members in all other positions. During this time, the outside managers had to train locals who would one day take over those positions as well. They did quite well, not only making money from the lease, but from individual bed fees as well. From 1999-2009, Kimana Group Ranch made 76 million Kenyan Shillings.⁴⁴⁹

Wilfred Ngonze, the head warden of the Sanctuary, recalled that although there were political problems in the group ranch, the fact that a local community saw the need to establish a wildlife conservancy on their own land in order to ensure they benefited from tourism and

⁴⁴⁹ About \$995,000.

protected their own land as a conservancy. He said, "People do not listen to the gun." Instead, they needed to be led by the stick, a peaceful symbol of authority in Maasai culture. The *esiere*, a Maasai walking stick is used for herding cattle. Ngonze likened Maasai gradual engagement in tourism and conservation through women's selling of beadwork to tourists and men's employment at lodges. These people were the first to see real advantages from tourism. "Now the Maasai have the stick," he explains. There was a need to strike a balance between user rights and wildlife conservation. The Kimana Sanctuary was supposed to be that balance, but transparency was not a priority among the Group Ranch leaders.⁴⁵⁰

In 2009, everything changed. The Group Ranch representatives began to look for another investor. ASC took them to court, arguing they were violation of the contract because the ASC was supposed to have first right of refusal. This was not the only problem the committee faced. Other members of the group ranch argued the committee's officers (chairman, secretary, and treasurer), and not the full committee, made the decision to find a new investor. Such an important decision, they believed, should have been brought to a meeting of the whole group ranch. Members also wanted certainty that future revenue would be transparent because they saw little of the previous revenue from ASC, but did see the committee building new permanent houses.⁴⁵¹ A group of members, including Korinko, took the Kimana representatives and Sarova Hotels, the new leaser of Kimana Sanctuary, to court for failing to consult with members on the twenty-five year lease that was signed. In court, the judge stated the committee was wrong in not

⁴⁵⁰ Wilfred Ngonze, interview.

⁴⁵¹ Moses Makonjio Okello, Simon K. Ole Seno, and Rita Wairimu Nthiga, "Reconciling People's Livelihoods and Environmental Conservation in the Rural Landscapes in Kenya: Opportunities and Challenges in the Amboseli Landscapes," *Natural Resources Forum* 33, no. 2 (2009): 123–33.

calling a meeting, but threw the case out in 2013 with no resolution.⁴⁵²

With the local dispute ongoing in Kimana, Sarova never took over the sanctuary. In 2009, when ASC was "run out of" Kimana Sanctuary, they left all the property behind. Since then, the buildings have been vandalized and the furniture stolen. The site is still guarded by local game scouts in order to keep herders from grazing as it is still official a wildlife sanctuary. It is possible for tourists to visit, paying a small fee to the Kimana Group Ranch.

Former group ranch chairman, Saiko Tutan recalled that not all group ranch members supported this effort to profit from the tourism industry. Those who wanted the land for agriculture fought the Sanctuary. Others feared another government takeover of Maasai land, remembering the gazettment of Amboseli National Park. It was another area for dry season water for livestock, but also, just as with Ol Tukai, highly frequented by wildlife.⁴⁵³

Although Kimana Sanctuary did not survive the local disputes, it still exists as a local protected area by Kimana Group Ranch. Its concept inspired other communities around Amboseli and Kenya to start their own conservancies on private or group ranch land. Ngonze is now the environmental manager for the Satao Elerai Conservancy, a luxury tourist lodge located on land leased from several owners of individual properties on Kimana Group Ranch. Eight brothers collaborated on a conservation plan to gain profit from tourism and assist with development among the surrounding families. The African Wildlife Foundation assisted them with finding an investor. Now the conservancy provides funds for medical expenses and school fees for families in the area, and eighty-five percent of the employees are local. The remaning

⁴⁵² Stephen Korinko, interview.

⁴⁵³ Saiko Tuutan, interview.

profits are divided among the eight land owners.⁴⁵⁴

Conclusion

The Kimana Sanctuary is one example of the recent turn toward community-based conservation. Although it did not survive, it started a new movement in Amboseli for locally based conservancies and the blending of tourism with conservation in a way that was intended to benefit local communities. Some have been more local than others. The common model in Amboseli and the rest of Kenya involve an investor leasing land, setting aside a portion for conservation that may also serve as a park for private safaris, employing some locals, and give money for school fees or community development. Over time, this "community" based development has become a luxury tourism-based conservation set on group ranches. Locals still have mixed feelings about this. Many recognize some of the benefits as many of their children have their schooling paid for by these lodges and conservancies. Some still resent the control and access they gave up to the leaser.

