



NAVAL POSTGRADUATE SCHOOL

MONTEREY, CALIFORNIA

THESIS

**DISPLACEMENT FOR CONSERVATION:
LIVELIHOOD ADAPTATIONS TO NATIONAL PARKS
IN EAST AFRICA**

by

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December 2021

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REPORT DOCUMENTATION PAGE			<i>Form Approved OMB No. 0704-0188</i>	
Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 1 hour per response, including the time for reviewing instruction, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information. Send comments regarding this burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden, to Washington headquarters Services, Directorate for Information Operations and Reports, 1215 Jefferson Davis Highway, Suite 1204, Arlington, VA 22202-4302, and to the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reduction Project (0704-0188) Washington, DC, 20503.				
1. AGENCY USE ONLY (Leave blank)		2. REPORT DATE December 2021		3. REPORT TYPE AND DATES COVERED Master's thesis
4. TITLE AND SUBTITLE DISPLACEMENT FOR CONSERVATION: LIVELIHOOD ADAPTATIONS TO NATIONAL PARKS IN EAST AFRICA			5. FUNDING NUMBERS	
6. AUTHOR(S) Barbara Vayda				
7. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES) Naval Postgraduate School Monterey, CA 93943-5000			8. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER	
9. SPONSORING / MONITORING AGENCY NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES) N/A			10. SPONSORING / MONITORING AGENCY REPORT NUMBER	
11. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES The views expressed in this thesis are those of the author and do not reflect the official policy or position of the Department of Defense or the U.S. Government.				
12a. DISTRIBUTION / AVAILABILITY STATEMENT Approved for public release. Distribution is unlimited.			12b. DISTRIBUTION CODE A	
13. ABSTRACT (maximum 200 words) This thesis examines the livelihood implications of exclusionary conservation policies in East Africa. Specifically, it evaluates the livelihood adaptations of indigenous groups in reaction to national parks-induced displacement. Current conservation schemes have linkages to the original colonial-era scramble for Africa, which instituted sweeping changes to customary land access and use. This thesis utilized an adapted version of the Impoverishment Risks for Displaced Populations framework to conduct case studies of multiple indigenous groups displaced and living adjacent to both Mount Elgon National Park and Serengeti National Park. Indigenous adaptations indicate that reactions to conservation-based displacement follow similar patterns. Displaced groups are not passive victims and instead, turn to legal and extralegal methods to reassert land access and use, which can become a destabilizing force. This thesis argues that similar adaptation strategies may facilitate the construction of more effective conservation policies.				
14. SUBJECT TERMS displacement, land use, customary law, colonialism, conservation, East Africa, protected areas, national parks, indigenous livelihoods, Maasai, Serengeti National Park, Tanzania, Sabaot, Ogiek, Bagisu, Sabiny, Benet, Mount Elgon National Park, Kenya, Uganda, dispossession, green militarization, Uganda Wildlife Authority, Kenya Wildlife Service, Tanzania National Parks Authority			15. NUMBER OF PAGES 129	
			16. PRICE CODE	
17. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF REPORT Unclassified	18. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF THIS PAGE Unclassified	19. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF ABSTRACT Unclassified	20. LIMITATION OF ABSTRACT UU	

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NATIONAL PARKS IN EAST AFRICA**

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Submitted in partial fulfillment of the
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**MASTER OF ARTS IN SECURITY STUDIES
(MIDDLE EAST, SOUTH ASIA, SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA)**

from the

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ABSTRACT

This thesis examines the livelihood implications of exclusionary conservation policies in East Africa. Specifically, it evaluates the livelihood adaptations of indigenous groups in reaction to national parks-induced displacement. Current conservation schemes have linkages to the original colonial-era scramble for Africa, which instituted sweeping changes to customary land access and use. This thesis utilized an adapted version of the Impoverishment Risks for Displaced Populations framework to conduct case studies of multiple indigenous groups displaced and living adjacent to both Mount Elgon National Park and Serengeti National Park. Indigenous adaptations indicate that reactions to conservation-based displacement follow similar patterns. Displaced groups are not passive victims and instead, turn to legal and extralegal methods to reassert land access and use, which can become a destabilizing force. This thesis argues that similar adaptation strategies may facilitate the construction of more effective conservation policies.

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I am indebted to a number of amazing people, without whose efforts and support I would not have been able to successfully complete this degree and thesis.

To my thesis advisors, Dr. Jessica Piombo and Dr. Emily Meierding, thank you for your guidance, patience, positivity, and critical eye. You expanded my critical thinking skills both during the thesis process and in your classes.

To my classmates, it has certainly been a unique pandemic learning experience, but we successfully conquered Zoom fatigue to emerge as better officers. Your knowledge, experience, and critical thinking made my graduate experience richer.

To my parents, Wes and Karen, who have always supported my academic, professional, personal, and spiritual growth, thank you. It is a special comfort to know I always have the support of my parents, no matter what.

To my brothers, Jon and Ryan, who are always willing to provide laughs, ridiculous GIFs/videos, and advice, thank you for keeping your little sister in check.

To my in-laws, Terry and Casey, thank you for your continual support and positivity. I am honored to be your daughter.

To my husband, Travis, thank you for being so amazingly supportive of everything I set out to do. You are my rock and steadfast source of support, encouragement, and love. Even from thousands of miles away, you strengthened my resolve to complete all the readings, assignments, papers, and, especially, this thesis. I am so excited to start a new (non-thesis) chapter with you at our next assignment!

WAHOOWA, and go Air Force!

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I. INTRODUCTION

A. RESEARCH QUESTION

The mammal room of the Smithsonian National Museum of Natural History in Washington, D.C., displays an artifact of significance for the history of conservation in Africa. A stuffed white rhino, killed during one of President Theodore Roosevelt's famous African safaris, holds a place of preeminence. The irony of this display is that Roosevelt, a self-proclaimed environmentalist, killed this nearly extinct species, claiming it was important to collect a specimen before it went extinct.¹ Additionally, as the "godfather of America's national parks," Roosevelt's model for conservation has, in many ways, been transcribed into Africa's conservation model.² External meddling has imbued Africa's history with many caustic legacies, slavery and colonialism being paramount. Are western methods of conservation another such detrimental legacy?

Western and elite notions of conservation in East Africa from the colonial era to present have interacted with indigenous patterns of land access, use, and ownership, and ultimately impacted indigenous livelihoods. This research asks how the development of a particular type of protected area based on Western notions of conservation, the national park, affected indigenous peoples, and how have they adapted? This question is motivated by the fact that both international and domestic conceptions of land ownership many times do not correlate with indigenous and local conceptions, and mainstream, modern conservation approaches have been based on an assumption that conservation requires the absence of indigenous people on the land. As a result, conservation programs have dispossessed many indigenous groups from their traditional lands. Over time, these programs have created several outcomes: tension between state and citizen and the creation of both conservation victims (those restricted from traditional land access and use), and conservation refugees (those removed from previous homesteads). Conservation refugees

¹ Fred Pearce, "Why Africa's National Parks Are Failing to Save Wildlife," Yale E360, January 19, 2010, https://e360.yale.edu/features/why_africas_national_parks_are_failing_to_save_wildlife.

² Pearce, "Why Africa's National Parks Are Failing to Save Wildlife."

are not to be confused with ecological refugees, or those forced off of land due to climate change issues, like desertification or floods. Conservation, unlike ecology, has the key component of a human interface - humans coercing other humans off of land. The responses of those losing ground in these processes may threaten local-level state sovereignty or subvert conservation programs. Untangling these issues is key to discovering the full range of consequences of conservation policies in East Africa.

Conservation policy in East Africa, specifically the creation of protected areas, has dispossessed many indigenous peoples from their customary land or changed their use patterns and access. East African indigenous groups such as the Maasai, Bagisu, Sabiny, Benet, Sabaot and Ogiek have experienced the brunt of conservation efforts firsthand via expulsion from, or restricted access to, their traditional lands in the Serengeti National Park and Mount Elgon National Park. Thus, the primary research question centers upon explaining the patterns and implications of how these communities have adapted to the impacts of these conservation initiatives.

B. BACKGROUND

Riding the growing wave of climate change concerns, conservation efforts have, in many ways, moved to the forefront of international and national-level policy and agenda priorities. Conservation itself can have multivalent applications – it spans local level efforts to protect microorganism biodiversity to global efforts to preserve the ozone. However, in focusing upon protected areas in East Africa, which are categorized and catalogued by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), this thesis will focus on the use of land enclosures for biodiversity conservation. A protected area is a “clearly defined geographical space, recognized, dedicated and managed through legal or other effective means, to achieve the long-term conservation of nature with associated ecosystem services and cultural values.”³ The IUCN designates six categories of protected areas, from I to VI, and this thesis will focus upon category II: National Parks. Specifically, it will focus upon the indigenous experiences of the Maasai people and their access to and use of Serengeti

³ “Living in Harmony with Nature: Protected Areas,” Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity, accessed October 21, 2021, <https://www.cbd.int/undb/media/factsheets/undb-factsheet-pa-en.pdf>.

National Park in northern Tanzania, and the Ugandan Bagisu, Sabiny, and Benet and the Kenyan Sabaot and Ogiek and their access to and use of Mount Elgon National Park, which bisects Uganda and Kenya. Ostensibly, category II allows for “culturally compatible” opportunities to take place in these protected areas, and this will be considered.⁴ However, whomever defines “culturally compatible” determines its application. Indigenous experiences reveal a conflicted truth, one with profound impacts to pre-conservation livelihoods. Protected areas create a global public good that serve to mitigate climate change. Thus, they hold clear benefits at the regional and global levels; however, at the local level, they stimulate clear costs to indigenous groups.⁵

How have state-level conservation schemes based upon the protected areas construct changed indigenous land use and access? For the most part, they have dispossessed indigenous people, limiting or eliminating land use and access. The IUCN defines protected areas as nature reserves, wilderness areas, and national parks. At present, 15% of the world’s landmass, excluding Antarctica, is considered “protected” by the IUCN and the UN Environment World Conservation Monitoring Centre.⁶ Of note, this status means that national parks and other such protected areas have been instituted – it is not a measure of conservation efficacy. Thus, it is a quantitative measure versus qualitative. As of 2018, indigenous people manage or maintain tenure rights on 25% of the world’s land.⁷ Scholars have estimated that exclusionary conservation has displaced between 900,000 to

⁴ “Category II: National Park,” IUCN, accessed October 15, 2021, <https://www.iucn.org/theme/protected-areas/about/protected-areas-categories/category-ii-national-park>.

