

# Pastoralism vs. conservation

## -Livelihoods and conservancies in the pastoralist areas, Kenya

The pastoralism vs. conservation debate in the conservancies in Northern Kenya, with Naibunga conservancy as case-study



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### Picture referencess:

- <https://www.one.org/us/blog/10-photos-that-take-you-inside-the-intriguing-world-of-kenyas-warrior-tribe/> (accessed on 13-07-2019)

- [https://wetu.com/iBrochure/en/Home/29857/The\\_Sanctuary\\_at\\_Ol\\_Lentille](https://wetu.com/iBrochure/en/Home/29857/The_Sanctuary_at_Ol_Lentille) (accessed on 13-07-2019)

## Abstract

In the pastoralist areas of Northern Kenya, nomadic livestock keeping is the main livelihood approach. However, there are challenges such as climate change, increasing droughts, ecosystem degradation and competing land uses impacting livelihoods. Changes in the pastoralist society also impact on livelihoods such as changing governance systems and cultural changes. Another livelihood approach in the pastoralist areas is conservation benefits from dedicated conservation areas. High-end luxury tourism is the main attempt at making a profit. Local people should be involved in tourism operations and get benefits to compensate for land lost. The thesis researches the opposing livelihood approaches of livelihood versus conservation. For that, stakeholders are interviewed during a six-month stay. The conclusion of the research is that the benefits of tourism don't materialize for the people and that they have little involvement in the tourism operations. It is recommended to start low-budget tourism which offers wildlife viewing combined with the local culture. Low-budget allows the pastoralist people to start-up initiatives for themselves and to offer cultural activities fitting within their capacities. Combining pastoralism and conservation moves beyond Western hegemonic conservation thinking of nature parks and considers the local setting of pastoralism in Kenya.

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## Summary

This research focuses on the debate between pastoralism and conservation as livelihood approach. In the pastoralist areas in Kenya livestock keeping has traditionally been the most important livelihood approach. Nowadays, conservation also plays an important role where areas are dedicated to only conservation and wildlife habitat. This clashes with livestock keeping where livestock is moved over communal lands according to the seasons and the availability of water and pasture.

In the literature review, conservation paradigms are identified to make sense of the conservation side of the debate. Those paradigms are exemplary of Western hegemonic conservation thinking. It started with the park paradigm where conservation is associated with nature parks. Those parks were started with the idea that humans cannot be where nature is, thus to conserve nature humans must be kept out nature areas. This has an impact on people living near parks who previously used resources on the land. Community-based natural resource management (CBNRM) aimed to include local people in the management of the parks and to make them benefit. To ensure nature parks generated benefits market-based conservation emerged. In this paradigm, ways are sought for nature to generate revenues. One way to benefit tourism.

There is a need to diversify livelihoods because of challenges facing pastoralism. Conservation is brought as one important alternative. Those challenges are climate change, increasing intensity and quantity of droughts, ecosystem degradation and competing land uses. There are also changes happening within pastoralist communities influencing livelihoods. Examples of that are a collapse of customary governance systems, corruption and obscure land deals and leases.

The pastoralism and conservation dichotomy is researched during a six-month fieldwork trip in Northern Kenya. Through semi-structured interviews with participants from key stakeholder groups their perspective on the pastoralism vs. conservation debate is collected. The stakeholder categories are pastoralist community members, local leaders, government representatives, people from institutions and NGOs, tourism operations and researchers. During the fieldwork the researcher cooperated with a local NGO called IMPACT-Kenya to organize fieldtrip. Also cooperated with the manager from Naibunga conservancy and the I-CAN research project. The field data is analysed with the help of four themes:

1. Pastoralism; collecting views on challenge in pastoralism, future options and alternative livelihoods
2. Conservation; here the benefits and disadvantages and cooperation between stakeholders is discussed
3. Land and resources; the perceptions on access to land and resources and formal and informal governance systems around those issues is discussed
4. Values. The priorities people feel and see between humans and wildlife is discussed. Also, the changes in pastoralist society.

The conclusion is that pastoralism and conservation are now seen as opposing livelihood approaches. However, it does not have to be like that. For a sustainable future cooperation between the two is necessary where both livestock, wildlife and the ecosystem have a place in decision making. Tourism as alternative livelihood is instrumental in that, but not in its current shape. Currently, tourism is predominantly done through high-end luxury tourism with a limited involvement of the local people. This because of high initial investment needed and high skills to run the initiatives. The proposal is to start low-budget tourism initiatives aimed at combining wildlife viewing with local culture. In this way, a way beyond exclusionary nature areas can be found where livestock and wildlife share the ecosystem. By finding solutions that combine pastoralism and conservation, tourist will see Kenya as it really is.

## 1. Introduction

A group of young Maasai men are walking over the plains in Laikipia, Northern Kenya. They are pastoralist people constantly on the move with their livestock in search of water and pasture. They have been away from home for months because it has been a long dry season. On their way to pasture, they pass a sanctuary for rhinos where their dry season grazing areas used to be. There is grass in the sanctuary, but they are not allowed inside. Only the wildlife and people paying thousands of dollars to see them are allowed inside. Maybe if the drought continues some cattle will be allowed inside the fences in exchange for payment. The tourists pay to see the rhinos and wildlife in their natural habitat, and they don't want their view spoiled by seeing livestock. Even though, the pastoralist people have been herding alongside wildlife for many generations.

In this research, pastoralism is associated with the traditional way of gaining a livelihood. This traditional way is through nomadic livestock keeping, where the livestock grazes in the same areas as the wildlife. Conservation, in this context, is associated with the separation of the land uses between areas for livestock and areas for the wildlife. However, this separation goes only one way: livestock cannot go where wildlife is while wildlife goes everywhere.

The situation as described in the story is the reality for many pastoralist people in Laikipia and Northern Kenya: high competition over resource use and land ownership combined with restricted access to resources between different users and interests. Land ownership in the pastoralist areas is broadly speaking divided into three categories: First, group ranches where communal land ownership and use is formalized for the Maasai and Samburu communities. Second, big private ranches owned by white settlers, dedicated to ranching or conservation combined with luxury wildlife tourism (Letai, 2011). Thirdly, small government or individually owned plots. In the nineties, an NGO called the Northern Rangelands Trust (NRT) started to work with the group ranches to start community owned conservation areas, called conservancies. Those conservancies are parts of the group ranch that are dedicated to wildlife conservation and access for livestock is restricted. To compensate for the land loss, the conservancies are supposed to give benefits to the community such as bursaries, security, schools, health care and employment. Income comes from overseas funding, but also through high-end tourism initiatives such as the eco-lodges in the private conservancies. Some community conservancies have those lodges, others have not. There are conflicts between pastoralist people and the conservation bodies because of the loss of access to grazing lands and because the benefits from community conservancies are too little. Also, there is a difference in value given towards land ownership, livelihoods and nature at play which informs the conflict. This in a context of increased land degradation, climate change and more demands for limited available land.

Pastoralist people are livestock keepers for whom it is paramount to have large stretches of land to find grass and water in the dry areas in Northern Kenya. Dedicating areas to only conservation and wildlife (with tourism), takes away from those areas and thus from livelihoods. According to the literature, wildlife tourism is one way to compensate the local people for that loss of land and (access) to resources. Conservation and tourism come with different livelihood approaches and a move away from pastoralism. These various ways of land use and of going about conservation are conceptualized as different conservation paradigms in this thesis. There is the park paradigm based on dedicating land to conservation use only; another paradigm is community-based natural resource management where local people's involvement is considered, and the last one discussed in this thesis is market-based conservation where nature has to generate income for conservation. In the case, that manifests in the pursuit of tourism. The value of tourism is compared with the customary livelihood of pastoralism. Is it possible to have both paradigms in one area without conflict? And if not, how does conflict between those paradigms influence and change livelihoods? In this thesis, the conservation paradigm of different stakeholder groups involved in conservation in Laikipia North are analysed and compared with the following research questions:



*Judging between pastoralism and conservation as livelihood approach, which one is most effective in pastoralist areas in Northern Kenya?*

What are the challenges for pastoralist livelihoods in pastoralist areas in Northern Kenya?

What are the conservation practices in the pastoralist areas in Northern Kenya?

To which extent can conservation be seen as an alternative livelihood approach to pastoralism?

The data is collected with semi-structured interviews, participant observation and literature research. The fieldwork is executed in cooperation with a local grassroots NGO, IMPACT-Kenya and in collaboration with other researchers in the area, I-CAN research. Also, collaboration with Naibunga conservancy is sought and found. This to gain access to local people, local leaders, NGO's, tourism bodies, government representatives and relevant individuals who form the stakeholder categories. Analysing the data of the stakeholder categories together gives a good overview of perceptions on conservation in Laikipia North and the case-study. The data is analysed with four different themes to answer the research questions: 1: pastoralism, 2: conservation, 3: land use and resources; 4: values.

During the analysis, it became clear that pastoralism is still the main livelihood approach in Laikipia North. Conservation and tourism offer an alternative, but those benefits are not compensating for the loss of land and resource use it causes. However, pastoralism and livestock keeping have challenges that need to be addressed to ensure the livelihoods in the future, such as increasing drought, land degradation and loss of grazing and water sources to other land uses. Few alternatives for livestock keeping were found during the fieldwork and most alternative livelihood approaches are on a small scale adding to livestock keeping, but not replacing it. Conservation and tourism are mentioned a lot as a viable alternative. However, in its current shape conservation does not benefit the whole community due to corruption and lack of awareness in the whole communities. In the future, a more inclusive way of conservation and tourism is necessary to offer the pastoralist people an alternative from livestock keeping. This in cooperation with the pastoralist people, both in the management and in resource use management. Also, the current focus on luxury tourism limits the involvement of local people due to a lack of skills and investment possibilities. Also, this tourism focuses on presenting a pristine nature without the presence of people. A different kind of tourism with a focus on the way pastoralist people and wildlife share the land must be motivated to ensure that the communities benefit from conservation directly. This will show the tourist how Kenya really is, with livestock and wildlife using the same resources and landscapes (Mbaria & Ogada, 2017). A more realistic image for tourist also opens the door for collaboration in resource use, because the two approaches don't have to oppose each other anymore. This enables pastoralist people to easier find pasture during dry seasons.

In the next chapter, the academic background of this thesis is explained (chapter 2). This thesis is founded on political ecology (chapter 2.1) and questions of development versus conservation (chapter 2.3). The conservation paradigms used in this chapter are also conceptualized in the literature review (chapter 2.2). The literature chapter ends with an assessment of literature on conservation tourism (chapter 2.4) and pastoralism (chapter 2.5). In the methodology, the methodological design (chapter 3.1) and the case-study are laid down (chapter 3.2). In the following chapter, the fieldwork data is assessed with the four themes (chapter 4). In the conclusion, the debate between pastoralism is settled and the research questions are answered (chapter 5). The discussion reflects on the results and gives recommendations for a different kind of tourism (chapter 6.1). Also, other recommendations for further research and policy are mentioned (chapter 6.2).

## 2. Literature review: Conservation or development?

Conservation has a different meaning and associated practices depending on who you ask. There are so many different approaches and movements in conservation that giving a single definition which is comprehensive, but not vague, is impossible (Sandbrook, 2015). If you look into a dictionary conservation is commonly either defined as 'protecting from harm' or 'the sustainable use of a resource' (Sandbrook, 2015). Looking into academia differences are defined in different conservation paradigms. In those paradigms, scholars put different emphases on priorities made between livelihood, resource use and biodiversity; conservation versus development or between people and wildlife; and who has decision making power over the resources. There is no single paradigm of conservation. Also, in the field conservation practices consist of a mix of paradigms depending on the views and backgrounds of the stakeholders. Conservation paradigms are not a factual representation of reality, but an aid to understanding the realities of conservation in the field. They assist to define conservation decisions of all the stakeholders involved.