Even though range management plans fell through because of corruption, misallocation of resources, or misunderstanding between parties, there is a legacy of integrating local communities in rangeland management. The Amboseli Tsavo Group Ranch Association (ATGRA) was formed in 1996 as an umbrella organization for all the group ranches between Tsavo and Amboseli, including Eselenkei, Kimana-Tikondo, Kuku A and B, Mbirikani, Ogulului-Ololalarashi, Rombo, and the private ranch of the Oloitiptip family. The ATGRA is a platform for all group ranch committees to coordinate grazing structures, address resource management and conservation, and act as a mediator for conservation groups who wish to

⁴⁵⁴ Wilfred Ngonze and Julius Onuko, interviews.

engage with the group ranches. Similarly, the Amboseli Ecosystem Trust works with local communities and conservation groups to "keep the rangelands open, diverse and healthy for the benefit of the people and wildlife."⁴⁵⁵ Over the next decade, it will be important to observe the successfulness of these two organizations who are attempting to do what so many had tried to do before.

Managing the range lands and conserving wildlife on the same landscape has proved to be difficult in Amboseli. Local politics and changing livelihoods have complicated the implementation of projects aimed at local development and improvement of livestock. National agendas for economic development were half-hearted in much of Maasailand because the government was not willing to invest a worthwhile amount of resources, money, and political economy in the region to truly develop its livestock and wildlife potential. International groups descended on Amboseli, hoping to mitigate the loss of wildlife and open grazing lands, but often failed to fully incorporate the needs and perspectives of local communities, but they also had to deal with a corrupt government that often had hidden agendas of their own.

⁴⁵⁵ "Amboseli Ecosystem Trust," *Amboseli Ecosystem Trust*, accessed July 5, 2015, <http://www.amboseliecosystemtrust.org/>.

Conclusion

Amboseli may appear to be just a dry dusty place; life can be hard there. I came to realize that there was some inexplicable pull that kept so many scientists engaged over many decades. There is no other place like it on earth. This landscape is a perfect storm of all the factors that make a good story about the convergence of local, national, and international politics and the ups and downs of conservation. It has all the components to examine the human dimensions of natural resource management or the history of Kenya. It has a people whose story has largely gone untold in East African historiography.

This history explores the centrality of local social, political, and environmental dynamics that have created many layers of memory and meaning over the land. However, these layers were not all locally originated; outsiders, both Kenyan and global, shaped meaning as well. Western ideas of what a wilderness should look like and be composed of informed the creation of the Reserve and subsequent National Park. Had these ideals of a place untouched by humans been fully realized in Amboseli, the story might have been more like that of Tsavo or Serengeti National Parks, where the people were displaced without having a voice in the decision. In Amboseli, the Maasai were involved in negotiations and policy making as early as 1948.

As the colonial history of Amboseli has shown, British opinion about the backwardness of Africans was reflected in the paternalistic policies of African governance at the level of the ADC and through the imposition of development programs such as ALDEV. The Kajiado ADC, intended to be a form of indirect rule, was used as a mechanism to implement taxation, development, and local governance that reflect the state's will. However, the KADC was not just an instrument of the state. Those who served on the committee used their authority to influence the development of the PA and access the revenue.

The legacy of the colonial KADC in the post-independence exerted even more influence over conservation and development, engaging with international agencies themselves.

International interest in Amboseli extended beyond conservation only to the production of scientific knowledge. This layer of the landscape has shaped meaning at different scales.

Scientific knowledge produced in Amboseli was, at the same time, influenced by the place from where it came and it impacted WNRM policies locally. Amboseli was part of a system of knowledge that extended beyond local borders to affect both Kenyan and international approaches to community-based conservation. These hybrid systems of knowledge were also important to the development of several disciplines of science.