⁵ Paul Vedeld et al., “The Political Economy of Conservation at Mount Elgon, Uganda: Between Local Deprivation, Regional Sustainability, and Global Public Goods,” *Conservation and Society* 14, no. 3 (2016): 184, <https://doi.org/10.4103/0972-4923.191155>.

⁶ “The World Now Protects 15% of Its Land, But Crucial Biodiversity Zones Left Out,” IUCN, last modified 2016, <https://www.iucn.org/news/secretariat/201609/world-now-protects-15-its-land-crucial-biodiversity-zones-left-out>.

⁷ Stephen Garnett et al., “A Spatial Overview of the Global Importance of Indigenous Lands for Conservation,” *Nature Sustainability* 1 (2018): 369–374, <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41893-018-0100-6>.

14.4 million Africans, and that is using the more restrictive definition of protected areas - IUCN categories I-III.⁸

In a survey of the literature on protected areas worldwide, there are approximately 250 reports on 200 protected areas, but only 25% of the literature involves “detailed examinations of the anatomy of the livelihood change experienced by rural groups following displacement,” and most focus on India and Nepal.⁹ Few in-depth studies have been done within Africa, and those that exist focus primarily on South Africa’s apartheid-era evictions. There is an opportunity to use existing case studies as a reference point for effects in East Africa, but that also poses the risk of missing important idiosyncrasies in this particular region. Thus, this thesis can serve as an attempt to evaluate impacts of conservation-induced displacement and subsequent adaptation strategies in East Africa.

C. SIGNIFICANCE

In many regions, but particularly on the African continent, higher than average population growth is challenging conservation efforts resulting in a “continuous tradeoff between long-term conservation goals and short- and long-term livelihoods of people”.¹⁰ Almost two-thirds of Africa’s population remain in rural areas, typically the same areas which conservationists target for exclusionary conservation areas.¹¹ Far from straightforward, conservation is a multidimensional, dynamic project that intersects with numerous domains, including, but not limited to, social (including race, ethnicity, identity), economic, and political issues. In areas where conservation is equated with removal of human beings from an area, the implications are intrinsically problematic. For the primarily pastoralist and agriculturalist indigenous populations of East Africa, access to land

⁸ Charles Geisler and Ragendra De Sousa, “From Refuge to Refugee: The African Case,” *Public Administration and Development* 21, no. 2 (2001): 158, <https://doi.org/10.1002/pad>.

⁹ Paige West, James Igoe, and Dan Brockington, “Parks and Peoples: The Social Impact of Protected Areas,” *Annual Review of Anthropology* 35, no. 1 (2006): 257, <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev.anthro.35.081705.123308>.

¹⁰ Frans Bongers and Timm Tennigkeit, *Degraded Forests in Eastern Africa: Management and Restoration* (London: Routledge, 2010), 8, <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781849776400>.

¹¹ Geisler and De Sousa, “From Refuge to Refugee: The African Case,” 159.

interlocks with everyday livelihoods – access to water, food, cattle grazing areas, agricultural fields, hunting areas, homesteads, schools, communities, and religious sites. Indigenous livelihoods depend upon varying interactions with the land. Pastoralists particularly rely on seasonally-based mobility to ensure consistent herd access to water and grazing land. When protected areas prevent or limit indigenous land use and access, they create numerous effects upon indigenous lives.

Thus, in the development of conservation techniques and policies, policymakers must address policy impacts on indigenous groups, including secondary and tertiary effects. Failure to address effects may have grave consequences for both the conservation efforts themselves as well as for the indigenous people. Historically, perceptions of conservation at the state level and realities at the local level can be divergent. The UN's Protected Planet report emphasized that "protected and conserved areas need to be better integrated into national planning and decision making, to enhance positive outcomes to both biodiversity and people."¹² The significance of this project is to illuminate conservation's effects on indigenous people. In contributing such knowledge, policymakers can perhaps formulate a better-informed conservation model which may result in better outcomes.

In attempting to highlight how indigenous lives are impacted this research can enable policymakers to either better address negative effects of conservation or attempt to avoid them through better-formulated policies from the start. Understanding adaptation strategies of indigenous people can also help policymakers be predictive of the second- and third-order effects of exclusionary tactics and weigh whether displacement in the name of conservation is truly in the state's best interest. Conservation activities are here to stay, so creating the right balance in the tradeoffs between livelihoods and conservation is crucial.

¹² "From Climate Change to Food Security: How Protected and Conserved Areas Can Tackle Global Challenges," UNEP-WCMC, April 28, 2021, <https://www.unep-wcmc.org/news/from-climate-change-to-food-security--how-protected-and-conserved-areas-can-tackle-global-challenges>.

D. DEFINITIONS

Conservation is defined as the protection of natural resources (in this case, land) for this and future generations. Indigenous people are defined as those who have “historical continuity with pre-invasion and pre-colonial societies that developed on their territories” and consider themselves distinct from modern societies which may now dominate.¹³ Indigeneity in East Africa, as across the continent, can be a difficult term to define, as many Africans were highly mobile migrants prior to colonization and thus few are “‘autochthons,’ deep-rooted sons of the soil.”¹⁴ Thus, in many cases, claims to indigeneity for the purpose of land rights begs the question: whose history, and thus whose claim, matters? Livelihood is also a complex dynamic but is best explained as: “individuals and groups striving to make a living, attempting to meet their various consumption and economic necessities, coping with uncertainties, responding to new opportunities, and choosing between different value positions.”¹⁵

For the scope of this investigation, conservation will be evaluated at the level of protected areas and indigenous groups themselves, which sometimes cross state borders. The focus of research will be on East Africa. Specifically, Kenya, Tanzania, and Uganda, where multiple indigenous groups have been impacted by exclusionary conservation. These particular countries provide salient case studies because they are East African countries with shared borders, access to Lake Victoria, and some shared ethnic indigenous groups. The Lake Victoria basin (which also includes Rwanda and Burundi) has demonstrated high rates of population growth and houses 30% of East Africa’s population.¹⁶ These three states are also home to world-famous protected areas, including

¹³ African Development Bank Group, *Development and Indigenous Peoples in Africa* (Abidjan, Côte d’Ivoire: African Development Bank, 2016), viii.

¹⁴ John Lonsdale, “Soil, work, civilization and citizenship in Kenya,” *Journal of Eastern African Studies* 2, no. 2 (2008): 306, <https://doi.org/10.1080/17531050802058450>.

¹⁵ Norman Long, “Exploring Local/Global Transformations: A View from Anthropology,” in Alberto Arce and Norman Long (eds) *Anthropology and Modernities* (London: Routledge, 2000), 196.

¹⁶ “Environment and Natural Resources Management – East Africa,” USAID, last modified July 2015, <https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/1860/ENV%20factsheet%20-%20East%20Africa%20-%20July%202015%20updated.pdf>.

Serengeti National Park and Mount Elgon National Park. The three states have an average protected areas landmass of 22%: Kenya (12%), Tanzania (38%), and Uganda (16%).¹⁷ Additionally, all three states primarily interacted with the British Empire during the colonial period. Both Uganda and Kenya were set up as British protectorates. Tanzania was a German colony first, but later came under British control. Case studies of two different protected areas, Serengeti National Park and Mount Elgon National Park, and multiple indigenous tribes affected by these conservation areas, the Maasai, Bagisu, Sabiny, Benet, Sabaot and Ogiek, will enable an evaluation of similarities and differences of indigenous experiences and adaptations in the post-colonial protected areas conservation construct.

E. LITERATURE REVIEW

Conflicting narratives and stakeholder interests litter the field of conservation methods in general, and also within East Africa. Conservation ideologies, in practice, determine fundamental questions of land use because they determine whether or not humans should be involved in the process. Across the literature, there is consensus that efforts must be made to protect land from further degradation; however, the current ecocentric model which excludes people from land through protected areas, thereby destroying traditional land use patterns, is contentious. While the literature has made strides in studying the effects of protected areas-based dispossession on indigenous people, what it has failed to discover is whether dispossessed groups share common adaptation strategies across borders, or whether local and national constraints create unique adaptation strategies. This thesis will explore adaption strategies of different indigenous groups across state boundaries and characterize similarities and differences. Thus, restating the specific research question, in what ways did the exclusion-based protected areas construct impact indigenous livelihoods, what have been the consequent adaptations, and why are those strategies similar or different across ethnic and state lines? The primary themes in the

¹⁷ “Protected Area Profile for Kenya from the World Database of Protected Areas,” UNEP-WCMC, accessed August 13, 2021, <https://www.protectedplanet.net/country/KEN>.; “Protected Area Profile for United Republic of Tanzania from the World Database of Protected Areas,” UNEP-WCMC, accessed August 13, 2021, <https://www.protectedplanet.net/country/TZA>.; Protected Area Profile for Uganda from the World Database of Protected Areas,” UNEP-WCMC, accessed August 13, 2021, <https://www.protectedplanet.net/country/UGA>.

literature include Western and elite capture of land use and protected areas conservation discourse, negative impacts of land dispossession on livelihoods, and adaptations ranging from low-level conflict to urban migration.¹⁸

1. The Nexus between Land Use and Conservation

Whereas many rural East African people continue to view land tenure as customary and land use as spatially variable and driven by environmental factors, post-colonial states now rely upon land boundaries, districts, and demarcation to facilitate administration and governance.¹⁹ Chapter II will trace the evolution of land use and tenure across the pre-colonial, colonial, and post-colonial periods, but it is important to note from the onset that the conceptions of land tenure and use are fundamentally at odds between the state and rural populations in East Africa. Conservation is an institution which impacts land use and is also a form of land use, among many others, like housing and cultivation. As such, conservation interacts with multiple social and biophysical dimensions. However, conservation goals are typically narrowly defined within the biophysical sphere. That is, they seek to maintain biodiversity or protect its attributes from human-induced damage. In the creation of protected areas, states have fundamentally altered land use patterns of indigenous people, and this development is traceable to the colonial period. Colonizers operated under the irrational premise that “nonwhite peoples did not own land before white settlement” which “disadvantages dispossessed people in contemporary resource struggles.”²⁰ For example, this premise has become a roadblock for indigenous people fighting for land rights in areas that are now cordoned as protected areas.