The conservation paradigms exist both side-by-side and emerged out of each other. The global conservation movement started with fortress conservation with a strong emphasis on top-down decision making. The local people were neither involved with the management of the park, nor had they access to the resources they previously relied on. Community-based resource management was intended to solve those ills and to ensure local people were compensated for losses due to conservation and benefitted from conservation. Local people got involved in conservation, however not necessarily in the management of nature areas. Market-based conservation emerged as a way for local people to benefit from conservation practices (Vaccaro, Beltran, & Paquet, 2013). Tourism is the most popular way of making a profit out of conservation. Often, this is high-end luxury tourism where visitors are offered to view wildlife in their natural 'pristine' habitat, meaning without a sign of human habitation. The level of involvement of local people in those tourism bodies is often limited to employees.

The crux of many discussions concerning conservation is whether a mix of stakeholders adhering to different conservation paradigms and non-western ways of conservation thinking can work together. One key question in those discussions is whether there can be nature when there are also people, and if both need their separate places, is there room for both?

The conservation paradigms discussed are indicative of developments in Western hegemonic conservation thinking. The perspective of the pastoralist people is explained further on in this review. In the 'pastoralism versus conservation' chapter the conflicting land uses and its effect on the livelihoods of the local people are discussed. For that, relevant tourism literature and literature on pastoralism is reviewed and compared. But first, the contextual background of political ecology in which this thesis is rooted is explained.

### 2.1 Political ecology

Political ecology places conservation questions into its social, cultural, political and economic background (Vaccaro et al., 2013). It also connects the local context and conservation in the field with global forces steering conservation decisions. Political ecology gives a 'post-conservation' perspective to conservation which is more concerned with social and environmental justice than biodiversity preservation (Fletcher, 2010, p. 178). Therefore it is a countermovement to a-political thinking in conservation (Robbins, 2012). This allows one to consider the role of conservation in development and how to define and re-define the human – nature relationship (Turnhout, Waterton, Never, & Buizer, 2012), as well as the potential for humans and nonhumans to share an ecosystem or not.

Joan Martinez Alier defines political ecology as the study of 'ecological distribution conflicts' (2002, in Escobar, 2008, p. 6), associated with the struggle over access to natural resources, livelihood and the cost of environmental destruction (Escobar, 2008, p. 6). Access is a better way to look at resource use and land disputes because the concept encompasses how stakeholders can benefit from land and resources and not only whether they are allowed to use it or not (Ribot & Peluso, 2003a). Distribution talks about priorities made between different humans as well as between human and nonhuman needs, and how the wider political and global world has an influence in a local setting. This is especially the case because actors define rights, nature and its use in different, culturally dependant ways (Vaccaro et al., 2013). Politics play a role in perceptions of nature (shaping different 'ontologies') and the ability to act on or live by that perception (Kohn, 2015). This is relevant to identify the political side of values in development and conservation decisions and how values towards wildlife and perception of nature play into those things. Also, political ecology studies the political realities of conservation decisions such as the often contradictory social relationships which emerge in the establishment of protected areas (Vaccaro et al., 2013). For example, on the one hand, communities welcome new livelihood options, but also fear, or even oppose, the impact on traditional livelihoods of the newer ones.

Political ecology concerns itself with social justice in a Western framework. In conservation and development, a subdivision is made with a hierarchical distribution in cultures and values where Western ideas of development and conservation are most important. A focus on the alternative trajectories created by indigenous people to broaden the scope of conservation thinking to different cultures and ecological practices is helpful (Escobar, 1998). This would entail studying the merits of different ways of doing conservation and the different ways local people formulate human – nature relationships. An example of that is pastoralism, where humans and wildlife share the ecosystem and resources in systems of multiple-use land use (Igoe, 2004a). This is opposed to tourism and nature parks which are single-use land use and thus have a huge impact on the traditional ways of resource use and livelihoods.

## 2.2 Conservation paradigms

The direction taken in conservation is about choices, which reflect the ethical judgement (e.g. priorities and values) of the people making the choices (Borgerhoff Mulder & Coppolillo, 2005b, p. 274). Those choices are informed by political, cultural, economic and historical backgrounds. 'Just as Maasai resource management is a product of certain social histories within the Greater Rift Valley, Western resource management models are also the product of social histories, particularly the history of European expansion.' (Igoe, 2004a, p. 69). This makes it useful to look into those histories and cultural backgrounds to understand the broader context of how culture shapes (perception of) animals and wildlife which shapes the economics and politics of conflict (Pooley et al., 2016, p. 518). Conservation paradigms are one way to look at those historical and cultural backgrounds.

One way to distinguish between paradigms is by the difference between 'preservation' and 'conservation', whereby preservation is maintaining the pristine, 'untouched' character of nature, which consequently excludes all forms of human habitation from parks (Wiratno, Indriyo, Syarifudin, & Kartikasari, 2004). Conservation assumes a rejuvenating quality of nature where the human and natural worlds are combined. This shows priorities made in conservation decisions between human and nonhuman needs. Often a choice is made between humans and nature regarding land and resource use, instead of multiple actors using the same resources collaboratively. This is the difference between single-use or multiple uses of land (Igoe, 2004a). Another way to distinguish between the paradigms is to assess which stakeholders have ownership of the conservation initiatives and who makes the decisions: is it local people or somebody else?

### 2.2.1 Park paradigm

From the 'rational' approach promoted by the Western Enlightenment, the idea came that nature, including wildlife, was something humans could control and use (Igoe, 2004b). The romanticism movement, on the other hand, saw nature as pristine and as outside the 'human realm', governed by its own rules, concluding that human influence should be avoided in nature (Igoe, 2004b; Wiratno et al., 2004). Romanticism (end 18<sup>th</sup> century) created a group of people who wanted to enjoy nature in its 'pure form' without people in the landscapes, which gave them an incentive to create nature parks (Wiratno et al., 2004). This is where the enclosure movements, also called fortress conservation (West, Igoe, & Brockington, 2006), started by the creation of national parks. This often coincided with the removal of people traditionally living in those areas. First, in North American parks where the 'removal' of the Native Americans acted as a model for later preservationist efforts around the world (Igoe, 2004b, p. 85). The creation of parks often coincides with the eviction of rural, poor marginalized people who consequently received little or no benefits from the parks or tourism (Honey, 2008). Also, they are often restricted to unsustainable areas around parks with fewer resources as inside the park and thus of lower economic value (Honey, 2008, p. 14). This impacts the traditional livelihoods of pastoralist people because parks are often created in areas with a lot of pasture or other resources (Igoe, 2004b).

State-led nature parks were one of the first attempts in the West to consciously protect nature (Borgerhoff Mulder & Coppolillo, 2005c). This happened when the enjoyment of nature became part of everyday life with the habit of visiting and enjoying nature parks (Igoe, 2004b; Vaccaro et al., 2013). Those parks also created the idea that everyday human life and nature are separate realms. Also, the enjoyment of nature in the form of parks became a public good. Therefore it was in the public's interest to legitimize state intervention to create nature parks (Vaccaro et al., 2013). This could be achieved by removing people of their lands and dedicating those areas to nature parks. Access would be limited to those who enjoy nature recreationally, and pay for it; access for people with a different perception on nature and its use is restricted.

The International Union for Conservation of Nature defines a protected area as a "*clearly defined geographical space, recognised, dedicated and managed through legal or other effective means, to achieve the long-term conservation of nature with associated ecosystem services and cultural values*" (IUCN, 2008:1 UIT 125,2 P. 40). An important concept in the park paradigm is the idea of 'wildernesses'. Wilderness is separated from what is human and creates a divide between nature and culture. This divide between culture, where humans live, and nature, where humans are not, materialized in the creation of 'pleasing prospects', meaning landscapes where humans, and all evidence of their presence, is erased to re-create pristine nature (Igoe, 2004b, p. 85). Protected areas, designated as 'wilderness' areas in which human habitation or resource use is forbidden, remain the dominant form of conservation globally (West, Igoe, & Brockington, 2006 in Fletcher, 2017). A difference is made between land and resource use that is allowed in conservation areas and those that are not. By definition, protected areas establish borders that define exclusionary rights (Vaccaro et al., 2013, p. 255). However, nature parks are not always physically fenced. Sometimes there are only agreements on land use to enable wildlife to roam around. Those physical, and non-physical, fences are implemented by different social and institutional actors (often powerful), suffered by other social groups (often not so powerful), and enjoyed by yet another set of players (tourists and scientists) (Vaccaro et al., 2013, p. 255). Parks protect the ecosystem through preservation and non-intervention and favours wildlife's resource use over that of humans. The decision to make parks is mostly top-down either by the national government or outside forces, NGO's, private investors.

Critique on the park paradigm states that proponents of parks ignore the influence of the social and political context on conservation interventions (Wilshusen, Brechin, Fortwangler, & Patrick, 2002). Resistance to nature parks is high without the cooperation of the local people or when they get no

benefits or compensation from enclosed areas. This resistance is especially high when the benefits the local people get out of the parks is lower, that the income they would have gotten from the land and resources using them in their traditional way (Igoe, 2004a). To improve the relationship between local people and the parks, the community-based natural resource management (CBNRM) paradigm emerged where the involvement and impact on local people of conservation plays a bigger role.

### 2.2.2 Community-based natural resource management (CBNRM)

This paradigm moves towards the involvement of local people in conservation. Around the 1970s newly independent governments' political claims caused a link between environmental conservation and development and the emergence of participatory decision making (Vaccaro et al., 2013, p. 255). In the parks or fortress movement, local actors often lost access to their land and consequently their traditional means of livelihood. In CBNRM attempts are made to rectify that (Borgerhoff Mulder & Coppolillo, 2005c), by involving the people living next to parks in the managements of the parks. However, this does not necessarily mean local people got access to the land they previously used. Also, the question with local involvement is whether that means involving them in the management of the parks or whether the land can be shared among people and nonhumans. This question is, whether with the involvement of local people, management and resource use decisions are revised, or whether the parks are run in the same way, but with local people in the management.

Research shows that there are both positive and negative outcomes for the involvement of local people in community-based conservation practices (Kamoto, Clarkson, Dorward, & Shepherd, 2013; Pollini & Lassoie, 2011). Some of the things to consider are a failure to consider local politics such as the effectiveness of local institutions; local power struggles; and elites using conversation to consolidate power (Kamoto et al., 2013; Pollini & Lassoie, 2011). Also, focusing on the claim that indigenous people are the 'natural guardians of biodiversity' to inform new policies (Borgerhoff Mulder & Coppolillo, 2005a, p. 81), without considering their actual practices and their effect on conservation and the ecosystem leads to surprises. Local people's resource use is not per definition sustainable. Connection with conservation can create access to a global market for resources. This changes resource use from subsistence to market-based incentives which lead to overuse and the depletion of resources (Borgerhoff Mulder & Coppolillo, 2005a).