The interactions of different systems of knowledge proved useful for understanding the meaning of animals in Amboseli. The significance of cattle in Maasai society has remained a constant, which was a source of contention for both the colonial and independent governments. At the state level, cattle were a source of revenue and a way to develop the local and national economies as well as the cause of environmental destruction if not properly managed. For some Ilkisono Maasai, cattle held more social capital than fiscal capital, representing contracts and social standing. The tension between these two perspectives on cattle can be both in the narrative of the history of the National Park and the management of the rangelands. Fueled by misunderstanding and lack of will, some early efforts at state and district level management failed. Only when local perspectives were fully integrated did some success at management emerge.

Similarly, the meaning of wildlife in Amboseli was impacted by the multiplicity of perspectives as to their purpose in the region and conservation. The Maasai's co-existence with wildlife, built both on myth and reality, was contrasted with the involvement of some Maasai in

hunting and poaching. With the increase in human population and the sedentarization of Maasai, human-wildlife conflict increased. Many conservationists tried to convince the Maasai that wildlife had a place in Amboseli and they could benefit from keeping wildlife in the rangelands outside the park. Efforts to bring this to fruition had mixed success.

Conservation history should have a place not only in the fields of history of science or the environment, but within African history as well. It is a part of Kenyan history that has not been fully explored beyond the “myth of wild Africa” or the role of hunting.⁴⁵⁶ The historiography of post-colonial Kenya will be broadened by this research that brings together the history of field science, wildlife conservation, rangeland management, and the changing livelihoods of pastoralists, all largely ignored area of Kenya’s history. The details of Amboseli’s conservation history are important because many problems of the 1960s and 1970s are still on going. There is a place for historians in policy development, and conservation history is one area where the research methodologies and historical analysis can shed light on local spaces’ change over time. Amboseli’s history reveals that local involvement, whether through politics, active or passive resistance, or the development of community conservation, should be examined from different perspectives. It can also be concluded that local involvement is not a panacea for conservation or development. However, there are examples from which to draw some insight into the relationship between local, national, and international efforts.

The story of conservation in Amboseli is ongoing, and it is still a site regarded as an

⁴⁵⁶ Jonathan Adams and Thomas O. McShane, *The Myth of Wild Africa : Conservation Without Illusion* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1992); John M. MacKenzie, *The Empire of Nature: Hunting, Conservation, and British Imperialism* (Manchester University Press, 1988). Jeff Schauer, “The Elephant Problem: Science, Bureaucracy, and Kenya’s National Parks, 1955 to 1975,” *African Studies Review* 58, no. 1 (April 2015): 177–98. Schauer takes his history of Kenya’s wildlife management bureaucracy through 1975, when the Game Department and Kenya National Parks Merged into the Wildlife Conservation and Management Department.

example of success in community-based WNNRM. The Kimana Sanctuary is one example of the recent turn toward community-based conservation in the 1990s. Although it did not survive, the sanctuary started a new movement in Amboseli for locally based conservancies and the blending of tourism and conservation with the intention of benefitting local communities. The common model in Amboseli and the rest of Kenya involve an investor leasing land, setting aside a portion for conservation that may also serve as a park for private safaris, employing some locals, and give money for school fees or community development. Over time, this "community" based development has been dominated by luxury tourism-based conservation on group ranches. Locals still have mixed feelings about this. Many recognize some of the benefits like lodges and conservancies paying for children's schooling. However, some still resent the control and access they gave up to the leasee.

Even though range management plans fell through because of corruption, misallocation of resources, or misunderstanding between parties, part of its legacy of integrating local communities in rangeland management remains. The Amboseli Tsavo Group Ranch Association (ATGRA) was formed in 1996 as an umbrella organization for all the group ranches between Tsavo and Amboseli, including Eselenkei, Kimana-Tikondo, Kuku A and B, Mbirikani, Ogulului-Ololarashi, Rombo, and the private ranch of the Oloitiptip family. The ATGRA is a platform for all group ranch committees to coordinate grazing structures, address resource management and conservation, and act as a mediator for conservation groups who wish to engage with the group ranches. Similarly, the Amboseli Ecosystem Trust works with local communities and conservation groups to "keep the rangelands open, diverse and healthy for the benefit of the people and wildlife."⁴⁵⁷ Over the next decade, it will be important to observe the

⁴⁵⁷ "Amboseli Ecosystem Trust," *Amboseli Ecosystem Trust*, accessed July 5, 2015,

success of these two organizations who are attempting to do what so many had tried before.