¹⁸ Catherine Corson and Kenneth Iain MacDonald, “Enclosing the Global Commons: The Convention on Biological Diversity and Green Grabbing,” *The Journal of Peasant Studies* 39, no. 2 (2012): 263–83, <https://doi.org/10.1080/03066150.2012.664138>.

¹⁹ Jevgeniy Bluwstein, “Resisting Legibility: State and Conservation Boundaries, Pastoralism, and the Risk of Dispossession through Geospatial Surveys in Tanzania,” *Rural Landscapes* 6, no. 1 (2019): 3, <https://doi.org/10.16993/rl.53>.

²⁰ Robin L. Turner, “Lasting Legacies: Contemporary Struggles and Historical Dispossession in South Africa,” *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa, and the Middle East* 36, no. 2 (2016): 276, <https://doi.org/10.1215/1089201X-3603343>.

2. Western and Elite Capture of Land Use and Conservation Discourse

Western and elite views towards nature and subsequent cooptation of land for conservation historically and presently threatens traditional land use. Western influences upon land use can be traced to the early 1900s, in which colonizers ascribed to the “fortress” conservation schema, which firmly delineates boundaries between conservation areas and humans.²¹ For example, in 1903, the Society for the Preservation of the Wild Fauna of the Empire (the Empire being Great Britain) began lobbying for game reserves in African colonies.²² Separating wildlife and people seemed logical and, by the 1950s, protected areas became the tactic de jure. During this period, protected areas arguably represented capitalism masquerading as ecocentrism. Colonizers were intent on protecting their land and livestock ventures. The Director of National Parks in Kenya stated: “Stock farmers cannot range their cattle with lions, nor can the wheat farmer allow his crop to be plundered by thousands of grass-eating antelopes. And, so, on the one hand there must be areas for human development and on the other hand let me plead for areas for total protection of nature.”²³ From this view, rather than coexist as humans and wildlife had for centuries, the creation of capitalist ventures necessitated separation for success. Separation benefitted colonizers’ farming and game hunting activities. Therefore, in creating the impetus for fortress-style conservation, colonization exposed Africa to yet another of its “constellations of interests” - in this case, African dispossession of land - with reverberations into the present day.²⁴

The Tragedy of the Commons argument is another such elite viewpoint towards land use and conservation. It is a widespread belief, frequently assigned to East African indigenous people, that pastoralists and farmers are “bad land managers” and destroy

²¹ Paul Robbins, *Encyclopedia of Environment and Society* (Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, 2007), 705, <http://dx.doi.org.libproxy.nps.edu/10.4135/9781412953924>.

²² David K. Prendergast, and William M. Adams, “Colonial Wildlife Conservation and the Origins of the Society for the Preservation of the Wild Fauna of the Empire (1903–1914),” *Oryx* 37, no. 2 (2003): 251–60, <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0030605303000425>.

²³ Mervyn Cowie, “Preserve or Destroy?,” *Oryx* 3, no. 1 (1955): 10, <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0030605300037984>.

²⁴ Turner, “Lasting Legacies: Contemporary Struggles and Historical Dispossession,” 276.

natural habitats where they reside.²⁵ This is akin to the colonial era justification behind fortress conservation, which claims people are irrational and damage resources on the land they inhabit. However, the Tragedy of the Commons analysis is disputed in the literature, as many indigenous people have effectively practiced conservation without external intervention.²⁶ Simply put, there is a “long tradition of erasure or dismissal of human contributions to landscapes that conservationists want to protect from human interference.”²⁷ Thus, fortress conservation approaches are largely a Western application of conservation onto Africa, which suited colonizer’s needs for exploitation of land and labor.²⁸

Additionally, scholars note that conservation projects tend to rely on generification: that is, simplifying peoples’ lives in order to more neatly fit policy prescriptions and the new spatial productions of conservation.²⁹ Policy makers and conservationists thus black-box indigenous livelihoods, largely viewing them as unimportant, static, or even uniform.³⁰ Instead, they typically focus on the parks or the objects of conservation themselves (flora and fauna).³¹ While conservationists many times view conservation as an essential goal itself, no matter the social, economic, or political costs, social scientists appear to be in agreement that conservation has far-reaching social, political, and economic

²⁵ Mark Dowie, *Conservation Refugees: The Hundred-year Conflict between Global Conservation and Native Peoples* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2009), 224.

²⁶ Jafari Kideghesho, “The Potentials of Traditional African Cultural Practices in Mitigating Overexploitation of Wildlife Species and Habitat Loss: Experience of Tanzania,” *International Journal of Biodiversity Science & Management* 5, no. 2 (2009): 83–94, <https://doi.org/10.1080/17451590903065579>; Amy Poteete, and Elinor Ostrom, “An institutional approach to the study of forest resources,” Poulsen Center for International Forestry Research (CIFOR), (New York: CABI Publishing, 2002).

²⁷ Bluwstein, “Resisting Legibility,” 13.

²⁸ John Iliffe, *Africans: The History of a Continent*, 3rd ed. (Cambridge, United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press, 2017).; Mahmood Mamdani, *Citizen and Subject: Contemporary Africa and the Legacy of Late Colonialism* (Princeton, N.J: Princeton University Press, 1996).

²⁹ West, Igoe, and Brockington, “Parks and Peoples,” 256.

³⁰ West, Igoe, and Brockington, “Parks and Peoples,” 257.

³¹ Katherine Homewood, Patti Kristjanson, and P. Trench, *Staying Maasai? Livelihoods, Conservation and Development in East African Rangelands*, 1st ed. (New York, NY: Springer New York, 2009), <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-0-387-87492-0>.

repercussions. As a student of political science, the necessity to research the extended livelihood and adaptation dynamics of conservation practices is clear.

3. Modern Conservation as Private Accumulation, Capitalism, Neoliberalism

Protected areas can provide private stakeholders with capital. Images of conserved nature are appropriated for private use in merchandise, through experiences, and even celebrity endorsements.³² In this way, a form of “spectacular accumulation” for private stakeholders revolves around “spectacle as both a commodity and a means of selling other commodities.”³³ Consider, for example, Walt Disney World’s Animal Kingdom Park, where guests can enjoy “Kilimanjaro Safaris,” a ride meant to simulate a safari experience in East Africa, or even the experience of interacting with animals in the “Affection Section Petting Zoo.” Both experiences stimulate an ideal of nature as pristine and human-less (apart from the visitors), wherein a private stakeholder, Disney, benefits from its appropriation of the ideal of conservation. A theme park-goer even receives a special pin if they donate to the Disney Conservation Fund. The pin says “Hero” under the image of an African elephant. Capitalism co-opts the concept of a pristine nature, untouched and uninhabited, for both conservation and private accumulation. But the reality is, indigenous people have inhabited most of East Africa for centuries, some areas even millennia. “Disneyfication” has skewed perceptions of East Africa, to the benefit of private, Western accumulation and capitalism.³⁴

Neoliberalism, which has tie-ins to capitalism, also plays a key role in modern conservation processes. Neoliberalism represents a shift in the relationship between the market, the state, and the people. Specifically for conservation, neoliberalism has meant the objects of conservation—resources and environments—have become more valuable on

³² Daniel Brockington, Roseleen Duffy, and Jim Igoe, *Nature unbound: Conservation, Capitalism, and the Future of Protected Areas* (London: Earthscan, 2008), 195, <http://dx.doi.org/10.4324/9781849772075>.

³³ Brockington, Duffy and, Igoe, 195.

³⁴ Jim Igoe, *Conservation and Globalization: A Study of National Parks and Indigenous Communities from East Africa to South Dakota* (Belmont, CA: Thomson/Wadsworth, 2004), 15.

the global market, and many East African states have experienced an increase in private investment for conservation purposes.³⁵ Thus, the spread of capitalism and neoliberalism and their adjacent commodification of, and investment in, conservation, has amplified the trend of indigenous dispossession and resource use restrictions.

4. Negative Impacts on Livelihoods

Political scientists have not ignored conservation's effects on indigenous people. Other than the general theme of altering land use rights, the overarching themes of the impacts of protected areas on indigenous people in the literature include: access and use restrictions through legislation and enforcement, criminalization of native peoples, estrangement from land coupled with unfamiliar uses of areas surrounding protected areas, and historic and contemporary increases in elite control of resources.³⁶ Other notable livelihood effects range from poverty, illiteracy, and sickness to conflict.³⁷ Lastly, some scholars straightforwardly assert that conservation practices, like protected areas, infringe upon human rights.³⁸

The literature reveals that the creation of protected areas dispossessed many indigenous groups of homesteads as well as alternate lands on which to shift in times of trouble, like drought and famine. Pastoralists especially require flexibility in land usage. Pastoralists face increasing demands on their livelihoods, primarily due to a combination of population growth and urban growth, as well as displacement in the name of

³⁵ Tor A. Benjaminsen et al., "Wildlife Management in Tanzania: State Control, Rent Seeking and Community Resistance," *Development and Change* 44, no. 5 (2013): 1091, <https://doi.org/10.1111/dech.12055>.

³⁶ West, Igoe, and Brockington, "Parks and Peoples," 251–77.

³⁷ Dowie, *Conservation Refugees*.