A benefit of including local people in park management is their local knowledge because often they have been living and using the ecosystem for generations and thus have in-depth knowledge of the ecosystem (Wiratno et al., 2004). Also, often they have been conserving the ecosystem already since they have been living in the area for generations. Local people also often have stronger incentives to maintain the ecosystem than outsiders (Borgerhoff Mulder & Coppolillo, 2005a). Focusing on local stakeholders can also work towards more effective conservation practices because it maintains feelings of responsibility to the actors involved in the field (Wiratno et al., 2004). Another argument that is made to favour local people's decision making regarding conservation is because the ecosystem is still in place, so the local people have been making the right decisions (Brierley, Manning, & Maslin, 2018a).

The question remains whether humans can live in a landscape in harmony with nature and preserve the ecosystem or not (Borgerhoff Mulder & Coppolillo, 2005a; Holt, 2005; Igoe, 2004b). For many local people, the combination of conserving the ecosystem and resource use is the traditional way of living. Some conservationists, therefore, advocate giving more authority to local stakeholders because they have the know-how of the environment (Wiratno et al., 2004). Also integrating local values in park management helps to connect local people with parks and explain their meaning to increase support for the park (Infield, 2001). Environmental justice, and social movements related to it are linked with land use, territorial disputes, livelihoods and large-scale farming and industries (Martinez-alier, 2014).

This makes sense because local people are often dependant on the land for livelihoods and subsistence and feel strongly connected to their lands. If conservation limits their use of the land, there are often no alternatives for them to gain a livelihood.

### 2.2.3 Market-based conservation

Out of the involvement of local people came the market-based conservation approach. Partly this was because it gave a way to profit from conservation, and to make it part of the livelihood strategies and to potentially replace traditional livelihood approaches. Another reason was to look at the long-term financial sustainability of conservation projects (Vaccaro et al., 2013). The idea is that conservation works when markets pay for conservation and development (West, 2006). Another argument for the market-approach is that local people are willing to give up land and resources, and accept conservation when it leads to development. Tourism is one way in which local people and conservation can be, and are, connected (Borges de Lima & Green, 2017; Fuentes, 2010; Krüger, 2005). Other potential benefits from conservation are donor funds for development projects, employment and security from wildlife or hostile communities.

This paradigm is based on the idea that competition works as an incentive to stimulate nature conservation because in that way nature 'proves its worth'. This integrates conservation with a business approach (Ginn, 2005). Many scholars have written about the influence of capitalism and neo-liberal thinking on conservation, and how that has an effect on the perception of nature and animals (Barua, 2016; Büscher & Fletcher, 2015; Büscher, Koot, & Nelson, 2017; Fletcher, 2010; Lansing et al., 2015). Neo-liberal conservation thinking can lead to the commodification of wildlife and cultural products which are thereafter protected and produced for monetary gain and not social or cultural reasons (West, 2006). A constant valuation of wildlife in monetary terms commercializes wildlife and downplays cultural values (Infield, 2001). Gadd even goes as far as to argue that when the cultural views of local people are bypassed in favour of monetary incentives, it might not be possible to go back to (stronger) cultural values (2005). This commodification happens through the selling of natural products to the market or valuing wildlife for the economic benefit it has through tourism among other things. An important question is whether monetizing nature allows power over, and access to, the natural resources to go to corporations and wealthy private parties instead of the local people. Another critique of the market approach wonders whether it will lead to sustainable resource use. In some cases, for example, the access to markets has led to overuse of the resources because monetary incentives to extract lead to more use than only for subsistence (Borgerhoff Mulder & Coppolillo, 2005a). Looking at that example, can natural resources use be regulated with monetary incentives, or is it important to also hold on to stronger, longer standing, cultural incentives to preserve ecosystems (Gadd, 2005; Rocheleau, 2017).

Conservation in developing countries is often dependant on tourism, subsidies from governments (national and international) and donations from companies, NGOs and governments seeking green respectability (Vaccaro et al., 2013, p. 255). Dependency on those funds creates an imbalance of power where local people are forced to adhere to values and conservation decisions of the donors. What does this mean for the local communities and their values and preferred land use?

### 2.3 Conservation, development: pastoralism versus ecotourism

What does the development of local people mean? Is it a way to aid local people to gain livelihoods in any way they want? Or is it a way to move away from traditional livelihood strategies and to embrace modernity and the Western style of living? The link between development and livelihoods is that development aims at assisting people in certain livelihood approaches. In this case, the choice is to assist people in maintaining pastoralism as a livelihood approach or to switch to other livelihoods, such

as conservation and tourism. In this chapter, the trajectories of eco-tourism and pastoralism are discussed and compared. In this discussion, it becomes clear both have opposite ways to approach land-use and livelihoods.

Often there are no strategies used in conservation for development, but it is assumed development effects will trickle down to the local people (Koot, 2016). However, this can easily lead to unexpected negative consequences or simply a failure of development for the people. Can conservation and development be combined, or are they two separate goals where the pursuit of one takes away resources from the other? The focus should be on identifying common ground and the differences between the two goals because both development and conservation need to be addressed simultaneously (Adams et al., 2004). However, how to combine the development of the people and conservation when both are depended on the same resources. Especially in a conservation context where a mix of conservation and livestock areas is not encouraged. A combination of conservation and development is possible, but for that, the needs of all stakeholders involved must be considered (Adams et al., 2004). The step to redistribute decision power to open the conservation and development debate to include indigenous realities and representation is next.

In this chapter, the impact of conservation on livelihood as the Western hegemonic way of thinking is discussed with tourism as a livelihood approach. Tourism as a livelihood approach is compared with the traditional livelihood approach of pastoralism.

## 2.4 Conservation and tourism

Eco-tourism is associated with sustainability, namely economic social, cultural and environmental sustainability (Mowforth & Munt, 2003). Eco-tourism's most exciting potential is to combine development and environmental protection in development countries (Honey, 2008). Eco-tourism is one way to capitalize on nature and to make conservation pay for itself (Mcafee, 1999). Early ideas to combine tourism with development and poverty alleviation came with the idea that tourism can cause economic growth and job opportunities (Adams et al., 2004; Harrison, 2008). Another potential use is to get foreign exchange (Honey, 2008). Other main development and conservation benefits of tourism mentioned are revenues used for ecosystem protection and development projects such as schools and dispensaries for the local people. Also, security and the protection of communities, both in human – wildlife conflicts and conflicts between different communities, is an important conservation benefit. Conservation became associated with tourism to compensate communities for resources lost because of nature parks and tourism operations. However, questions are asked whether eco-tourism is delivering on those promises in practice. Questions - such as whether eco-tourism is beneficial for the ecosystem (Krüger, 2005). In this chapter, those questions are addressed with the help of three topics: 1. who are involved in the tourism operations. 2. The role of indigenoussness and culture in conservation 3. Biodiversity and the use of flagship species. In the end, conclusions are drawn about the potential of eco-tourism for conservation AND development.

There are several different terms used to indicate environmentally aware tourism with the intention to benefit local people. Names that are used are eco-tourism, sustainable tourism, pro-poor tourism (Harrison, 2008) and community-based tourism. A relevant question is whether it is a real pursuit or a term used for 'green washing' tourism ventures and marketing (Mowforth & Munt, 2003). Another present discussion in tourism for development is the question whether capitalism, through tourism, is an effective way to reduce poverty (Harrison, 2008). The same questions are asked about the market-based conservation paradigm (chapter 2.2.3).

### 2.4.1 Who is involved? Locals, governments and external private bodies

Many eco-tourism initiatives are dependent on foreign or governmental investments to set up and manage them. However, foreign investors participate because of their own interest to preserve the areas they want to visit (Mowforth & Munt, 2003). Therefore, are tourism operations benefitting investors or the local people? The question of who controls tourism activities is linked with the question whether tourism leads to development and conservation because the distribution of benefits is decided by who has the most power in decision making. The argument to allow external investors and tourism is that it garners more revenue than other (traditional) uses of the land (Mcafee, 1999). This places the focus completely on money and profit for the investors, and not on subsistence use of the land or other values that are given to the land. The question is whether the money goes back to the communities as well for their livelihood and subsistence. Also, when parks are created for tourism, other land uses are prohibited affecting the livelihoods of those living around the park who depend on those resources (Igoe, 2004a).

The involvement of local people is an indicator of the sustainability of tourism initiatives (Krüger, 2005). When the local people are involved benefits are adjusted to local needs. However, involvement does not necessarily mean they have control over the tourism activities, revenues and resource use (Mowforth & Munt, 2003). Involvement of the communities increases support for the tourism initiatives (Eyisi, Lee, & Trees, 2018; Woo, Kim, & Uysal, 2015) and allows to address potential problems (Eyisi et al., 2018). This points to the need for collaboration between stakeholders to create economically viable tourism that is also well-situated in the locality. This is especially important when linking tourism with development (Eyisi et al., 2018). This ensures that the new land-use of tourism doesn't impact negatively on the already existing day-to-day activities. A dialogue between tourism bodies and local people create awareness of the needs of both. For this, the impact of tourism in the locality needs to be studied prior to starting the tourism body. Unplanned tourism has a negative effect on the socio-cultural aspects of local people (Eyisi et al., 2018). Examples to involve communities is to include them in the planning process to choose the locations of the tourist lodge. Other ways are to create resource use agreements and agreements on how responsibilities and benefits are shared together with all the stakeholders. Lastly, community members who are affiliated with tourism in their community often are more supportive of tourism initiative and perceive a higher quality of life (Woo, Uysal, & Sirgy, 2018). Tourism should be seen as one component of the livelihood strategy of communities, and not as the only options, because of its unpredictable nature, for both resilience of the ecosystems and the communities living in them (Fordred & Mearns, 2018).

#### 2.4.2 Indigenousness: values and power

Ecotourism is one way to look at nature and the world, but how much is that in line with local people's view of the world (Fletcher, 2009)? Eco-tourism and tourists are associated with a specific set of values, single-use land use for example, which are not the same as the values of the people living near the parks. What does it mean for customary traditions and values when tourist activities are introduced? Often tourism is marketed as the opportunity to experience the local culture. In Laikipia, websites are full of stories of experiencing the local Maasai cultures, traditional performances, village visits and cooperation with those local pastoralist people<sup>1</sup>. One question from the perspective of the tourist is about authenticity (Koot, 2016). Does mixing traditional performance with the expectations of visitors alters the host culture? Is it 'authentic' to get paid to perform your own culture? What do the performers think of that? However, this worry of performance of tourists altering the local culture fails to see local people's decision power and role in the exchange. Research shows that local people react in various ways, A distinction is made between the performances for the tourists and the performances they have among themselves (Hunter, 2014). Some local people agree with payments

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<sup>1</sup> An example: <https://www.olpejetaconservancy.org/community/>



for those performances, others fear it will change the meaning of the performances (Hunter, 2014). It is clear, however, that local people make decisions about authenticity and performance themselves.

For pastoralism, the impact of tourism on traditional culture is predominantly by restriction of land uses. Meaning that conservation is sold to local pastoralist people with the promise of compatibility with pastoralism (Igoe, 2004a). However, because of single land use and a lack of access to resources parks, or otherwise excluded areas, tourism disrupts traditional resource use patterns. Restrictions in grazing patterns, and consequently livelihoods and livestock keeping have a bigger impact on traditional culture than the performances. When studying pastoralism and conservation those dynamics of change must be considered to create a picture of how pastoralism and tourism interact.