Managing the rangelands and conserving wildlife on the same landscape has proved to be difficult in Amboseli. Local politics and changing livelihoods have complicated the implementation of projects aimed at local development and improvement of livestock. National agendas for economic development were half-hearted in much of Maasailand because the government was not willing to invest a worthwhile amount of resources, money, and political economy in the region to truly develop its livestock and wildlife potential. International groups descended on Amboseli, hoping to mitigate the loss of wildlife and open grazing lands, but often failed to fully incorporate the needs and perspectives of local communities, but they also had to deal with a corrupt government that often had hidden agendas of its own.

The Ilkisongo, though the subject of anthropological and ethnography studies, have not had a larger stage to tell the story of their existence to the outside world. This has implications for those who would come in to set up conservation or development projects to protect biodiversity or alleviate poverty. By telling at least one part of their story, I give a more prominent position to Maasai who have been so centrally located in this story, but have had uneven participation in policy development and implementation and limited access to the benefits of conservation.

A narrative history of wildlife and natural resource management in Amboseli has allowed me to study the relationship between intellectual processes of the multi-local perspectives on land use, wildlife, and natural resources or between scientists who have conducted long term studies in this "living laboratory" with those of the Maasai who have a long history of lived experience in Amboseli. Integral to all these connections is the role animals have in these

perceptions. Animals have had consumptive and non-consumptive purposes for people and biological role in the ecosystem.

There are continuities and differences between more recent events and approaches to managing the landscape that have become apparent throughout the past seven decades that people other than the Ilkisongo have attempted to exert control. There continues to be a disconnection between local actors and national and international perspectives. An excellent example of this can be found at Ol Tukai. It took three decades to come to firm agreements about cattle restrictions. This had largely to do with the clash between how the Maasai understood the purpose of this place and how the government believed it should have been used. Before independence, conservation and utilization were incompatible, although many in the government saw that if there was no compromise, all would lose the use of the swamps in the end through misuse. Significant differences in how outsiders engaged with the Maasai changed throughout the period of time of this narrative. Partly, this was a result of the Maasai exerting their power through politics or use and destruction of wildlife and natural resources as a way to show they had the ability to frustrate any politician or conservationist's plans.

At times it seems that many of the problems that were prevalent in the 1950s, 60s, 70s, and 80s, are still problems people are addressing today in Amboseli. Finding the balance between protecting wildlife and the environment and improving the livelihoods of the Maasai has been a continuous struggle, requiring frequent readjustments and retrials. Efforts to find solutions that work towards both problems, through CBC for example, have had mixed results. On this dusty plain, it may look like it is too late for anything to be done to stop the complete collapse of biodiversity and continued decline of the capacity of the land to sustain a pastoralist lifestyle. People gave up hope in the 1950s, fearing the overgrazing of cattle would wipe out the

wildlife populations in Amboseli. This has not happened yet. With the local extinction of rhino in the 1980s, some thought elephants were next. Now there is a vital population. Those who thought the park or other conservation efforts would spell the end of pastoralism as a defining characteristic of the Maasai, but it has endured despite even the growth of agriculture. It will not be for lack of effort in trying to stop these things, but a force much larger than any local factor - climate change. The glacier atop Kilimanjaro is rapidly shrinking; some scientists argue the permanent snow will be gone in less than twenty years.⁴⁵⁸ Seasonal snowmelt provides water for the underground aquifers and rivers in Amboseli, and the reliability of this event has changed over the years. Rainfall has become more unpredictable and erratic with too much rain at times causing deadly flooding and not enough at other times leading to devastating drought. Still, there are bright spots of conservation and local development that is sensitive to the people there.

The creation of Amboseli National Park was a controversial move, and perhaps better solutions to preserving the landscape could have been found had all parties openly engaged in negotiations, but few would not suggest it be degazetted now.⁴⁵⁹ Although never the great source of revenue it was promised to be, some revenue from the national park makes its way to communities that live adjacent to the park. KWS helps fund a school and dispensary on the periphery of the park, but the parastatal is not limited to the park. KWS also works with other organizations on wildlife related matters such as anti-poaching and research. Their willingness to disburse funds to local communities has been slow to develop and sporadic. This has left many

⁴⁵⁸ N.J. Cullen, "A Century of Ice Retreat on Kilimanjaro: The Mapping Reloaded," *The Cryosphere* 7, no. 2 (2013): 419–31.