³⁸ Mara J. Goldman, "Strangers in Their Own Land: Maasai and Wildlife Conservation in Northern Tanzania," *Conservation and Society* 9, no. 1 (2011): 65, <https://doi.org/10.4103/0972-4923.79194>.; Steven R. Brechin, Crystal L Fortwangler, and Peter R Wilshusen, *Contested Nature: Promoting International Biodiversity with Social Justice in the Twenty-First Century* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2003).; Poul Wisborg, "Human Rights Against Land Grabbing? A Reflection on Norms, Policies, and Power," *Journal of Agricultural & Environmental Ethics* 26, no. 6 (2013): 1199–1222, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10806-013-9449-8>.; Marcus Colchester, *Salvaging Nature: Indigenous Peoples, Protected Areas and Biodiversity Conservation* (UNRISD: Geneva, 1994).

conservation.³⁹ Land access has been noted as key to employing Africa's youthful population.⁴⁰ Over time, conservation has shifted land use norms and inhibited self-determination of indigenous lands, and current use of the protected areas construct continues to impinge upon self-determination.⁴¹

Political scientists have conducted studies in attempts to qualify and quantify protected areas' effects on livelihoods. For example, some have documented protected areas' effects on local traditions and community dynamics, access to resources for sustenance, and tension surrounding conservation's costs and benefits.⁴² Specifically in Africa, scholars note that dislocations from former communally-held lands impacts pastoralist groups in fundamental ways, whether through increased migration, social stratification, decreased nutrition, or decreased material wealth.⁴³ Adult conservation victims may be more prone to poverty, alcoholism, and prostitution, and children may experience higher rates of malnutrition, disease, and death.⁴⁴ However, more research is warranted on the causal mechanisms for these effects.

³⁹ Elliot Fratkin, "East African Pastoralism in Transition: Maasai, Boran, and Rendille Cases," *African Studies Review* 44, no. 3 (2001): 1–25, <https://doi.org/10.2307/525591>.

⁴⁰ T.S. Jayne, Jordan Chamberlin, and Derek D. Headey, "Land Pressures, the Evolution of Farming Systems, and Development Strategies in Africa: A Synthesis," *Food Policy*, Volume 48, 2014: 1–17, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.foodpol.2014.05.014>.

⁴¹ Colchester, *Salvaging Nature: Indigenous Peoples, Protected Areas and Biodiversity Conservation*.

⁴² West, Igoe, and Brockington, "Parks and Peoples," 251–77.; W.M. Adams and D. Hulme, "If Community Conservation Is the Answer in Africa, What Is the Question?," *Oryx* 35, no. 3 (2001): 193–200, <https://doi.org/10.1046/j.1365-3008.2001.00183.x>; Lisa Naughton-Treves, Margaret Buck Holland, and Katrina Brandon, "The Role of Protected Areas in Conserving Biodiversity and Sustaining Local Livelihoods," *Annual Review of Environment and Resources*, 30, no. 1 (2005): 219–252, <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev.energy.30.050504.164507>; Matthew Sommerville et al., "The role of fairness and benefit distribution in community-based Payment for Environmental Services interventions: A case study from Menabe, Madagascar," *Ecological Economics* 69, no. 6 (2010): 1262–1271, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ecolecon.2009.11.005>; Jessica Coria and Enrique Calfucura, "Ecotourism and the Development of Indigenous Communities: The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly," *Ecological Economics* 73, issue C (2012): 47–55, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ecolecon.2011.10.024>.

⁴³ Fratkin, "East African Pastoralism in Transition: Maasai, Boran, and Rendille Cases," 1–25.

⁴⁴ Dowie, *Conservation Refugees*.

5. Lack of Clear Framework, But Much Connective Tissue with Others

Within the literature, there is not one neat theoretical lens or framework with which to study conservation-based displacement and adaptation strategies. Rather, this action and experience can fit into many different, but related frameworks. These larger theoretical frameworks include land use, environmental policy and security, hegemony, conflict, human security, social justice, and displacement.

This thesis is placed within a wider context of environmental policy. It is important to note that scholars recognize the elite capture of environmental science and conservation policy.⁴⁵ This realization should serve to remind policy makers of the ethical and social justice aspects of conservation. That is, for policy to be truly ethical, it must consider and incorporate local, indigenous knowledge and practices into policy rather than stampede such experiences with exclusive scientific knowledge. One clear way in which to consider conservation-induced displacement is to consider it an imposed environmental scarcity. National parks create an imposed environmental scarcity of land and resources upon indigenous people who once lived and relied on what are now deemed protected areas. Some have characterized rural populations' struggle against conservation as a microcosm of their struggle to contend with environmental change and globalization writ large.⁴⁶

This thesis is also placed within the wider context of displacement studies. In particular, this thesis will use a framework developed by Michael Cernea, the Impoverishment Risks for Displaced Populations, to systematically conceptualize and analyze displacement's effects on indigenous people. It breaks down eight categories of study as: (1) land-lessness; (2) joblessness; (3) homelessness; (4) marginalization; (5) food insecurity; (6) increased morbidity; (7) loss of access to common property resources; and

⁴⁵ Vedeld et al., "The Political Economy of Conservation at Mount Elgon, Uganda," 184.

⁴⁶ Connor Joseph Cavanagh and Tor A. Benjaminsen, "Guerrilla Agriculture? A Biopolitical Guide to Illicit Cultivation Within an IUCN Category II Protected Area," *The Journal of Peasant Studies* 42, no. 3–4 (2015): 725–45, <https://doi.org/10.1080/03066150.2014.993623>.

(8) social disarticulation.⁴⁷ This model will be used to evaluate livelihood impacts; however, this thesis will adopt one slight change. Category four, marginalization, will be parsed out into political, economic and social categories, absorbing category eight, social disarticulation, into it.

F. POTENTIAL EXPLANATIONS AND HYPOTHESES

This thesis hypothesizes that if conservation dispossesses East African indigenous groups, then it damages indigenous livelihoods. The effects can manifest in various and overlapping ways, but the experience of dispossession also provides space for adaptations and innovation. The mechanisms of livelihood damage itself - forced removal and restrictions upon land use and access - manifest many first, second, and third order effects. The act of eviction and alteration of land use and access simultaneously delivers psychological, physical, economic, social, and political shocks to indigenous people.⁴⁸

Forced removal instills a sense of insecurity and fear, alongside a questioning of a group's core identity and value as indigenous (psychological impacts). It often disrupts access to food and water, and thereby negatively impacts health (physical effects). The creation of boundaries prevents the flexibility of seasonal and drought-induced migration, a key coping action for both pastoralists and farmers. Forced removal dispossesses groups from raw materials and resources used to barter or sustain standards of living, such as firewood and cattle (economic effects). Forced removal might also induce entrance into larger market economies for which an individual is ill-prepared. Removal from land simultaneously creates social disharmony, including disunity within groups about how to handle dispossession, amplification of class divisions, changes in gender relations, and loss of status. Groups may instigate fights for political enfranchisement to change outcomes (political effects). Thus, forced removal or restricted use/access in the name of conservation poses a myriad of consequences for indigenous groups.

⁴⁷ Michael M. Cernea, "Risks, Safeguards and Reconstruction: A Model for Population Displacement and Resettlement," *Economic and Political Weekly* 35, no. 41 (2000): 3659–78, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/4409836>.

⁴⁸ West, Igoe, and Brockington, "Parks and Peoples," 251–77.

Further, this thesis hypothesizes that if indigenous groups experience a low degree of political inclusivity in their state government, then their adaptation strategies to exclusionary conservation are influenced and constrained by their lack of relevance to the state, the state's disposition towards repression, and the state's philosophy of protected areas enforcement. The literature points to varied adaptation strategies: attempts to reestablish livelihoods outside the protected area boundaries, attempts to fight the state in legal battles to reinhabit and access traditional lands, or attempts to ensure continued land use and access through illegal means. Such choices are likely constrained by the political system, the people's status within it, and park law enforcement.

If the hypotheses are correct, then East African state practices of creating protected lands must be altered, and maybe even eliminated, to avoid continued abuse and exploitation of indigenous people. If incorrect, then the evidence should reveal that the preponderance of indigenous groups is able to adjust and thrive after becoming dispossessed of land. The argument will not seek to dispute the value of conservation writ large, but it may dispute the necessity of land dispossession or restricted access for that goal. The interplay and tradeoffs between valuing the environment and valuing human lives is the crux of the matter.

G. RESEARCH DESIGN

Based upon the literature, the primary impact categories of exclusionary conservation or changes to use or access include social, economic, and political. This thesis will use comparative case studies of Mount Elgon National Park and Serengeti National Park and their neighbors, or those who were displaced and resettled around the periphery of the parks as a result of post-colonial conservation actions that altered land use and access. The primary groups of focus are the Maasai, Bagisu, Sabiny, Benet, Sabaot and Ogiek. The case studies will evaluate how displacement impacted these park neighbors and how they subsequently adapted to the protected areas conservation schema. It will evaluate similarities and differences between the distinct ethnic groups. Thus, this research will take the form of a top-down, explanatory, qualitative approach, in which the use of protected areas (the mode of conservation) affects indigenous livelihoods.

In comparing the effects of two different national parks in one time period on indigenous people across three countries (Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda), the project seeks to evaluate whether the effects of and adaptations to park-based conservation are similar across groups and locations. The time period will be from 1950 to present, but the project will briefly also address the evolution of conceptions of land ownership, use, access, and conservation evolution over time between the precolonial, colonial, and postcolonial periods.

The primary sources and materials for this thesis include academic journals, books, international and state-level conservation policies, and mainstream news sources. These are the best types of material to provide in-depth indications of conservation's effects on livelihoods and subsequent adaptations. They might also shed light on the disjointed nature between higher-level conservation mentalities and ground-level experiences.

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II. EXCLUSIONARY CONSERVATION: AN ENDURING LEGACY OF COLONIALISM

As referenced in the literature review, political scientists have highlighted how colonialism created a fundamental fracture in Africa's land tenure system. Colonialism also instituted the legacy of exclusionary conservation schemes.⁴⁹ These schemes were based upon a perception of a wild, uninhabited, and pristine African continent, a perception that has largely been perpetuated by the West ever since.⁵⁰ This chapter will cover the context of land tenure and conservation across the precolonial, colonial, and postcolonial periods to show how colonialism fractured true customary land rights, as well as how it created and shaped contemporary conservation discourse and practice.