### 2.4.3 The ecosystem: flagship species and biodiversity

An important component in tourism studies is the use of flagship species or charismatic animals. Those are animals especially popular in conservation and used to promote conservation efforts (Lorimer, 2007). Flagship species are also a tool to attract tourists and therefore can also be used for marketing to get funds used for the wider ecosystem (Walpole & Leader-williams, 2002). The involvement of flagship species in tourist sites increases the likelihood of sustainability (Krüger, 2005). Charisma given to animals is most often given by international visitors to wildlife with human characteristics (Lorimer, 2007, 2015). Social media enables actors from far away to influence conservation decisions, focusing on the well-being of those flagship pieces, trumping the decision power and needs of local actors (Büscher, 2013). Tourism marketing is becoming increasingly informal where online user-generated content influences expectations and popularity of tourist destinations (Narangajavana, Fiol, Moliner, Rodríguez-Artola, & Sánchez-García, 2017). Places without flagship species are less popular for tourists (Honey, 2008). This neglects local realities and sharing ecosystems and the meaning local people give to nature.

### 2.4.4 Conclusion: Tourism and the local people

An important component of eco-tourism is the long-term planning and management of tourism numbers and local involvement (Krüger, 2005). This to both ensure local people will benefit, but also that tourism doesn't have a negative impact on the ecosystem. Planning tourism numbers and careful planning during the development and maintenance of the initiative (Krüger, 2005).

There are different kinds of tourism and tourists. Eco-tourists, as wildlife tourism often is, generally have higher education, which suggests a higher awareness of the socio-cultural context of tourism, and a willingness to be educated among the eco-tourists (Krüger, 2005). This could lead to an awareness of local realities and place-based development. However, long-term planning and cooperation between locals and external people need to be pro-actively brokered for success. Challenges hindering tourism's potential are infrastructure costs, adverse social effects, meagre economic benefits and profits not staying in the host countries (Honey, 2008). Also, there is the question of the distribution of benefits. It is often assumed that development effects will trickle down to everyone but that is not necessarily true in reality (Koot, 2016).

## 2.5 Pastoralism: pastoralist people are also modern

A prominent focus of discussions concerning conservation, development, tourism, and possibilities for integrating the three is how to integrate conservation with pastoralism. This to study the merits of different ways of doing conservation and the different ways local people formulate human – nature relationships. Especially, because in wildlife tourism in Kenya, landscapes are cleared of pastoralist presence (Mbaria & Ogada, 2017). Pastoralism is relevant because of the big role it plays in food

security and development now and in the future (Zinsstag et al., 2016). But also because pastoralism is the most sensible land use in Arid and semi-arid areas (Zinsstag et al., 2017). Additionally, livestock keeping is the primary source of income for most pastoralist people. What is pastoralism and how is it connected to conservation and development? The quote below shows the simplest explanation of what pastoralism means in East-Africa. It jokes with the idea that Pastoralism has been a crucial land use for generations, which makes it strange to questions its future now.

*“Pastoralists” simply means “Black people who are already living on the land.”*  
(Mordecai Ogada in Steers, 2018)

There are challenges to ensure a future for pastoralism, such as climate change, population growth, sustainability and modernization. In this chapter, the topics of resource use and land ownership, and climate change and ecosystem degradation are discussed. Those are the biggest challenges for pastoralism according to the literature.

### 2.5.1 Resource use and land ownership

Pastoralism usually is a nomadic lifestyle in which people migrate with their livestock according to the seasons and rain. Traditionally this was possible because of large stretches of common lands and informal agreements between tribes about land use in times of drought (Pas, 2018). However, land ownership and use are increasingly formalized where pastoralist can lose the power over their land or traditional migration routes and places might get closed off from the pastoralist people. Land is an important consideration because environmental justice is often linked with territorial disputes (Martinez-alier, 2014) and the question of whether people can access and benefit from their land or resources (Ribot & Peluso, 2003b). One example of that is nature parks or protected areas, but also in the form of large-scale private land ownership from people within their own communities (Barons, 2017) or from external people. In that way, the pastoralist people slowly lose their land and access to the resources (Hesse, n.d.). Changing land tenure, but also climate change and growing demand for grazing areas, land use agreements based on commons and reciprocity are diminishing and communities increasingly take care of their own dry and wet grazing areas (Pas, 2018). Changing land use patterns in time of drought where commonly based on historical ties, rather than private or state ownership (Galaty, 2016). New land tenure in the form of demarcation and the emergence of conservation plays a role in that. This divides land use in either communal for pastoralism or demarcated for other land uses or ways of keeping livestock.

Change in land tenure and ownership has consequences for the subsistence and livelihood of pastoralist people. A resilient food system is dependent on allowing people to take advantage of their own resources (Shanahan, 2013). Pastoralists access water and pasture through mobility because the resources are sparsely distributed in the dry areas where they live. The change in land ownership decreases that mobility and this is affecting the pastoralist ability to take care of their own livelihood and their contribution to food security of a country as a whole (Shanahan, 2013). The concept of mobility and communal land, with free access with informal arrangements between communities, is based on reciprocity. Demarcation curtails access to the resources but does not diminish the availability of the resources. This has implications because decreasing access to grass land puts higher stress on the remaining accessible pasture, overturning the balance of pasture use and re-growth (Igoe, 2004a). This has led to eco-system degradation and in increased mobility of herders and their livestock because the livestock has to be taken further away from home for longer periods of time to find the shrinking resources the pastoralist people can access (Pas, 2018).

Ribot’s and Peluso define access and resource use as ‘the ability to benefit for a resource’ (Ribot & Peluso, 2003b). This is a good definition in the pastoralism versus conservation case because sometimes the grass is available, but the pastoralist cannot access it, because private land ownership,

distance, conflicts or because other communities do not allow them to. With the three changes mentioned in this chapter, pastoralism is currently re-defining itself and adapting to a changing world (Herrero et al., 2016; Zinsstag et al., 2017). The question is for how long the current extended migratory routes are stable and whether more sustainable ways of pastoralism will emerge in the future.

### 2.5.2 Climate change and ecosystem degradation

There is a growing demand for the diminishing available land and resources, both through climate change, growth in livestock numbers and other land uses. Climate change causes longer dry seasons and unpredictable rain which doesn't rejuvenate pastureland (Foster, 2017). Also, there is an increase in population and livestock numbers, competing over the diminishing resources. Both factors together lead to ecosystem degradation in areas when the pasture doesn't grow back at all. This means herders have to migrate for longer periods to find areas with grass and water (Pas, 2018). This also influences customary migratory arrangements such as those based in reciprocity where communities graze in each other's lands. Increasingly communities don't allow other communities on their land because the pasture is needed for their own livestock. This and forced access by one community in the lands of another one leads to conflicts (Pas, 2018).

Critique of pastoralism is often aimed at the overuse of the resources because of livestock numbers (Brierley, Manning, & Maslin, 2018b). One can wonder, though, to which extend livestock numbers are the issue, or whether that is a scapegoat diverting attention from other, systemic, issues (Fletcher, Breitling, & Puleo, 2014). One argument for that is the fact that the ecosystem in the pastoralist areas is still there, leading to the assumption that the pastoralist do something to conserve the ecosystem and wildlife (Brierley et al., 2018a). Igoe pointed out that pastoralist people in Tanzania encountered problems in grazing patterns when dry-season grazing areas started to become nature parks (Igoe, 2004a).

There are ways beyond the systemic issues and challenges of pastoralism. For example, the adaption of new technical practices, diversifying income, institutional support and new market mechanisms could move pastoralism into a sustainable future (Herrero et al., 2016). However, there are few alternative livelihood options big enough to replace livestock keeping.

### 2.5.3 Conclusion: the future of pastoralism

Which direction will pastoralism take in the future, considering the current changes and challenges? Scholars in favour of pastoralism recognize its importance in ASAL areas and for food security, however, they also see the need for adaption and change to create a 'multifunctional-future-oriented pastoralism' (Zinsstag et al., 2016). For this, a hybrid of local and scientific research is necessary generated in cooperation with experts and communities (Reid et al., 2016). For example, knowledge is needed to improve the quality and health of the livestock that is kept. Also, ways must be found to combine pastoralism and wildlife management in land use plans so nature benefits both the people and wildlife (Reid et al., 2016). Also, policies that make livestock keeping more profitable can release pressure from the land because people get sufficient revenues from less livestock (Greiner, 2012). Livelihood diversification is another way to create less dependency on high livestock numbers.

Instead of focusing on over population as ill for all problems, it is suggested to look at the structural inequalities created by the capitalistic system (Fletcher et al., 2014) and to see in what way pastoralism can adapt to be ready for the future (Zinsstag et al., 2016). 'What is the potential of pastoralism for dryland management and to ensure its future (Brierley et al., 2018b)'. Pastoralism plays a major role in food security (Shanahan, 2016) and the continuous adapting nature of pastoralism and it's a

contribution to public goods needs to be recognized and supported (Zinsstag et al., 2016). In that case, the question doesn't have to be asked whether indigenous people are conservationists, but rather how to create the means and willingness for them do so, now and in the future.

## 2.6 Wrap-up: eco-tourism and pastoralism; conservation or development?

The question is how to judge between pastoralism and conservation. Conservancies are built with promises of development for the pastoralist people, which seems to say that they need development. In that case, are the conservancies used as a development tool to spread a western-centric developmentalism? And if it is, what does that mean for the pastoralist people?

The difference between conservation and pastoralism, and the livelihood approaches coming with each one, seems to be largely determined by different values and lifestyles associated with livelihood approaches choices. Whether pastoralism or tourism is most effective to create a sustainable livelihood is not the question that should be asked. Rather, it is vital to find a way to integrate all the different values, priorities, needs and livelihood approaches of pastoralism and conservation, because each approach has its own value. *How does the combination of the two livelihood approaches play out in the case-study of conservancies in Kenya?* Conservancies represent Western-hegemonic thinking where nature parks and preservation are important values. Local people get benefits but do not play a big role. Nature parks and tourism give a vision of pristine nature in need of protection. Conservancies are also associated with international NGO's and large sums of donor funding. Pastoralism is the traditional way of livelihoods in Northern Kenya where mobility and movement from one area to another with the seasons and rains plays a big role. Wildlife is part of life, but not with any touristic value. In the next chapter, this is put into context with the case study of Naibunga conservancy. After that, the data is analysed, and conclusions are drawn. The analysis will both go into the perspective of the people, NGO's, government and local leaders to be able to compare how values and decisions of people overlap. It will show that in practise it is not a matter of one strategy versus the other, but of finding a way to combine pastoralism and conservation.

### 3. Methodology

Previous research done in this area occurred mainly through interviews and participant observation. This makes sense because for most researchers pastoralism and the nomadic lifestyle is different from what they know. Most research is done by Western scientist and not local / Kenyan scientists (Mbaria & Ogada, 2017). In-depth interviews and prolonged time in the field is a way to get a good understanding of both the different culture and what's going on in the field. This report is based on a six months stay in Nanyuki town, Kenya in 2018 and 2019. In that time various fieldtrips were undertaken for interviews and observation. Also, people and organizations in Nanyuki town are interviewed. Time in the field was combined with extensive document research, literature research and building a network and contacts for the fieldtrips.

During the fieldwork, I cooperated with local organizations and already existing research projects. The main organization I cooperated with was the grassroots advocacy NGO IMPACT-Kenya<sup>2</sup>. IMPACT works with pastoralist communities in Northern Kenya to create awareness and advocate for their rights. Through IMPACT access was gained to key stakeholders. Also, we collaborated on the organization and execution of fieldwork trips. Their advice and expertise were invaluable to the research. One fieldtrip was planned and executed with the cooperation of the manager of Naibunga conservancy. Here key data was gathered of key stakeholders in the Naibunga case-study. This fieldtrip was vital to gather data for the case study and to interview local leaders. Another important data source beside my own fieldwork data is the data of the I-can<sup>3</sup> research. I-can is a research project by the African Wildlife Foundation and McGill University with as aim to identify challenges and the future of pastoralism. We collaborated on 2.5 weeks of fieldwork interviewing people in pastoralist communities. The interview notes of that trip inform for a big part of the pastoralist communities' point of view in this research.