⁴⁵⁹ John S. Akama, Christopher L. Lant, and G. Wesley Burnett, "Conflicting Attitudes toward State Wildlife Conservation Programs in Kenya," *Society & Natural Resources* 8, no. 2 (March 1, 1995): 133–44; Michael B. Mascia and Sharon Pailler, "Protected Area Downgrading, Downsizing, and Degazettement (PADDD) and Its Conservation Implications," *Conservation Letters* 4, no. 1 (2010): 9–20.

local people with a negative opinion of KWS, particularly when it comes to appearing to be pro-wildlife over the well-being of people.

The approaches of colonial conservation and management have moved toward more holistic visions of how wildlife and people interact and coexist. Unlike other East African protected areas, the Maasai of Amboseli were not unilaterally removed from the park. Consultations between the government and the Maasai slowed environmental conservation, but Maasai leadership created spaces for themselves in the political process. Now local leadership understands the role of conservation in their communities if only for the funding they receive as a result. The next step is making sure all members of the community can actively participate and benefit from the millions of dollars that flow through Amboseli each year, particularly women. Women are still only marginally engaged in the tourism and conservation efforts. One woman stands out as an exception to prove the rule, Lucy Nkoye, from Kuku Group Ranch. Nkoye is a park ranger in Amboseli. Nkoye first worked with the Problem Animal Control Unit in Loitokitok, dealing with lions or elephants that were interfering with crops or stealing livestock. She was effective in her job, shooting lions or buffalo when the men ran. She said she had no speed, so she had to adapt by becoming a sharp shooter. For a time, she worked in intelligence at Tsavo West National Park near her home during the 1990s. This was a time of high poaching rates, with Somali *shiftas* (bandits) roaming through the region. Based from her home in Itilal, at the gate of the park, she dressed normally, allowing her to gather intelligence from the community. *Shiftas* lived among the Maasai, mingling with herders and utilizing the social network there. Nkoye also used these same networks to identify new people in the area that might be poachers, helping arrest many who were illegally killing wildlife. In 2004, KWS transferred her to Amboseli where she now works in security. No one in 1948, when Amboseli

was first established as a National Reserve, would have thought that a local Maasai woman would become one of the rangers keeping the national park safe.⁴⁶⁰

In Amboseli, poaching has stabilized over the past ten to fifteen years through the efforts of local game scouts funded by both national and international agencies. Elephant numbers have increased in Amboseli while the population over the whole continent has declined sharply. Most areas of Amboseli are now patrolled by community game scouts. These men, and occasionally women, spend hours every day, trekking miles and miles through thorn bush, often staying out at night. These are locals, most of whom are trained by KWS to track poachers and stage ambushes when they locate them. They are unarmed, but explained to me how they are trained to disarm poachers. Since they cannot arrest the offenders, they work with KWS who can. Most of these game scouts are funded by the Big Life Foundation, who equip them with a uniform and a few supplies if they are living in the outposts scattered throughout the ecosystem. Much of their success stems from the fact that they are local, working in the communities where they live. They know the land, how to track wildlife, and understand how to communicate with local people to gather information about poachers, problem animals, or charcoal burning, which is illegal. Most of the regions scouts are coordinated through the Amboseli Tsavo Game Scouts Association.⁴⁶¹

Scientists, once simply focused on a particular species for the sake of science, cannot now stay entirely disengaged from the broader environmental issues and conservation

⁴⁶⁰ Lucy Nkoye, interview.

⁴⁶¹ Peter Gisa, May 13, 2013; Game Scout; Joseph Kotoke, July 28, 2013, Big Life Foundation, Rhino Program; James Kupere, May 13, 2013, head of Amboseli Tsavo Game Scouts Association; Wilson Mancha, July 28, 2013, Big Life Foundation, investigation; Martine Kirasi Marsaria, September 17, 2013, Chairman of Amboseli Tsavo Game Scouts Association.