A. PRECOLONIAL: CUSTOMARY LAND TENURE AND INDIGENOUS CONSERVATION ACTIVITIES

Pre-colonial African land tenure was primarily communal and characterized by freedom of movement and access. Most Africans were mobile and responded to resource scarcity with further movement. Population densities were low, and land was readily available. States, as Europeans conceptualized them, were not introduced until the colonial era. Rather, micro-states, with a central locus and power extending outwards, were the closest form to a state.⁵¹ Even these state-like forms did not uniformly cover the continent. Importantly, these micro-states had porous boundaries and did not police or restrict population movements, which allowed flexibility in land tenure systems. Lastly, customary tenure refers to the highly variable land tenure practices of rural Africans which depended upon ethnicity, clan, community, and family. Colonial powers and subsequent independent African governments largely altered or attempted to cancel customary land tenure, as will be discussed in the next sections.

⁴⁹ Dawn Chatty and Marcus Colchester, eds, *Conservation and Mobile Indigenous Peoples: Displacement, Forced Settlement and Sustainable Development* (Herndon, VA: Berghahn Books, 2002), 3.

⁵⁰ Igoo, *Conservation and Globalization*, 13.

⁵¹ Iliffe, *Africans: The History of a Continent*.

In the pre-colonial period, before Western conceptions of conservation became mainstream in Africa, traditional practices of conservation included natural shifts in land use and hunting patterns to account for diminishing returns and overuse of land and its resources. Indigenous groups even sometimes established intentional conservation areas, such as traditional forest reserves, which were customary protected areas used for limited purposes, such as circumcision rites and practicing medicine men.⁵² Indigenous people recognized the value of maintaining a variety of flora and fauna on the land, and took steps to ensure biodiversity.

Conservation practices in the West operated under a completely different philosophy. In Europe and the United States, the English enclosure movement and American westward expansion served as forebearers of exclusionary conservation practices in colonial Africa.⁵³ The United States inaugurated this process, with the forced movement of Native Americans from parks and onto reservations as early as 1786. Roosevelt, in addition to hunting endangered animals on behalf of the Smithsonian, reflected the similarities between early 20th century Kenya and Wyoming thirty years prior, but noted that Africans were “a less formidable foe than Red Indians.”⁵⁴ As a result of colonial influence operating under a form of exclusionary and expansionary conservation, the key elements of precolonial African land access and use – communal and marked by freedom of movement – were to be fundamentally damaged by the European conquest of most of Africa.

⁵² C.A. Gerden and S. Mtalo, “Traditional forest reserves in Babati district, Tanzania: A study in human ecology,” Working paper 128. (Uppsala: Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences, International Rural Development Center, 1990).

⁵³ Igoo, *Conservation and Globalization*, 168.

⁵⁴ John M. MacKenzie, *The Empire of Nature: Hunting, Conservation and British Imperialism*, (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 1988), 162.

B. COLONIAL: BIFURCATED LAND CONCEPTS AND THE RISE OF NATIONAL PARKS

Colonial conceptions of land revolved around European powers' desires for control over labor and extraction of resources.⁵⁵ Initially, colonial powers focused on building infrastructure, legal systems, and taxation towards these ends, allowing the interests of private investors to dictate economic activities.⁵⁶ However, this trend shifted to exploitation by the colonial power itself, especially in the hopes of rebuilding post-World War II economies.⁵⁷ A key symbol of the extractive nature of colonialism was the value it placed on railroads, which served to expedite extraction from the inner areas of the continent to coastal shipping ports.⁵⁸ Colonizers and private firms extracted commodities like cocoa, rubber, and minerals, while continuing to abuse indigenous Africans as laborers, even after the declared end of the Trans-Atlantic slave trade.⁵⁹ Just as existing African populations and social organizations were highly varied at the onset of colonialism, so too were African experiences with colonialism widely varied. Going forward in this chapter, the focus will be on British colonization of Africa and its changes to customary law, land tenure, and its particular motivations for conservation. While other colonizers, like France, also instituted protected areas, its particular mode of operation and ideology was divergent from that of Britain in East Africa.⁶⁰

⁵⁵ Iliffe, *Africans: The History of a Continent*.; Mamdani, *Citizen and Subject: Contemporary Africa and the Legacy of Late Colonialism*.

⁵⁶ Iliffe, *Africans: The History of a Continent*, 217.

⁵⁷ Roderick P. Neumann, "The Postwar Conservation Boom in British Colonial Africa," *Environmental History* 7, no. 1 (2002): 28, <https://doi.org/10.2307/3985451>.

⁵⁸ Iliffe, *Africans: The History of a Continent*, 219.

⁵⁹ Iliffe, 222–3.

⁶⁰ Caroline Ford, "Nature, Culture and Conservation in France and Her Colonies 1840–1940." *Past & Present*, no. 183 (2004): 173–98. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/3600863>.

The colonization of Africa was motivated by both trade and land.⁶¹ Colonists viewed land as a commodity for financial gain, rather than as a key aspect of indigenous livelihoods. The philosophical architect of British indirect rule, Frederick Lugard, believed that efficiency and economy were the key tenets of colonial control.⁶² Towards those ends, territorialization, or the creation of new spatial relations, served to subvert existing property arrangements and expedite resource extraction.⁶³

Colonial administrators, eager to consolidate power in the colonies, morphed customary law in their favor and were instructed to “find a chief and build a court around him.”⁶⁴ They also sought out what they deemed ‘pristine’ indigenous people to assist them in this endeavor. Thus, while they appeared to take indigeneity into account, in reality, the colonizers merely coopted it for their purposes, and then modified it into a foreign form. For example, colonizers held the final authority to declare any practice repugnant (known as the repugnancy clause). As a consequence, traditional African livelihoods were slowly distorted and transformed based on Western ideals. Additionally, in the “containerization” of Africa, British colonial authorities divided colonies into administrative units based on race and tribe. Racial and tribal sub-units were intended to serve the colonizers’ hopes to prevent conflict and streamline colonial administration, all of which facilitated the main goal of resource extraction.⁶⁵

From the early 1900s to mid-century, the ideology of exclusion-based, or fortress, conservation gained traction, primarily in the British colonies of East and Central Africa.⁶⁶ However, it was not until the post-war period that colonial powers implemented those

⁶¹ Connor Joseph Cavanagh, “Plague of Bureaucracies: Producing and Territorializing Difference in East Africa, 1888–1940” (PhD diss., Norwegian University of Life Sciences, 2017), <https://nmbu.brage.unit.no/nmbu-xmlui/handle/11250/2644639>.

⁶² Achille Mbembe, “Necropolitics,” *Public Culture* 15, no. 1 (2003): 11–40. <https://doi.org/10.1215/08992363-15-1-11>.

⁶³ Mbembe, “Necropolitics,” 25–6.

⁶⁴ Mamdani, *Citizen and Subject: Contemporary Africa and the Legacy of Late Colonialism*, 125.

⁶⁵ Mamdani, 125.

⁶⁶ Neumann, “The Postwar Conservation Boom in British Colonial Africa,” 22–47.

plans. Britain, in particular, designed capitalistic and conservation policies with the goals of development and modernization of its African colonies.⁶⁷ Protected areas-based conservation supported capitalism by moving labor away from wildlife hunting and decreasing the mobility of African laborers. Still viewing Africans as backwards, British elites saw it as their duty to bring the continent towards “freedom and enlightenment.”⁶⁸ Plans for and establishment of national parks spread, causing high incidence of forced resettlement. As colonizers institutionalized private landholding at the expense of customary tenure, conservancies were also created on purchased, private land.

In East Africa, compulsory resettlement schemes began to drive many indigenous people from their lands. The British government commissioned a study by a University of London botany professor, who concluded that African land uses, particularly pastoralism, were incompatible with conservation.⁶⁹ This study provided a central impetus to evict people from parks. By the end of the 1950s, human settlement within national parks was completely banned in all subsequent, and most current, parks.⁷⁰ Colonial administrators justified resettlements to Africans under the guise of ecological protection, especially wildlife preservation. However, colonial conceptions of conservation largely, and ironically, revolved around hunting. In fact, many present-day African protected areas were originally established as hunting grounds for Europeans.⁷¹ These grounds were later transformed into national parks in the independence era. Thus, colonial-era conservation was pursued primarily for the purposes of extraction and Western conceptions of development, with the rationalization that it would also achieve ecological protection.

In Kenya and Tanzania, early colonial administrators recognized the power and legitimacy of a Maasai nation, which stretched across some 200,000 square miles of

⁶⁷ Neumann, 28.

⁶⁸ Neumann, 29.

⁶⁹ Neumann, 34.

⁷⁰ Neumann, 34.

⁷¹ Tim Caro et al., “Assessing the Effectiveness of Protected Areas: Paradoxes Call for Pluralism in Evaluating Conservation Performance,” *Diversity & Distributions* 15, no. 1 (2009): 178–82, <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1472-4642.2008.00522.x>.

present-day Kenya and Tanzania.⁷² The British even entered into treaties with the Maasai in 1904 and 1911, an act that temporarily consolidated Maasai legitimacy as a nation.⁷³ However, that legitimacy was short-lived, because in 1913, the British colonial government declared the Maasai a tribe instead of a sovereign nation.⁷⁴ This act changed the trajectory of Maasai-state interactions forever, especially when the post-independence governments of Kenya and Tanzania prioritized nationalism over tribalism to consolidate power.

Tanganyika (now Tanzania) was a German colony, part of German East Africa, until 1919, when it became British Tanganyika Trust Territory. Germany started the protected areas conservation program and designated 15 protected areas, representing about five percent of the colony, by 1911. This was ostensibly completed in an effort to protect wildlife, which had been exploited to an alarming degree in the preceding years, by both Arab traders and German colonizers. However, colonial archives recorded the vast amounts of hunting, especially of elephants and rhino, that actually drove the establishment of these protected areas.⁷⁵

The dispossession of indigenous land deepened in 1895, when a German imperial decree declared all land in Tanganyika belonged to the Kaizer. Under British rule, Land Ordinance Number 3 (1923) declared Britain itself owner of the land title system, and further overrode customary tenure. Land control and titling power passed to the president at independence, but more on the post-colonial era will follow.