Most of the interviews are done in the pastoralist communities or in Nanyuki town. In total, 47 interviews were held for this specific research ranging between 10 – 60 minutes depending on the stakeholder and the topics discussed. Participants were chosen based on the participant groups (**chapter 3.1**) or whether they added a unique perspective. Semi-structured interviews were conducted informally with a topic list to guide the interviewee. This to enable participants to talk about aspects of conservation important to them. It was felt this was the best way to identify stakeholder's views regarding conservation. The interview topics depended on the stakeholder and evolved while the research changed. The topics were: wildlife attacks; livelihoods; conservation benefits; challenges and the future of pastoralism; tourism; security and conflicts and values people give to nature and wildlife. The results are coded and processed anonymously because of the highly political and sensitive nature of this research. See a list of codes in appendix X. Basic characteristics of participants were gathered to analyse the data (age, gender, occupation, education, etc.). All interviews are done in English, the national language of Kenya or in Maa, the Maasai language or in Samburu which is like Maa. An interpreter is used for those interviews.

#### 3.1 Methodological design: stakeholder groups

A stakeholder is defined as any person or group with an interest in the matter at hand, formally organized or not (Grimble & Wellard, 1997). In this thesis, six different stakeholder groups are defined. Those groups are defined on the assumption that participants from each group have a different opinion on conservation, nature and pastoralism. There is also overlap between the stakeholder groups. For example, local leaders, people from NGO or local researchers working on pastoralist issues are usually

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<sup>2</sup> <https://www.impacttrustkenya.org/>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.icanconserve.org/>

from the communities themselves. Those people are sorted in the category most fitting their interview answers. Those overlapping roles are considered during the analysis.

#### *1. Community members from the pastoralist communities*

These people generally have a low education and literacy level and speak predominantly Maa or Samburu. They depend on livestock as the main source of income with some small-scale ancillary activities. They have limited access to and knowledge of the world outside their own communities. Most of these participants have a strong adherence to customary traditions.

#### *2. Local leaders*

These participants are the formal and informal leaders, such as members of the group ranch management committee, the conservation committee, community champions or renowned managers of local businesses. These participants often have a higher education level, but that is not always the case. These people are the representatives of the community and decide the policy direction of the communities. Community members are consulted during general meetings, but these people are involved in the day-to-day operations.

#### *3. Government representatives*

KWS is the governmental body in charge of Kenya's wildlife, wildlife conservation and conservation in general. They also train the rangers of the conservancies as well as their own. They have a headquarter in Nanyuki and an office in Dol Dol, which is a town in Laikipia North. Other relevant governmental bodies are the department of NDMA (national disaster management authority) dedicated to disaster prevention and mitigation. Lastly, there are the chiefs siring over pastoralist communities as the government representative.

#### *4. Tourism operations*

These participants are the managers of the eco-lodges, local tourism initiatives or tourism consultants. Most of these people are higher educated.

#### *5. NGO's, international or local*

In Laikipia, there are a lot of NGO's involved in either development, conservation or both. Most of them depend on funds from overseas such as US-AID and other embassies. Some are set up and run by international people and others by grassroots people. This has a huge influence on their approach and focus.

#### *6. Researchers and research institutions*

Lots of research has been done both by local people, institutions and international students (MSc and PhD's mainly). There are also a number of independent researchers and research institutions. Many of those have their base in Nanyuki.

### **3.2 Case-study: Conservation in pastoralist areas, Kenya.**

In many developing countries, conservation policies are legacies of colonial occupation, which have shaped current attitudes (Mackenzie 1988; Adams & Mulligan 2003; Beinart & Hughes 2007 in Pooley et al., 2016). The history of land division in Kenya relevant to the wildlife-related conflicts started with the colonial government which focused on the protection of wildlife and hunting (Gupta, 2017).

Creating parks was a way to claim the wildlife and hunting rights as their own by Western colonist (Igoe, 2004a). The big stretches of seemingly untouched nature reminded the Westerners of the nature lost in the West. Part of the hunting was for a profit where the ivory trade played a big role. However, wildlife hunting has been officially banned since 1977 (Kabiri, 2010), the big ranch owners are still there either as a conservation area or livestock keeping. Within Kenya, the poaching “crisis” led to the creation of a single government wildlife organisation (the KWS), and the development of an armed anti-poaching force employing a controversial shoot-to-kill policy (Adams, 2004; Neumann, 2004). Also, all wildlife belongs to the state, where special licences are given for consumptive and non-consumptive use (Ogada, Roba, Mbaria, & Letoyie, 2017). The Kenyan Wildlife Service, the KWS, is Kenyan’s government body in charge of wildlife management.

This thesis focuses on the pastoralist areas in Northern Kenya, Laikipia and Samburu in particular. The eco-system in those areas is qualified as ‘arid and semi-arid areas (ASAL) (Pellis, Lamers, & Van Der Duim, 2015). The Maasai and the Samburu communities live in those counties. Naibunga conservancy is in Laikipia, but because of mobility through livestock keeping both Laikipian and Samburu pastoralist people play a role in this thesis. The pastoralist areas in Laikipia and Samburu are qualified as ASAL areas. In Kenya, on the one hand the crucial role of livestock keeping and pastoralism for food security is acknowledged, on the other hand, it is also portrayed as a backwards system bringing ecological problems and conflicts (Shanahan, 2013). Those areas are relevant for conservation research because 65% of wildlife is outside government protected land on community or private land (King, Kaelo, Buzzard, & Warigia, 2015). A big part of that is in the pastoralist communities in Northern Kenya.

#### *Laikipia North: a history of land use*

Laikipia is a 9800m<sup>2</sup> big plateau between Mount Kenya, the Aberdare Mountains and the Rift Valley (see figure 1). It has the second highest level of wildlife in Kenya after Maasai National Reserve (to the South-West of Laikipia) but has no formally protected areas (Kinnaird and O’Brien, 2012 in Evans & Adams, 2016). This means that for the conservation of animals largely has to be depended on local and community efforts (Blair, 2008). The main city of the district is Nanyuki with approximately 50.000 inhabitants. The Maasai live in group ranches, constituted in the Land group representatives act of 1968, in Laikipia North installed when Kenya gained independence (Kubania, 2017), although the group ranch structure is changing with the new community land act. Those group ranches are community owned and used for livestock keeping and conservancies.

During colonial times a lot of change has happened in land use and ownership in Laikipia. In 1904 the Maasai were moved into Laikipia, to be moved out again in 1911 and pushed to the North and East of Laikipia. The colonists designated the Kenyan highlands, of which Laikipia plateau is a part, a place for European settlement and area for large-scale production (Evans & Adams, 2016). This reflected the colonist’s’ view that pastoralism is ‘irrational, uneconomic and based on accumulation for its own sake’ (Kenya land commission, 1933 in Evans & Adams, 2016). The area was divided into big ranches and given to white settlers for productive cattle production, some of which are still in place up to this day (Waithaka, 2017). Those ranches are either still ranches or have switched to conservation and high-end luxury tourism.

When Kenya gained independence in 1963 part of the land was re-distributed. The Maasai communities were given land in the form of fourteen Group Ranches. In those group ranches, the pastoralist people could own and manage land as a community. In this way, land rights were formalized, but also kept the pastoralist people free to organize livelihoods in their customary way. However, some say that another reason to implement Maasai group ranches was to encourage a shift in the lifestyle of the Maasai people living in the area from pastoralist land use to agriculture or to settle (Velt, 2011). Not all group ranches are successful, due to challenges such as insufficient size, lack

of pasture, corruption, elite capture and governance issues (Herren, 1991 in Evans & Adams, 2016). In Kenya conservation is tourism driven (Steers, 2018). This is also true for the group ranch area in Laikipia, of which Naibunga conservancy is an example (Pellis, Lamers, & Van Der Duim, 2015).

### *Conservancies and tourism*

In the '90s community conservancies started to emerge in group ranches and other community-owned lands. Conservancies are part of community land and formulated as land designated for wildlife conservation only. Conservancies are not created by the local communities only. Most of them are supported by an organization called the Northern Rangelands trust, the NRT run by the white settler Ian Craig. Conservancies are created for two reasons: first, to increase livelihood opportunities for the local people through tourism and more profitable livestock production and security. Second, to enable conservation, development and security in the area. The NRT aim is to support communities to set up conservancies, aid in fund raising and offer resources such as cars and training with as end goal independent conservancies (NRT-Kenya, n.d.). The NRT is both criticized and lauded. Through the NRT and the community conservancies, the concept of high-end tourism came to the pastoralist communities. Conservation tourism has been introduced in communal landscapes through new partnership arrangements, resulting in numerous forms of land use and multiple interests of land owners, private enterprises, government agencies and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) (Pellis et al., 2015, p. p.130). The NRT introduced high-end tourism through international investors and deals to lease the community land in return for a part of the profit.

NRT is scrutinized for keeping unnecessary power in their own hands and for having corrupt intentions. One example of that is their stated aim to make the community conservancies independent, something which has not materialized in almost 30 years of their existence (27LT). What is clear that the NRT has much success in established community conservancies with 39 conservancies in Kenya up to this date (NRT-Kenya, n.d.). People look differently at conservancies depending on their cultural background and involvement. For the Maasai group ranches of the Laikipia North district or Mukogodo region have become involved in ecotourism, but success depends on the benefits becoming higher than the costs of living with wildlife (Blair, 2008). One thing that is certain is that a decrease in range land available for wildlife makes cooperation of ranges even more important in conservation (Blair, 2008, p. 10). In 2015 there were 140 conservancies in Kenya (140 in 2015) most established in the last 15 years (King et al., 2015). At its most ambitious the Laikipia tourism association (LTA) plans to make tourism not dependant on funds in the next 10 years (Forum, 2017).

#### 3.2.1 Naibunga conservancy

The fieldwork of this report focused mainly on Naibunga conservancy in Laikipia North. Naibunga is around 47.740 hectares and has a bit more than 20.000 inhabitants (NRT, 2016). Naibunga consists of 9 out of 13 group ranches in Laikipia, namely Koija, Ilmotiok, Tiamamut, Kijabe, Nkilorit, Morupusi, Ilpolei, Munichoi and Musul. Naibunga was created after NRT became involved in 2007 when there was unrest and insecurity between the communities in the region (Pellis et al., 2015). One aim of the conservancy was to create peace between the communities. Because Naibunga covers such a big area, it is divided into 3 units, the upper, middle and lower unit, each with their own headquarters. Management is by a committee consisting of representatives of the group ranches. Naibunga also has a grazing committee and three managers employed by the NRT. Each group ranch has its own dedicated conservation zones. This means that there is not one big area dedicated to conservation and wildlife, but rather many smaller ones.

The main livelihood activity in Naibunga is livestock keeping. Other livelihood approaches are, for example, through the employment with the conservancy, tourism and sand harvesting (38CC). All



other livelihood approaches are on a household level, executed by women for additional household income. Examples of those activities are charcoal burning, bee-keeping and small business (31CL).