implications of their work. David Western's research expanded beyond the Amboseli Conservation Program, which continues to conduct research on the ecosystem and human dimensions of wildlife management, extended this work to the African Conservation Centre (ACC). The ACC expands the same ideology of wildlife conservation and community-based conservation to the whole country, but largely focusing on Maasai areas. The Amboseli Ecosystem Trust, mentioned previously, is one of the programs started by ACC as a means to empower the local Amboseli community engage directly in managing wildlife and natural resources and keeping communication open between the community and government.⁴⁶²

The scope of science has gotten larger in Amboseli. In 2010 and 2013, the African Wildlife Foundation worked with KWS and Tanzanian wildlife authorities to conduct cross-border wildlife censuses. This was the first effort between the two countries to establish wildlife population estimates that encompass an area between the two countries. One of the goals beyond counting wildlife was to formulate a methodology that could be used throughout Africa where wildlife populations migrated in international territories. For Amboseli, the wildlife populations showed remarkable improvement between 2010, which reflected a very low census due to the 2009 drought, and 2013. This census also raised issues among wildlife authorities that proved how difficult the competing bureaucracies of each of the countries made the transnational census. Better coordination and ease of resource sharing would improve wildlife management. For example, Kenyan airplanes, had to refuel in Arusha in order to continue aerial observations, but were forced to pay the tax for landing in Tanzania when they were just returning to Kenya.⁴⁶³

The early decades of international efforts to fund community oriented approaches to

⁴⁶² David Western, interview.

⁴⁶³ Fiesta Warinwa, interview, AWF Program Director, Kenya.

management show much of what managers now take for granted was not understood fully then. In Amboseli, international funding supported the creation of the national park, and beyond the park, the UNDP and FAO were among the first to try to make wildlife pay for their place as members of the Amboseli community through revenue sharing projects of wildlife utilization or tourism. Continued subdivision of Kimana Group Ranch closed off a migration route between Amboseli and the Chyulu Hills. Fiesta Warinwa, who worked as the regional director of the Kilimanjaro Heartlands before become the country director of AWD, explained that one of the projects she worked on in Amboseli was securing a corridor in the subdivided Kimana Group Ranch. This was a vital area for wildlife migration that was being cut off as individual plots were closing open spaces. In 2008, she mobilized land owners to pull together their parcels and not develop them or start farming them. At first, most were skeptical of AWF, fearing the organization would use this as an opportunity to seize their land. When she explained they would be paid to keep their land open, she worked with John Giza, a local employee of AWF, to get ninety land owners to agree to the plan. The leases paid them 30,000 Kenyan shillings for each member's sixty acres, at an increase of 2.5% each year they maintained the agreement. They could keep livestock, but not agriculture. In 2013, they participated in a similar campaign in the Kitenden corridor, on the Ogulului Group Ranch border with Tanzania, an important area for wildlife migration into Kenya. The Kitenden corridor had recently been subdivided.⁴⁶⁴

The history of conservation in Amboseli is a story of how a small place in Africa is closely connected with global ideas of wildlife conservation, which, as I have shown, changed and evolved as science revealed how ecological process and human choices are closely connected. However, despite national and international efforts to transform the environment and

⁴⁶⁴ Fiesta Warinwa, interview.

changes people's minds about conservation, the power to make wildlife and natural resource management successful was ultimately locally driven.

APPENDIX

MAA AND SWAHILI TRANSLATION

Maa

Enkang’	Maasai homestead, see <i>boma</i>
Enkiyieu	formalized male friendship
Ilmurran	Young male warrior age set
Manyatta	Military camp for <i>ilmurran</i>
Oinkat/Linkati	Wildebeest
Olkarasha/Ilkarash	Red plaid cotton fabric, reminiscent of Scottish tartans, see <i>shuka</i>
Oloshon/Iloshon	Regional sections of the larger Maasai ethnic group.
Olaiboni	Maasai spiritual leader
Olkiteng’ Iolbaa	Ceremony for <i>Enkiyiu</i> , Bull of arrows
Olokeri	An area fenced off to allow grass to regrow
Olopololi	grazing area around the <i>enkang’</i> for younger cattle
Orpul	Location for Maasai men to gather and eat meat

Swahili

Askari	police or security officers
Baraza	Swahili, a meeting of the community to discuss public matters
Boma	Rural homestead, <i>enkang’</i>
Uhuru	Independence or freedom
Harambee	“Let’s all pull together!”
Shuka	<i>Olkarasha</i>

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