The British designated the Serengeti lands as a game reserve in the 1921 Game Ordinance, but it was not until 1948, with the passage of the National Park Ordinance, that the lands were converted into what was, at that time, a prototype national park. Colonial-era Tanzania similarly expanded its protected areas from the 1940s-1960s. The creation of

⁷² Meitamei Olol Dapash, "Maasai Autonomy and Tanzania," *Cultural Survival* 25, 1 (2001): 60–2, <https://www.culturalsurvival.org/publications/cultural-survival-quarterly/maasai-autonomy-and-sovereignty-kenya-and-tanzania>.

⁷³ Dapash, 60–2.

⁷⁴ Dapash, 60–2.

⁷⁵ Rolf D. Baldus, "Wildlife Conservation in Tanganyika under German Colonial Rule," *Internationales Afrikaforum* 37, no. 1 (2001), 73.

Serengeti National Park was not without debate about indigenous livelihoods, though. Notably, the Ordinance explicitly protected customary rights in the new park. Colonial officials promised that the Maasai would retain their access to the land. However, that promise was broken in the ensuing decade. In 1958–9, the colonial government dispossessed approximately 50,000 people, primarily Maasai, of their traditional lands in the creation of Serengeti National Park, a 5,700 square mile protected area.⁷⁶ The British also divided the 1948 park into two areas, the park in its current form and Ngorongoro Conservation Area. The National Park itself followed a fortress model and therefore no people, other than tourists, were allowed inside. The government resettled displaced indigenes at Ngorongoro Conservation Area (97% of inhabitants are Maasai), where they were allowed to live, but where they were also charged with wildlife conservation. Just as colonizers distorted indigenous customary law for their purposes, so too did colonial administrations and, later, post-colonial governments, prioritize their interests over indigenous customary rights within the parks.

In colonial Kenya, a settler colony, the British administration prioritized the creation of individual title holdings for European immigrants, resulting in large-scale land expropriation from indigenous people. In particular, the colonial government's creation of the White Highlands, nearly three million hectares of land in the fertile Rift Valley, displaced thousands of indigenous people, the Kalenjin and Maasai among them.⁷⁷ If indigenous people attempted to remain, they became squatters on their own land. So extreme was the land expropriation that, by 1934, white settlers, who amounted to less than 0.25% of the population, controlled almost a third of the arable land in Kenya.⁷⁸

⁷⁶ Peter G. Veit and Catherine Benson, "When Parks and People Collide," Carnegie Council for Ethics in International Affairs, Last modified April 23, 2004, https://www.carnegiecouncil.org/publications/archive/dialogue/2_11/section_2/4449.

⁷⁷ Catherine Boone, Fibian Lukalo, and Sandra F Joireman, "Promised Land: Settlement Schemes in Kenya, 1962 to 2016," *Political Geography* 89 (2021): 102393–, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.polgeo.2021.102393>.

⁷⁸ Peter Veit, "History of Land Conflicts in Kenya," *Gates Open Research* 2019, 3: 982. <https://doi.org/10.21955/gatesopenres.1115885.1>.

In Uganda, the colonial administration entered into multiple agreements with existing kingdoms. The prime example is the Kingdom of Buganda, which signed a contract in 1900 that divided land into two sets, *mailo* land and Crown land.⁷⁹ Bugandan elites—the Kingship and chiefs—controlled *mailo* land, while Crown land was literally titled to the Queen of England and was used for colonial government purposes.⁸⁰ This change in land tenure immediately terminated customary land tenure of peasants, and they were forced to rent land which they previously considered their own from the kingdom elites. In 1922, the colonial administration, through the Crown Lands Declaration Ordinance, converted all land outside of Buganda into crown land, essentially either dispossessing or making tenants of all Ugandans.⁸¹

The Uganda protectorate administration declared Mount Elgon a Forest Reserve in 1929, formalizing ownership at a level other than the customary for the first time. The government then elevated a portion of it to protected area status in 1936. Indigenous people immediately faced changes to land use, such as restrictions on cultivation and cattle. Indigenous people experienced the brunt of changes in 1951, when restrictions on hunting were added to those on cultivation and cattle. Conflict and uncertainty ensued, as these restrictions effectively wiped away core forms of sustenance.

Meanwhile, international conservation organizations grew in size and scope during this postwar period, and the British government realized its leadership role in conservation policy was being usurped.⁸² The British government did not want to lose ownership of its African colonial conservation schemes. However, after some competition with the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the United Kingdom begrudgingly stepped aside.⁸³ As independence began to take hold, international

⁷⁹ Lillian Mono Wabineno-Oryema, “Changing Face of Land Tenure in Uganda: Period Before 1900 to date.” *Journal of Land Administration in Eastern Africa*. (2014) no 2: 134–148. <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/307631527>.

⁸⁰ Wabineno-Oryema, “Changing Face of Land Tenure in Uganda,” 134–148.

⁸¹ Wabineno-Oryema, “Changing Face of Land Tenure in Uganda,” 134–148.

⁸² Neumann, “The Postwar Conservation Boom in British Colonial Africa,” 39.

⁸³ Neumann.

conservation organizations feared that post-independence African leaders would forsake existing conservation objectives. The International Union for Conservation of Nature created an African Special Project in 1960, in an effort to bolster African support for conservationist aims.⁸⁴ In an attempt to appeal to the “African mind” conservationists used the slogan “profit, protein, pride, prestige.”⁸⁵

In all, colonialism influenced and molded East African notions of land tenure and conservation practices into a production of capitalist value and a production of a faux pristine nature. Protected areas, by restricting land use and access and dispossessing indigenous Africans of their homesteads, facilitated what Britain believed to be a more modern, stable African workforce, conducive to better colonial capitalist production. Colonial administrators, eager to consolidate power within their colonies and develop a ‘backward’ people, morphed customary law in their favor and subverted land tenure in the same way.

C. POST-COLONIAL: THE RISE OF PROTECTED AREAS

As colonialism faded and independence was won, exiting colonizers vested power over land with the state, another key departure from the pre-colonial era. Centralized power over land tenure at the state level enabled further subjugation of indigenous people under conservation constructs. Around the mid-twentieth century to the 1990s, the protected areas construct became the conservation practice de jure. Protected areas growth peaked, globally, from 1985–1995.⁸⁶ Even within the last five years, East African states have forced indigenous people from land in the name of conservation. Additionally, the economic liberalization of the 1980s incentivized East African governments to arbitrarily sell communal lands without any indigenous input.⁸⁷

⁸⁴ Neumann, 39.

⁸⁵ Neumann, 39.

⁸⁶ Daniel Brockington and James Igoe, “Eviction for Conservation: A Global Overview.” *Conservation & Society* 4, no. 3 (2006): 424–470, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/26396619>.

⁸⁷ Homewood, Kristjanson, and Trench, *Staying Maasai?*.

1. Post-Colonial Kenya

After gaining independence in 1963, Kenya's land tenure system became highly centralized and controlled by the state, and customary land taken by Europeans was only returned to Kenyans in fashions that benefitted the government. In the 1970s, the regime under President Jomo Kenyatta reacquired European-owned farmland, and, facing pressure from indigenous populations in resettlement areas, sold or transferred some of that land to individuals or companies.⁸⁸ State capture and subsequent state-mediation of the former White Highlands led to a situation of centralized government control over what had been customary, indigenous land tenure in the precolonial era.⁸⁹ The regime took advantage of this power and utilized patronage to maintain it. The Kikuyu and Luo people were the primary beneficiaries. Kenyatta was from the Kikuyu community.⁹⁰ In addition, the Kenyan government instituted compulsory *ujamaa*, or villagization, in an attempt to exert more control over its populations.⁹¹

During the single party era from 1978–1992 under President Daniel arap Moi, the central state shifted the political patronage system to benefit Moi's own community, the Kalenjin, while simultaneously disrupting the previous Kenyatta regime's land tenure system through direct eviction or de-legitimization of allocation schemes.⁹² Of note, the Sabaot, one group displaced by Mount Elgon National Park, are a subset of the Kalenjin ethnic group. Thus, the regime essentially pitted ethnic groups against each other in competition for land tenure rights. In 1991, the adoption of *majimbo* policies devolved power over land from the central government to the regional level, and established titular ethnic groups who became the only legitimate land owners in each region. After much

⁸⁸ Catherine Boone, "Land Conflicts and Distributive Policies in Kenya," *African Studies Review* 55, no. 1 (2012): 75–103, <https://doi.org/10.1353/arw.2012.0010>.

⁸⁹ Boone, "Land Conflicts and Distributive Policies in Kenya," 79–80.

⁹⁰ Boone, "Land Conflicts and Distributive Policies in Kenya."

⁹¹ Daniel Sambu, "Wildlife Conservation in Kenya and Tanzania and Effects on Maasai Communities," *The American Geographical Society's Focus on Geography* 60 (2017), <https://doi.org/10.21690/foge/2017.60.2p>.

⁹² Boone, "Land Conflicts and Distributive Policies in Kenya."

instability and continued uncertainty over land rights, exacerbated by state-led cultivation and conservation programs, the regime passed the Regulation of Land Tenure Act of 1992, which terminated all customary land rights.⁹³ *Majimbo* policies and the erasure of customary land rights resulted in land insecurity and dispossession for many ethnic groups, especially those that became non-titular regional minorities.

Upon the emergence of a multiparty era from 1992–2002, a strong political support base became even more essential, and land became an even more prominent pawn of political patronage. The regime under President Mwai Kibaki, in power 2002–2013, overhauled national policy, rejected *majimboism*, and instituted decentralized control of land at the county level.⁹⁴ During this regime, in 2007, land disputes and their connection to politics hit a tipping point, when violence over the disputed December elections killed more than 1,000 and displaced over half a million people.⁹⁵ President Uhuru Kenyatta, the son of Jomo Kenyatta, became president in 2013 and remains in power. Overall, the land question, and the historical roots of injustices surrounding land tenure, particularly in the Rift Valley, where most of the former white highlands were located, remains a heated topic. Politicians have addressed tensions by co-opting land tenure to their benefit, rather than addressing the root problems from the colonial period. Kenya's key legislation governing conservation is the 2014 Wildlife Conservation and Management Act.