#### *Tourism activities in and around Naibunga*

At this moment, there is no high-end tourism lodge in Naibunga conservancy. Currently, there are camp sites, however, each attracts less than 10 visitors a year (27LT). There are plans to start up high-end tourism initiatives within Naibunga conservancy. Several of the group ranches have or used to have their own luxury tourism initiatives. Examples of those operations are Il Ngwesi, Ol Lentille lodge, Twala, Lemarti camp and Kojia Star Beds. Those initiatives are dependent on rich investors, usually from outside Kenya. Il Ngwesi is the only community-run tourism body in the area.

There are often conflicts between communities and tourism operations. An example of that is 'the Sanctuary at Ol Lentille'. Ol Lentille, which is founded between 2001 and 2003 with assistance from the AWF and the LWF (Pellis et al., 2015). Conflicts are between the managers of Ol Lentille and Kajido group ranch where a big part of the sanctuary is situated. The community feels corruption is preventing them from getting their rightful share of the profit. Also, they want access to pasture in the dry season. The lodge denies corruption and does not allow grazing to maintain the integrity of the ecosystems to attract tourist (NR6). Part of the community wants to throw out the current managers, but it is unclear whether that is legally possible (NR4, NR5, 42NR). Conflicts like this are common between conservancies, communities and tourism operations in the whole of the pastoralist areas in Kenya.

#### *Challenges for livelihoods in Naibunga*

During the fieldwork and analysis, it became clear that the biggest challenge in the Naibunga area is the issue of livelihoods and how to approach those in the future, especially because of limited alternatives for livelihoods (Sumba, Warinwa, Lenaiyasa, & Muruthi, 2007). Naibunga has the same challenges for pastoralism as other areas among them recurring droughts, diseases, scarce pastures, mismanagement in group ranches, high unemployment, and invasions from other communities (Sumba et al., 2007). Other communities invade the lands in search of water, pasture or to steal livestock (Pellis et al., 2015). Another thread in Naibunga is invasive species, in particular, the *Opuntia Stricta*. The *Opuntia* prevents the growth of grass and its thorns are a health hazard to livestock and small children (39CC). The last challenge in Naibunga is the erosion of customary governance systems and of the group ranch system (Kabubo-Mariara, 2006 in Pellis et al., 2015). These challenges need to be addressed in the future and form part of the analysis.

## 4. Results

Four themes are used to analyse the data and answer the research questions:

Theme 1 focusses on perceptions on pastoralism of the stakeholders and the livelihoods gained. This theme answers also sub-question 2, 'what are the livelihood options of pastoralism'.

Theme 2 studies perceived and hoped for benefits of the conservancies. This theme answers sub-question 2, 'what are the livelihood options of conservation'.

Theme 3 discusses land and resource use because those topics came up a lot during the fieldwork.

Theme 4 compares the different perceptions and values of the stakeholders on conservation and pastoralism. Values are the basis for habits, so understanding values behind actions helps to understand the decisions of different stakeholders.

In the conclusion, the themes are compared to conclude the pastoralism vs. conservation debate and to answer the main research question: 'Judging between pastoralism and conservation as livelihood approach, which one is most effective in pastoralist areas in Northern Kenya?'

### Theme 1: Pastoralism

This theme looks at the current challenges of pastoralism, the future of pastoralism and diversification options for livelihoods in ASAL, pastoralist areas. The future of pastoralism depends on current challenges. Alternative livelihoods could be a way forwards from the challenges, but it is unclear which alternatives are possible in the pastoralist areas.

#### Challenges pastoralism and livestock keeping

There are three main challenges in pastoralism mentioned by the participants:

1. Ecosystem degradation
2. High numbers of livestock
3. Other competing land uses

The first challenge is land degradation which manifests in the struggle to find pasture and water. Traditionally, during droughts, pastoralist people would take their livestock to places with pasture or water, however, those places are increasingly hard to find. One of the reasons for that is the increasing frequency of droughts from once every ten years to once every two years (38NG, 187-46). This means that the areas reserved for dry season grazing get less chance to rejuvenate. This caused the degradation of those areas. A Marshal plan is necessary for arid land restauration to prevent conflicts and for livelihoods (186-45).

One way droughts and land degradation is tackled by the communities is with the creation of olokeres. An olokeri is a small conservation area pastoralist people have at home. Olokeres are either owned by individuals or as a community. The Olokeri show a small tendency to the enclosure, fortress way of conservation. Usually, the elites in communities are the ones who can claim big effective olokeres for themselves (SIR14). This shows its potential not only to keep livestock at home in times of drought but also to rejuvenate the land.

High numbers of livestock is another reason for overgrazing and ecosystem degradation. The pastoralist people sell livestock when they need the money and not when the market is good because of the cultural significance of having a larger herd. An example is of old cattle pastoralist people keep long after their prime years because they like the colour (36NG). Cultural significance of herding, **mobility** and specific livestock needs to be taken into account when considering a change. When

livestock is sold only when there is a direct demand for money, it leads to lower prices. For example, when the school fees are due the market gets saturated and the prices are low. Pastoralist people in touch with modern society feel that need to preserve livestock less, and argue for better planning to get better prices for livestock. This can help fight poverty and decrease livestock numbers because fewer animals are needed to make a living. Another strategy to increase money gotten from livestock are livestock fattening programs where a ranch fattens community livestock before bringing it to the market (34LC).

The last challenge is competing land uses such as conservation areas, big infrastructure projects and private ranches which decrease land available for livestock. Participants mentioned, for example, that the areas dedicated to solely conservation decrease land available for livestock (I83-42, I30). This causes higher mobility and conflicts between communities, and between communities and the private ranches or tourism and conservation bodies. An example of that are the ranch invasions and the burning down of lodges in 2016 in Laikipia where pastoralist people forcibly grazed their livestock in ranches and burned lodges down (Bond & Mkutu, 2017; Knowles, 2017; Kubania, 2017)

### The future of pastoralism

With those challenges for livestock keeping, what is the future of pastoralism according to the stakeholders? Some people, leaders and community members, in communities, fear there might not be a future in pastoralism because their way of life is not recognized and community land is getting scarce (I17). However, some participants from organizations also acknowledge that pastoralism and the livestock they keep has a big role in Kenya's economy (46NO, 47NR).

Discussion about pastoralist' future is about livelihoods. Participants agree there is a need to diversify livelihoods, although in which direction? Livelihood diversification is one argument used to bring conservancies to the pastoralist areas. Conservancies offer alternative incomes and relieve pressure from the land because resource use is curtailed. Some people claim the conservancies are a form of land-grab where land is slowly taken away from the pastoralist people for other land uses through nefarious resource use agreements. Also, it is not proven that separating livestock from an area improves the ecosystem. Il Ngwesi, a community conservancy uses the concept of holistic grazing to maintain the ecosystem, allowing wildlife and livestock to graze (I89-48).

But the question remains: do the pastoralist people want to change their livelihood? Everyone has livestock and no one wants to be seen as 'having no cows' (I72-32). One participant told me that even a Maasai living in America will have livestock in Kenya and call every day to enquire about its wellbeing (42NR). Not all pastoralist people will herd their own livestock, but all pastoralist need some livestock to feel a true pastoralist. Asking people who lost all their livestock what they most wanted from the government, the answer was almost always some livestock so they could start their herd again. There is also a lot of pride and adherence to Maasai pastoralist customary culture. A participant said that culture won't fade out and that the Maasai are the only ones maintaining their original culture and conservation does not affect that (I11CL). 'Pastoralist people want to keep their lifestyle and don't want to change' (47NR).

*"There is one thing you can't tell a Maasai not to have: these domestic animals" (I11CL).*

The participants do agree that there are challenges. The participants working for organizations, the government or researchers confirm that pastoralism needs to change (42NR, 38NG). This to ensure to both ensure sufficient profit and to protect and rejuvenate the ecosystem. Changes needed are an increase in breed quality and a decrease in livestock numbers and to diversify income for higher resilience during droughts. They also acknowledge, however, that cultural change is difficult and takes

a lot of time. Change and evolution of practices is necessary for a sustainable future for all. However, in which direction is not clear.

### Diversification livelihood options

What are the options for livelihood diversification according to the stakeholders? The table below shows all livelihood options participants mentioned and their viability to diversify income or replace pastoralism.

1. Pastoralism > mobility
2. Conservancies and tourism

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3. Sand harvesting, both regulated by group ranches (39CC) or illegal. Governance is struggling to control sand harvesting.
4. Kitchen garden
5. Small businesses by women
6. Livestock brokering or buying and selling of livestock
7. Keeping other animals as livestock such as chickens and bees
8. Charcoal burning (illegal)
9. Hay growing and harvesting
10. Poaching (happens little among pastoralist communities)
11. Cattle rustling (illegal)
12. Brewing local alcohol (this is a women's business, but illegal)
13. Selling natural products: toothbrush, manure, acacia gum
14. Use of natural product such as berries (very limited)
15. Employment
16. Agriculture (limited in ASAL areas)
17. Merry go rounds (not income generating though).
18. Green energy (I86-45)

Above the line are the livelihoods believed to be potentially sufficient on their own. Participants from all categories acknowledge the need to diversify income. Below the line are additional incomes. For now, there is no alternative livelihood able to replace pastoralism, and some stakeholders wonder if that's possible (46NO, 31CL). Rather, the alternatives are seen to diversify (46NO, 31CL). That explains the emphasis on changing the way livestock is kept now instead of replacing livestock keeping. Change is difficult, because, especially for men, livestock is a sign of wealth and prestige. It is only sold when there is an immediate need for money for food and school fees and such (46LO, I-CAN talks team), not to generate a stable income. Also, some alternatives such as keeping chickens and a garden as seen as not fitting within traditional society. The pastoralist women are the ones adapting to those activities. Women is responsible for the care of their family, and the additional income ensures food and money also during the dry season. Livelihood diversification is a way to avoid risks in times of drought (31CL, 38NG). Also, it is a way for women to generate extra income to take care of their families (31CL). Livelihood diversification and caring for the family is predominantly the women's endeavour in pastoralist communities (I82-41, SIR17). They are also taking more initiative to diversify income such as kitchen gardens with waste water (31CL), businesses (43SO), small-scale illegal activities such as charcoal burning and brewing alcohol (SIR22) and selling food (SIR17). They engage in illegal activities when there are no alternatives available or when they lost their livestock. However, livestock is still seen as the most important livelihood approach, also for women (SIR5).

Additionally, most alternative livelihoods are related to livestock such as brokering where livestock is taken to better markets by a middle man.

## Theme 2: Conservancies

This theme looks at the benefits and disadvantages of community conservancies discussed by the participants. One of the main ways those benefits are gained is through tourism. Additionally, this theme talks about the collaboration between stakeholders because that determines the distribution of the benefits and disadvantages.

### Conservation benefits

Here is a list of all the benefits of conservancies stakeholders mention.

1. Livelihood through funds and tourism
2. Livelihood through beads and NRTT and other business programmes
3. Development
4. Employment
5. Bursaries and the building of schools
6. Solution human – wildlife conflicts
7. Conflict solution between the tribe's area
8. Grazing area for droughts and eco-system maintenance
9. Security (from human-wildlife conflicts and human-human conflict)
10. Community work

It is interesting to remark that the benefits regarded as most positive by the pastoralist people are not nature or wildlife related. They mention security and the role the conservancies' rangers have in conflicts and cattle rustling from other communities (I30). One interviewee mentioned that a big part of the ranger's job is to retrieve stolen cattle (28NO). Also, development related benefits are highly regarded such as education, health care and water projects. It is perceived as strange by some participants that those benefits play such a big role because they are the governments' responsibility. In that way, the conservancies, and thus the NGO NRT, takes over the role of government in parts of Northern Kenya. Are the benefits a way to convince the pastoralist people to accept conservancies and not look too critically at the negative consequences? Many of the educated participants mention that conservancies are mainly benefitting the elite of a community (elitist), but that community members agree because of the security benefits (which makes militarization of conservancies key) (I30). An example of that are badly-built schools with conservation money.

### Downsides and critique conservancies

The biggest downside of conservancies is the amount of land and resources they take up. Land used for conservation is only meant for conservation. This is also ground for conflict within the communities. Elders and local leaders sign the leases with promises of benefits, which do not materialize for the whole community. When the community complains it turns out they have very little power to negotiate their needs (42NR). A key question is whether pastoralist people have the right to access conservation areas in times of drought or not. Some participants claim access is possible in times of extreme drought, others claim not. It depends on the situation and on the good-will of individuals. Also, it differs who is allowed to access, where in some cases each community member can enter with a few cows and in some cases only the elite benefits. Access is denied for two reasons: 1. the area is for wildlife conservation 2. There is a tourism operator who sells tourist the image of a pristine nature without habitation. Access and resource use agreements are part of the leases the community has with the NRT and tourism operators. Often the whole community has to be involved in the process, however, sometimes only the elders are part of the decisions. Those elders are not always capable to

make a good decision (I33). There is a lot of unclarity about the agreements and the participants from all categories gave conflicting stories.

Another downside of conservancies is that they, and the steering body NRT, are completely depended on international donor funds. If the funding stops the whole system of conservancies and benefits collapses, also the security (18CP). This is potentially dangerous because communities depend on the bursaries and on the security the conservancy rangers' offer against wildlife attacks or attacks from other communities. High-end luxury tourism is seen as an important step towards independence of the conservancies. Tourism also helps the community members to benefit from the wildlife as compensation for the problems it causes (11NL). However, tourism operations come with a loss of control. Tourism means high-end luxury lodges which need a large initial investment and capacity to manage which the community members usually don't have. An investor is sought, usually from outside Kenya and an agreement is made regarding the distribution of the benefits and lease of the land. However, those agreements are not transparent and it is never clear if the communities get what is agreed (NR5). There are several occasions of communities and lodge owners fighting over the benefits they get and access to grazing land, where the benefits to the communities got cut of as a way to control the community (NR4, NR5, NR6).

### Collaboration stakeholders

Agreements between group ranches, conservancies and tourism operations are wrought by the NRT, people from the group ranch committee and the potential investor. However, sometimes the elders on the committee are illiterate and placated with promises and gifts to sell leases they have no full understanding of (I33). In other cases, the management of conservancies and tourism operations is done by the young people from a community who have gone to school. That can have wonderful consequences such as Il Ngwesi where young people run the only completely community run luxury lodge in Kenya. However, there are also stories of corruption and elites claiming the conservation benefits for their own. One reason for this is the lack of involvement of the complete community. Group ranches are big and spread over vast areas with low accessibility to all the members of the community. Also, in the faraway places the community members have a low literacy level and lack of awareness of anything except livestock keeping. During talks with community members, not all were aware of conservancies or tourism operations in their own group ranch.

Another critique of conservancies is that they erode the group ranch system (30NR). One can wonder why conservancies are wrought bringing several group ranches together, and not per group ranch. One participant refuse to make his group ranch part of the conservancy because he does not trust the NRT's intention and believes sharing the land with wildlife has always worked, so he does not see the need to dedicate areas to wildlife (3SL). Some participants wondered if the need to dedicate areas to wildlife only is a way to work on those lands without notice. They suspect the presence of minerals as a reason to discuss 30-year long leases to enable them to extract the resources.

### Theme 3: Land and resources ownership conservancy

This theme talks about the land division in pastoralist areas, changes in land use, and what those changes mean for resource use and access to the resources. For this, matters and access and land ownership are discussed and the governance and institutions used to arrange resource use.

#### Access and land ownership

Private land ownership in Laikipia and Northern Kenya is for a big part by white settlers in the shape of big conservation areas or cattle ranchers. Their relationship with neighbouring communities is usually troubled with conflict and illegal grazing by community members. Some of those big land owners allow livestock to graze in times of drought, but usually for payment and livestock of the elite. Another land ownership is small private ownership. The idea of land demarcation of communal (group ranch) land is slowly getting traction. Especially the educated pastoralist people dream of a small piece of land of their own (10 acres) (38NG). Pastoralist people are slowly starting to think in individual ownership (I85-44), which also affects the communities' attitude towards land (29NO). However, for a big part communities depend on communally owned land for pasture and water. Access is a useful term to look at communal land use in pastoralist areas because it looks at the ability to use resources, and not who owns the land. In pastoralist communities, the concepts of reciprocity and mobility are important in resource use considerations.

Mobility: Livestock is moved around and when one community with pasture allows another to graze there it can count on the other's grass next season (I83-42). Mobility has always been an important factor of pastoralist lives, however, livestock is moved for a longer time and greater distance due to the challenges (theme 1). Dry-season areas pastoralist people used to go to are either suffering from overgrazing or are a wildlife sanctuary now. Areas still available are not always good for the livestock. Many participants narrated about the time livestock was brought to Mount Kenya. The event made an impression on the people, because a lot of the cows died during that time because they were not used to the cold and the air up the mountain. This increased mobility creates a situation where the livestock is gone from home for most of the year. This makes it difficult to get money or milk from the livestock for the people at home. Also, it changes the customary governance structures, because the young men who herd the livestock adjust to making their own decisions instead of adhering to the elders. An important theme in mobility is reciprocity.

Reciprocity: Between certain pastoralist communities, for example, the Maasai in Laikipia and the Samburu, it is common to allow people to graze in your areas with the knowledge that grazing in their areas is allowed in the next season. However, in conservancies there is no reciprocity: The conservation areas are for wildlife only, but the wildlife is allowed to go into community areas (no fences). The reciprocity should come in the shape of conservation benefits, although because those are felt to be limited and don't reach the whole community it creates painful situations (theme 2). Some participants indicated frustration that areas with grass where they used to take their livestock are suddenly secluded (SIR24). Many young men don't accept this situation and grass by force by breaking fences or engage rangers in (gun) fights.

### Governance and institutions

There are a different kind of governance system and (informal) institutions needed for customary grazing arrangements between communities and arrangements with conservancies and tourism bodies for benefits.

Customary grazing arrangements are between different communities brokered by elders. Those elders also played a vital role in conflict resolutions between those communities. In the conservancies, the emphasis is on leases and contracts, something which the elder illiterate population has no grasp of. In Il Ngwesi, the only community-run conservation area in Northern Kenya, the young people with education took over to make it a success (38NG). That is one of the reasons education is brought as such an important benefit to conservancies. Two things are happening because of this difference: 1. Elders lose power, not only in grazing but also influence over the young generation. This is exuberated by the young people being away for long stretches from home to graze. 2. Elders sign leases not in the benefit of the people but based on empty promises, lies and flattery (I33).

Absence from home, and elder's control, of the young people, causes a breakdown of customary governance systems. The young men are in charge of the livestock when they go to far-away places in search of pasture. Stakeholders mentioned increased difficulty by elders to decide the grazing habits of the young men. The young men graze illegally and do not adhere to informal arrangements made between the elders. This increases conflict with other communities, conservancies and tourism operations. Another effect of this is the killing of elders by the young men. One participant said that in 2016 19 elders were killed by young men in Samburu because of disagreements (183-42).

## Theme 4: Values

Values are what drives people's behaviour. They determine priorities made between humans and wildlife and the different ways pastoralist people, conservation and tourism operations look at wildlife. During the fieldwork, it became clear that there is no longer a strict division between pastoralist values and modern values anymore, but rather that pastoralist culture is changing. Those two topics are discussed in this theme.

### Humans vs. wildlife

Gadd investigated the different attitudes towards wildlife of people who live with the animals 'outside parks' in Laikipia. She found that generally, the attitude of agricultural people is more negative towards elephants and that of pastoralist more positive. For the pastoralist presence of elephants and admiration is part of their culture and history and they appreciated the elephant for aesthetic reasons despite the problems they cause. (Gadd, 2005). This is also confirmed by participants.

*'We love these animals, more even than those agents that are interested in the security of the wild animals. We love them more than how they love. And we know how to care for those wild animals more than them because ours is not another thing you learn but has just come naturally. Because since I was born I met an E and used to go to school in the presence of E and other animals. It is an inborn thing (11NL)*

They also mention the importance of living among wildlife as education for the next generation (3SL, 6SG, 11NL). They won't be able to take their kids to the wild parks, so they must protect the animals where they live (3SL, 6SG). An example of that is the rhino many grandfathers remember walking around freely. Now, they only live in parks highly protected. However, the dangerous side of living with wildlife is acknowledged (13SL). Every year there are human life casualties and big losses in livestock because of the wildlife. Some community participants prefer wildlife to be in a different area to not trouble their day to day life (32CP, 33CP).

Conservation in Laikipia is about wildlife and tourism, and with wildlife, the emphasis is on elephants. The elephant is used for branding. The different attitude towards wildlife is clearly seen in the different attitude towards elephants. The pastoralist people tolerate the elephant for cultural and aesthetics reasons, but also consider it a very dangerous animal. They prefer the number of elephants to be limited and they don't mind killing an elephant when it causes problems (21CL). By and large, they protect the elephants and other wildlife, also when they ill (3SL), but they prioritize livestock and human life. However, the pastoralist community members do feel conservation and tourism operations favour elephants over human life. When an elephant is ill helicopters come to take care of the elephant, but if an elephant attacks a human you can wait two or three days until the KWS appears (SIR12). Similar sentiments were voiced by many of the community participants. The local people feel not enough action is undertaken to protect their livelihoods from elephants, and sufficient compensation promised for destruction is not given (Bond & Mkutu, 2017).



## Cultural change

There are many changes ongoing within the pastoralist communities. One reason for that is increasing accessibility to faraway places through improved roads and mobile phones and such. This brings even the communities members living far away in contact with another way of life. Schooling also caused people to settle down so they could send their children to school (36ST). Education is seen as a necessity because it helps the pastoralist people to understand formal land agreements and to take an active role in decision making regarding tourism and conservation. Increasingly, for educated people, pastoralism is not seen as a job or a way to gain a livelihood, but as a necessary part of their culture. A pastoralist person needs a herd to feel at ease, but they do not necessarily herd their own livestock. Often, they enlist family members to take care of their herd or they recruit herders from the community.

In the interviews with the communities, a wedge was visible in the community between those who went to school and those that didn't. This influences local governance where the role of the elder's decreases and that of 'the young elite' increases. The illiterate population adheres strongly to traditional culture, the educated people are more modernized. The young educated people caused the change in governance discussed in theme 3 change in governance where they take the lead in agreements with conservation and in tourism initiatives. Also, the difference in education level and livelihood pursuits beside pastoralism caused individualization where communal benefit diminishes in importance. This manifest in the diversification of livelihood approaches and a trend towards land demarcation and individual land ownership (I85-44). This shows two different development trajectories among pastoralist youth.

## 5. Conclusion: The verdict of pastoralism versus conservation

In this chapter, the research questions are answered with the literature review and the fieldwork data.

What are the challenges for pastoralist livelihoods in pastoralist areas in Northern Kenya?