Kenya's post-colonial land tenure system evolved into one in which land became inextricably linked with ethnicity and political patronage. Regionalism and villagization connected land tenure to both ethnicity and electoral bids. This evolution has echoed over time, underpinning the outbreak of conflict in hotspots across the state, like Mount Elgon. In contrast, Tanzania's post-colonial land tenure system began and remains highly centralized at the state level. The process of villagization in Tanzania, ostensibly a method

⁹³ Katherine Homewood, Ernestina Coast, and Michael Thompson, "In-Migrants and Exclusion in East African Rangelands: Access, Tenure and Conflict," *Africa (London. 1928)* 74, no. 4 (2004): 567–610, <https://doi.org/10.3366/afr.2004.74.4.567>.

⁹⁴ Boone, "Land Conflicts and Distributive Policies in Kenya," 75–103.

⁹⁵ Veit, "History of Land Conflicts in Kenya," 982.

of decentralizing land tenure, proved to be only a façade, as the central state still determines land demarcation and thus land rights and use.

2. Post-Colonial Tanzania

After gaining independence in 1961, Tanganyika (renamed Tanzania in 1964) held all customary lands, including those of the Maasai, in a state trust until the 1980s, after which, some lands were privatized and some were made into group ranches.⁹⁶ The Arusha Declaration of 1967 created a program of state villagization, intended to streamline provision of public goods and create collective farming ventures. However, villagization dispossessed Tanzanians of customary land and the traditional rights associated with customary land tenure. It also created two main categories of land – village land and national land. However, the program lacked a legal framework, and the central state determined what was in the ‘public interest’ when demarcating village land.⁹⁷ Through villagization, the Nyerere government effectively extinguished customary land rights.

Interestingly, Nyerere, like many of his colonial predecessors, viewed conservation through a lens of profit. In 1960, regarding wildlife conservation, he stated, “I believe after diamonds and sisal, wild animals will provide Tanganyika its greatest source of income. Thousands of Americans and Europeans have the strange urge to see these animals.”⁹⁸ The Wildlife Conservation Act of 1974 remains Tanzania’s chief legislation on conservation. This law identifies the government as the key decision-maker on conservation decisions, including establishment and management of conservation areas. The centralized character of land tenure and control in Tanzania means that the government and foreign investors have a wide margin of land use possibilities within the state. The President is the trustee of the land, controlling it on behalf of all Tanzanians. Thus, it is perhaps not surprising that of all the states evaluated in this thesis, Tanzania has the highest percentage of protected

⁹⁶ Homewood, Kristjanson, and Trench, *Staying Maasai?*.

⁹⁷ Simon Coldham, “Land Tenure Reform in Tanzania: Legal Problems and Perspectives,” *The Journal of Modern African Studies* 33, no. 2 (1995): 227–42, <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0022278X00021042>.

⁹⁸ Julie M. Weiskopf, “Socialism on Safari: Wildlife and Nation-Building in Postcolonial Tanzania, 1961–77,” *Journal of African History* 56, no. 3 (2015): 429–47, <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0021853715000341>.

areas, at nearly 40%.⁹⁹ Additionally, the Maasai continue to experience systematic evictions from and changes in land use within the areas the Tanzanian government resettled them.

Land tenure in Tanzania was, and remains, highly centralized. Indigenous groups face confusing processes and vested state interests in attempts to obtain land rights. In Uganda, land tenure rights have arguably progressed the most of the three states discussed. Ugandan land tenure has evolved from being highly centralized at the state level to its present form which recognizes multiple forms of ownership, including customary tenure systems, which regulate two thirds of the total land.¹⁰⁰

3. Post-Colonial Uganda

Following Uganda's independence in 1962, land and resource control largely kept continuity with the colonial period, wherein hegemony meant control of land. Crown lands were made public land, and public lands were vested in the Uganda Land Commission. The Land Commission also abolished all forms of land ownership in any previous form. Thus, customary land tenure was abolished, and only those with access to capital were able to establish true government-backed land tenure.¹⁰¹ The Amin regime passed the Land Reform Decree of 1975, which simplified land tenure into only two categories, leasehold and public land, ignoring the existence of complex, overlapping land interests.

In 1995, the Constitution of Uganda dissolved the Land Reform Decree of 1975, declared that land belongs to the Ugandan people, and reinstituted four land tenure systems: *mailo* (a size-limited, formal customary tenure with stable rights), freehold, leasehold, and

⁹⁹ "Protected Area Profile for United Republic of Tanzania from the World Database of Protected Areas," UNEP-WCMC, accessed 13 August 2021, <https://www.protectedplanet.net/country/TZA>.

¹⁰⁰ "Prevailing Systems of Land Tenure," Food and Agriculture Organization of The United Nations, accessed October 15, 2021, https://www.fao.org/gender-landrights-database/country-profiles/countries-list/land-tenure-and-related-institutions/prevailing-systems-of-land-tenure/en/?country_iso3=UGA.

¹⁰¹ Patrick McAuslan, *Land Law Reform in East Africa, Traditional or Transformative? a Critical Review of 50 Years of Land Law Reform in Eastern Africa, 1961–2011*, 1st ed. (Oxfordshire, England: Routledge, 2013), 27.; Peter Veit et al., *Protected Areas and Property Rights: Democratizing Eminent Domain in East Africa* (Washington, D.C.: World Resources Institute, 2008), 8, <https://www.wri.org/research/protected-areas-and-property-rights>.

customary.¹⁰² Customary land, though normally not formalized in writing, may now be officially registered under a Certificate of Customary Ownership.¹⁰³ Thus, in Uganda, rural peasants have experienced a gamut - from total loss of customary land tenure in the colonial period, to a new period of opportunity to reassert customary land claims. The government has issued approximately 25,000 Certificates of Customary Ownership since 2015.¹⁰⁴ However, legal protections for such reassertions of customary tenure may prove deficient against state land grabbing, an area of ongoing study.¹⁰⁵

Uganda has been under the leadership of one president and one-party rule since 1986, and scholars note a general trend of declining governance, particularly manifesting within the agriculture and infrastructure sectors, but also in uneven application of civil liberties, like freedom of expression.¹⁰⁶ Political elites have manipulated district boundaries to their advantage, kindling land disputes, and an upcoming land reform bill is expected to continue the downward spiral of governance and accountability to those outside of patronage networks.¹⁰⁷ Presently, land reform is characterized as Uganda's "most controversial problem."¹⁰⁸

¹⁰² Wabineno-Oryema, "Changing Face of Land Tenure in Uganda," 134–148.

¹⁰³ Wabineno-Oryema, "Changing Face of Land Tenure in Uganda," 134–148.

¹⁰⁴ Liam Taylor, "Uganda drive to certify customary land runs into culture clash," Reuters, last modified June 1, 2021, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-uganda-landrights-women/uganda-drive-to-certify-customary-land-runs-into-culture-clash-idUSKCN2DD3H3>.

¹⁰⁵ Jean-Claude N. Ashukem, "Land Grabbing and Customary Land Rights in Uganda: A Critical Reflection of the Constitutional and Legislative Right to Land," *International Journal on Minority and Group Rights* 27, 1 (2020): 121–147, <https://doi.org/10.1163/15718115-02701003>.

¹⁰⁶ "Uganda's Slow Slide into Crisis," International Crisis Group, last modified November 21, 2017, <https://www.crisisgroup.org/africa/horn-africa/uganda/256-ugandas-slow-slide-crisis>.

¹⁰⁷ "Uganda's Slow Slide into Crisis," International Crisis Group.

¹⁰⁸ Liam Taylor, "How Land Reform Became Uganda's Most Controversial Problem," *Foreign Policy*, October 15, 2021, <https://foreignpolicy.com/2021/10/15/uganda-uganda-kingdom-land-reform-debate-museveni-colonialism-indigenous-power/>.

4. Post-Colonial Outlook

Herbst's land tenure pattern classifications illustrate the wide variance of land tenure across the continent, but also between the subjects of study - Kenya, Tanzania, and Uganda.¹⁰⁹ All have differing levels of private ownership and state leasehold. However, the main difference is in customary tenure. Both Kenya and Tanzania maintain no recognition of customary tenure, whereas, starting in 2011, Uganda now explicitly recognizes customary tenure. Thus, with the recent exception of Uganda, indigenous groups maintain no strong institutionalized claim on land. In sum, Kenya's land tenure, while now decentralized, is fraught with historic ethnic and political strife, Tanzania's land tenure remains highly centralized, and Uganda's land reforms allow for recognized customary tenure. Despite the differences in land tenure across time among all three states, their present-day use of exclusionary conservation for national parks is constant.

Central for the purposes of this thesis, however, is the sub-national, everyday experience with land access and rights and how land dispossession impacts livelihoods. Low levels of violence resulting from dispossession many times fail to capture the attention of media and scholars. For example, many scholars do not identify confrontations as "intrastate armed conflicts" unless they reach a threshold of twenty-five or more battle deaths per annum.¹¹⁰ However, in East Africa, low-level disputes over land may not meet that threshold, and therefore might not gain attention. Additionally, violent state acts against marginalized groups may be overlooked and rationalized as enforcement of conservation, rather than actual repression of certain ethnic groups.¹¹¹ Continual, non-violent struggles can also shape livelihoods. Indigenous people were divided along colonial- and state-determined state and park boundaries, many times making them ethnic

¹⁰⁹ Jeffrey Herbst, *States and Power in Africa: Comparative Lessons in Authority and Control*, 2nd ed. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2014), muse.jhu.edu/book/36540.

¹¹⁰ "UCDP Definitions," Uppsala Conflict Data Program (UCDP), accessed August 15, 2021, <https://www.pcr.uu.se/research/ucdp/definitions/>.