The greatest challenges are climate change, ecosystem degradation and competition in land use. In these matters, the fieldwork and literature agree.

Another challenge found during the fieldwork was a change in the customary governance system which leads to conflict within and between pastoralist communities. Originally, pastoralist society adheres to elder rule. However, young people are taking over. This change is vital because young people understand conservancies, leases and land agreements. If they don't take over the leader role in those matters communities lose access and decision power over their own land (133).

What are the conservation practices in the pastoralist areas in Northern Kenya?

Conservation practices in the area can be divided between western hegemonic influenced conservation thinking and the customary pastoralist way of life.

Conservation is done in several ways in the pastoralist areas. The oldest form of Western hegemonic inspired conservation by big private ranches owned by white settlers. These are enclosed areas dedicated to nature and wildlife conservation. Often there are luxury lodges in those areas. Many of those private ranchers came into the hands of the settlers during colonial times or during independence. Some pastoralist people still feel it is their land. Those tensions rise in times of extreme droughts. In some cases, the private ranchers allow livestock of the pastoralist people access, in other cases it is forcibly **gained**.

A newer form of conservation is through the community conservancies championed by the NGO Northern Rangelands Trust (NRT). Conservancies cause the same kind of conflicts as the private conservancies: they also restrict grazing of community members. This restriction of grazing clashes with the customary way of life where pastoralist people followed the rain and pasture with their livestock. With the proclaimed aim of conservation, the NRT pushes more and more communities to start conservancies and to dedicate land to conservation. As compensation revenues from tourism and other conservation benefits are promised, such as security, bursaries and clinics. Critiques of the NRT claim that these conservancies slowly erode customary conservation practices. Whether that is a good thing or not is discussed in the next sub research question.

To which extend can conservation be seen as an alternative livelihood approach to pastoralism?

Conservancies are an interesting alternative livelihood. However, one can wonder if the idea of conservancies is executed correctly. Especially considering all the critique the conservancies get. On paper, a good system. Question is now whether the critique against NRT of land grab and control is true, or whether good intentions are badly executed and that's why conservancies fail. I think both, and I think NRT conservancies focus too little on specific local capacity. Too big scale with a standard model. Can't do the same everywhere copy paste.

In literature, tourism through conservation is seen as an alternative way to gain livelihoods. Sometimes the implication is that livestock keeping causes ecosystem degradation, so an alternative is needed to save the environment. Sometimes it is stated that alternative livelihoods are vital to create resilience

of the pastoralist communities. This is important especially now droughts are more frequent (once every two years). A benefit of the conservancies is the opportunities they give to youths in the form of employment and education.

However, what kind of alternatives does conservation offer, and do the alternatives compensate for the loss of grazing land? During the fieldwork, those two questions are asked. All stakeholders generally agree that conservancies offer benefits and they are happy with them. However, they also claim that the benefits are not enough. For example, Naibunga has around 20.000 inhabitants, but not more than 10 bursaries. Also, educated participants claimed that benefits are not fairly distributed or captured by elites through corruption. Corruption within group ranches and conservation committees and lack of involvement the whole community are detrimental to the success of community conservation. Not only corruption within communities but on all levels of society.

The greatest challenge of tourism is to find a way to involve local communities in tourism operations. This also became clear in the literature about community based natural resource management (CBNRM). The luxury tourism, common in northern Kenya, is based on high-investments and the need for high capacity to run the place. The only community-run luxury lodge in Kenya is Il Ngwesi close to the Naibunga area. This initiative succeeded because the young educated people were allowed to run the place. Therefore, community-run tourism has potential if management is given to the skilled people in communities. Those have to be found or educated through the conservancies' bursaries. Now communities depend on the goodwill of an investor to run the lodge and to distribute benefits. Many community participants indicated distrust about the amount of money they were getting. Another challenge is to find an investor. In the case of Naibunga, there is a lack of investors and capacity within the community to set-up the high-end tourism initiatives themselves. The focus is only high-end wildlife tourism, both as option NRT and conservancies offer the communities and what communities indicate they want themselves. In the recommendations (chapter 6.1), I'll argue to switch the focus to low-budget tourism aimed at students and young families. The benefit of a switch in the tourism market is the potential to attract a different kind of tourism, it will allow locals to run their own initiatives and to avoid saturation of the high-end tourism market.

And lastly, the main research question is answered:

Judging between pastoralism and conservation as livelihood approach, which one is most effective in pastoralist areas in Northern Kenya?

Is a combination of conservation and pastoralism possible? A combination where capacity is built of the local people to run their own conservancies and tourism bodies. It is undeniable that tourism has potential in Laikipia because of its nature and wildlife. Also, alternative tourism from high-end can involve the local people and their livestock instead of excluding them from landscapes allocated for tourism. However, is a focus on conservancies and high-end tourism (based on pristine hopes) really the way forward? Reverting back to the conceptual background of this thesis, critiques against political ecology thinking include that it does not go far enough. That is, it does not move beyond 'humanism', and is therefore too anthropocentrically oriented, and consequently does not move beyond mainstream (traditional) development thinking (Srinivasan & Kasturirangan, 2016). That critique suggests that we need to look at options for conservation and tourism within the pastoralist communities. Initiatives like that are already emerging where tourists are offered a combination of wildlife viewing and pastoralist culture. That kind of initiatives should be motivated. They allow a combination of pastoralist land use and conservation. (tourist don't come to degraded ecosystems. ) A mix of pastoralist and **Western hegemonic** conservation is the only way to ensure a future for both in the reality of ecosystem degradation and more competition over land. However, to mix the two approaches the value of each approach has to be considered.

Some other requirements are to address the inequalities between those who benefit from conservation and who experiences the negative effects of wildlife. Also, to solve the conflict we need to look beyond the scarcity trap and work at distributing the resources that are there fairly (Bond, 2014). This means to move away from the narrative that population numbers and the high numbers of livestock are the key problem, and to study the systemic reasons behind problems associated with overpopulation and livestock numbers. Overpopulation cannot be used as scapegoat to neglect systemic reasons behind ecological and social problems (Fletcher, Breitling, & Puleo, 2014). This doesn't take away from the fact that a large-scale 'Marshal plan' to rejuvenate the ecosystem is necessary (38NG).

## 6. Discussion and recommendations

A group of American tourists are sitting on the balcony of Ol Lentille conservancy with a cocktail in their hands. They are relaxing from an intensive game drive where they saw lions, giraffes, zebras and their favourite animal: the elephant. Their driver and the guy serving them their cocktails are clad in the traditional Maasai attire. The tourist will visit a cultural Manyatta, traditional houses of the pastoralist people, tomorrow and after that their life-changing experience of the real wilderness and culture of Kenya is done. They chose Ol Lentille because they read on their website that a part of the payments would go to the local communities for development and that the local people are involved in the running of the lodge.

This research made clear that those imposing images of untouched nature are not the reality in Kenya. Tourists should get used to the idea of seeing livestock together with the wildlife (Mbaria & Ogada, 2017). Also, it became clear that the tourism operation's promises of benefits and cooperation often do not materialize, or only in a very limited way. In many cases, the communities feel the tourism operations are only bringing problems and taking the grazing land they sorely need. More and more tourism operations are started in pastoralist areas, though, through conservancies and the NRT. They claim that conservation and tourism is an important alternative livelihood to livestock keeping, needed to deal with the challenges facing pastoralism. All stakeholders agree that livelihood diversification is needed. However, it doesn't work to impose conservation practices based on Western conservation thinking in a case with widely different approaches to development, livelihoods and conservation. Is there a way to engage in tourism and conservation activities in collaboration with pastoralism? It is possible, but will require trust, political goodwill (47NO) and the perception that different values deserve a place in conservation decisions. One solution is the following recommendation of low-budget tourism with local initiatives.

### 6.1 Recommendation: Low-budget tourism with local initiatives

High-end luxury tourism focuses on a limited market of people with the willingness and ability to spend a thousand dollars a night for accommodation. However, there are many people, like the researcher, who don't have that budget but still want to see wildlife. Also, wildlife tourism in the lodges is often limited to the lodge and conservation area itself. This leaves a whole lot of Kenya and Kenya's culture left unexplored. Current luxury tourism in the area is focused on wildlife viewing in areas that are dedicated wildlife habitats as emerged with the park conservation paradigm. This approach creates a wedge between pastoralist and conservation life. A low-budget market can be set up to attract visitors interested to see livestock and wildlife together. The assumption is that students like me, young families and anyone interested in different cultures are interested to learn how the local people are actually living. Potential problems for this plan are corruption, both in the government and on the group ranch level which creates a risky investment potential. Also, ecosystem degradation is ongoing which slowly turns the ecosystem into a desert.

Low-budget tourism is beneficial because of three reasons: 1. It attracts more tourism, so many people can open up a small tourism business before the market is saturated. In this case, a lot of people will benefit a little from many tourists, instead of a small number of people benefitting from a few tourists. 2. It has low start investment costs, so it is more likely the community as a whole, or individuals, can start and run those initiatives. There are already low-budget options in the area, both activities, campsites and accommodation, however not enough to create a complete program for eager tourists. 3. It benefits Kenya's domestic tourism because it will be affordable for both international and national tourists. Exploring the country is getting more popular in Kenya (47NR). Local communities can participate with the tourism bodies in any way they can, as a guide, guard, cook or organizing cultural activities. This will also create a diversity of options for tourism, which potentially attracts many

people. The focus should not only be on wildlife but on exploring all areas of Kenya's culture, even if that means having to look at livestock and zebra's grazing together. This kind of low-budget tourism should not be based on dedicated nature areas only for conservation and wildlife. A way has to be found to share the land available. This kind of tourism by 'real' Kenyans will show how Kenya really is, which is not a big nature park with elephants lazing around and Maasai men serving drinks.

## 6.2 other recommendations future research and policies

Here are some other ideas for future research or policies based on my fieldwork.

Topics for further research:

- There is a growing demand for land demarcation schemes among pastoralist people. What are the implications of those schemes and where does this change come from?
- Livelihood diversification options aimed at youths or women. The focus should be on women because they care for the whole family and on youths because they are the future.
- What are the climate change adaption strategies already in use by the pastoralist people? How do they work and how effective are they?
- What is the future of pastoralism?
- What is the role of small-towns, markets and mobility on poverty, hunger and development in the pastoralist areas? Pastoralist people are seen as poor people, but they have a big wealth considering their livestock. How to make sense of those two seemingly contradicting statements?
- What are the conflicting land uses in the area and how those clashes impact on conflicts and violence between communities?
- How effective is the governance structure of group ranches and conservancies, how big is the impact of corruption on those systems and what are recommendations for improvement. Conservation benefits are distributed by those structures, so they also play a role to make conservation and tourism a success as an alternative livelihood.

Recommendations for policy:

- It is necessary to build educate and build the capacity of the pastoralist communities to start and manage their own conservation areas and tourism operations. This decreases dependency on donor funds and also increases resilience in the pastoralist areas.
- There is a need to implement large-scale ecosystem rehabilitation plans quickly to increase available pasture and water for both the livestock and wildlife.
- There are already schemes giving loans to women or youth to start a business. It is paramount to continue supporting those initiatives.
- It is necessary to make drought contingency plans together with the pastoralist people. A pastoralist person will only sell livestock when it is absolutely necessary. Those kinds of cultural aspects need to be taken into account for plans the people will accept.
- Support sustainable livelihood diversification initiatives with subsidies, such as low-budget tourism or the sustainable collection of natural resources.

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