¹¹¹ Homewood, Coast, and Thompson, "In-Migrants and Exclusion in East African Rangelands," 574.

minorities in their respective state and, subsequently, politically marginalized in many cases.¹¹²

The addition of third parties, whether non-governmental organizations (NGOs) or parastatal organizations, onto the post-colonial conservation scene is a notable trend because it has created another layer of sovereignty dynamics between the state and indigenous people, many times disjointed and overlapping in nature.¹¹³ There has been a rapid expansion of such organizations, especially the last two decades of the twentieth century. For example, in Tanzania in the early 1980s, there were 17 registered NGOs, but by the end of the century, there were over 1,000.¹¹⁴ Kenya experienced a 1,100% increase in NGOs between 1990 and 2009.¹¹⁵ When states sub-contract conservation schemes to NGOs and other conservation institutions, they give them tacit power over indigenous populations through the “privatization of sovereignty.”¹¹⁶ For example, this dynamic has developed between conservationist organizations and the Maasai in Ngorongoro District. Third-party or parastatal organizations operating in the space between indigenous people and the state tend to complicate attribution of blame for violence and other extralegal actions against indigenous people. In most cases, East African state conservation schemes are funded by large, international conservation NGOs, like the International Union for Conservation of Nature, the World Wildlife Fund, and Africa Wildlife Foundation. From there, smaller NGOs are charged with carrying out conservation programs and interfacing with local communities.¹¹⁷ NGOs are careful to protect their images, and make it clear that they do not initiate indigenous displacement from protected areas. However, state

¹¹² Homewood, Coast, and Thompson, “In-Migrants and Exclusion in East African Rangelands,” 574.

¹¹³ Esther Mwangi, “Bumbling Bureaucrats, Sluggish Courts and Forum-Shopping Elites: Unending Conflict and Competition in the Transition to Private Property,” *European Journal of Development Research* 22, no. 5 (2010): 715–32, <https://doi.org/10.1057/ejdr.2010.38>.

¹¹⁴ Igoe, *Conservation and Globalization*, 11.

¹¹⁵ K.A. Cockerill and S. M. Hagerman, “Historical insights for understanding the emergence of community-based conservation in Kenya: international agendas, colonial legacies, and contested worldviews,” *Ecology and Society* 25, no 2 (2020): 15, <https://doi.org/10.5751/ES-11409-250215>.

¹¹⁶ Dowie, *Conservation Refugees*, 231.

¹¹⁷ Igoe, *Conservation and Globalization*, 170.

governments have been known to sub-contract their power to NGOs or parastatals once they decide to displace indigenous people. Thus, while they strive to distance themselves from the gray areas around human rights violations, NGOs can become part and parcel of the displacement program. However, indigenous people have also co-opted the “associational revolution” for their own purposes, either through creation of their own NGOs or attachment to existing ones.¹¹⁸

The idea that “national parks equal nature and nature does not include humans” remains pervasive in modern-day conservation discourse.¹¹⁹ East Africa, in particular, has been characterized as a Western-contrived “ecocultural theme park.” For example, even the Discovery Channel has provided vivid footage of East African savannahs, animals, and people, including the Maasai, but the images it broadcasts portray a vast, untouched wilderness, and keeps images of humans separate from those of nature.

In many parts of Africa, dispossession remains a present-day issue, as indigenous people have largely been unable to reassert traditional, customary, precolonial land tenure rights in their respective domestic legal spheres.¹²⁰ Since the 1990s, conservationists had adapted and experimented with other methods of conservation, including locally-based conservation initiatives like community conservancies, ecotourism ventures, and the creation of local incentives for conservation on community lands. However, institutional inertia is at play, and state power has become seemingly entwined with national parks enforcement. Scholars have long noted institutional path dependency, and conservation is not immune to these forces. In fact, fortress-based discourse continues to dominate state approaches to protected areas conservation.¹²¹ This approach originated and was

¹¹⁸ Jim Igoe, “Scaling up Civil Society: Donor Money, NGOs and the Pastoralist Land Rights Movement in Tanzania,” *Development and Change* 34, no. 5 (2003): 867, <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-7660.2003.00332.x>.

¹¹⁹ Igoe, *Conservation and Globalization*, 14.

¹²⁰ Turner, “Lasting Legacies: Contemporary Struggles and Historical Dispossession,” 275–92.

¹²¹ Jón Geir Petursson and Paul Vedeld, “Rhetoric and reality in protected area governance: Institutional change under different conservation discourses in Mount Elgon National Park, Uganda,” *Ecological Economics* 131 (2017): 166–177, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ecolecon.2016.08.028>.

manipulated by colonial powers to their advantage. Additionally, the rhetoric of conservation as development continues to pervade park philosophy. Tanzania National Parks Authority's moto is "sustainable conservation for development."¹²² The applications of this approach, including state repression of park-adjacent people, will be covered in the case studies.

It was within the context of colonialism that the "hegemonic claims of environmentalism" began to take form.¹²³ State power is now intertwined with conservation schemes at the supranational and international level, and "ulterior hegemonic motives" continue, alongside indigenous coercion and park-people struggles.¹²⁴ Qualitatively and quantitatively, in the historic and present-day Westernized enforcement of conservation, indigenous East Africans are bearing the brunt of the costs of conservation.¹²⁵ How they are adapting to these costs is the focus of the next chapters.

The following chapters discuss the livelihood impacts and subsequent adaptations of indigenous groups impacted by exclusionary conservation for the creation of two national parks. The first case study examines the approximately 50,000 Maasai people affected by British evictions from and restricted access to Serengeti National Park and resettled into the adjoining Ngorongoro Conservation Area and Ngorongoro district, Tanzania. The second case study examines the Bagisu, Sabiny, and Benet of Uganda, and the Sabaot and Ogiek of Kenya, who have experienced eviction from or restrictions to access of Mount Elgon National Park in Uganda and Kenya. The exact numbers of those impacted by the creation of Mount Elgon National Park is more difficult to ascertain than the Maasai of Serengeti National Park. This is because the Maasai entered into a legal

¹²² "Tanzania National Parks," The United Republic of Tanzania, accessed August 14, 2021, <https://www.tanzaniaparks.go.tz/>.

¹²³ Tania Murray Li, "Engaging Simplifications: Community-Based Resource Management, Market Processes and State Agendas in Upland Southeast Asia," *World Development* 30, no. 2 (2002): 278, [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0305-750X\(01\)00103-6](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0305-750X(01)00103-6).

¹²⁴ Alice B. Kelly, "Conservation Practice as Primitive Accumulation," *The Journal of Peasant Studies* 38, no. 4 (2011): 694, <https://doi.org/10.1080/03066150.2011.607695>.

¹²⁵ Vedeld et al., "The Political Economy of Conservation at Mount Elgon, Uganda," 183–94.

agreement with the government, and it is also due to the nature of the creation of Mount Elgon National Park. Colonial and then state regimes gradually created and expanded the conservation area of Mount Elgon National Park, first as forest reserve in 1929, then as a protected area in 1936, and lastly to a national park in 1993, with many additional restrictions occurring between 1936 and 1993. This complicates exact accounting of the affected and displaced populations. However, based on census data and general persistence of settlement in and around Mount Elgon National Park among these ethnic groups, approximately 300,000 Sabaot and Ogiek in Kenya and 1.7 million Bagisu, Sabiny, and Benet of Uganda have been impacted by the gradual development of exclusionary conservation of Mount Elgon.¹²⁶

In the case studies to follow, the reader will be taken through the experiences of multiple indigenous groups in and around two different national parks. While the experiences of these groups are markedly different in the face of conservation schemes, their adaptation strategies show significant parallels. Many of these groups undertake both legal and illegal methods to maintain or create viable livelihoods. Overall, the case studies will reveal how exclusionary conservation in East Africa prompts relatively predictable patterns of adaptation, albeit along a spectrum. More analysis and fusion of results will follow in Chapter V.

¹²⁶ David K. Himmelfarb, "In the Aftermath of Displacement: A Political Ecology of Dispossession, Transformation, and Conflict on Mt. Elgon, Uganda" (PhD diss., University of Georgia, 2012), 40, http://getd.libs.uga.edu/pdfs/himmelfarb_david_k_201208_phd.pdf; *The National Population and Housing Census 2014 – Main Report* (Kampala, Uganda: Uganda Bureau of Statistics, 2016), https://www.ubos.org/wp-content/uploads/publications/03_20182014_National_Census_Main_Report.pdf.

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III. CASE STUDY I: MOUNT ELGON NATIONAL PARK, UGANDA AND KENYA

The indigenous peoples displaced in Kenya and Uganda for the creation of Mount Elgon National Park, who now live in the areas immediately surrounding the park, struggle and maneuver to persistently challenge the hegemony of conservation. This includes active social, physical, and political resistance to the imposed scarcity of land and resources that this protected area has induced. Additionally, larger-scale violent conflicts have emerged in both the Ugandan and Kenyan portions of the park. Overall, the primarily agricultural population which was displaced from Mount Elgon National Park and now borders it does not consist of passive victims but, rather, active victims with a vengeance, who are proponents for their own indigenous land rights.

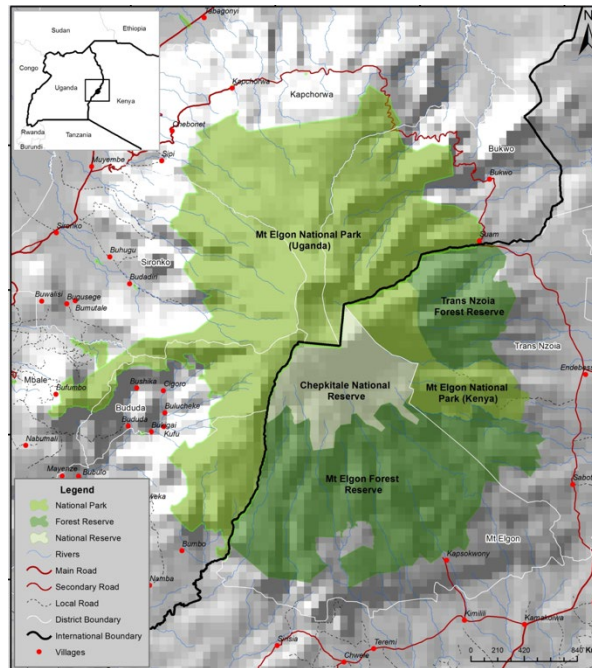


Figure 1. Mount Elgon National Park and Corresponding Forest Reserves.¹²⁷

A. LIVELIHOOD IMPACTS AND ADAPTATIONS OF THE UGANDAN BAGISU, SABINY, AND BENET AND KENYAN SABAOT AND OGIEK

Owing to its high rainfall rates and fertile, formerly volcanic soil, Mount Elgon National Park comprises a dense forest ecosystem with critical natural resources, which also supports some of East Africa’s highest population densities. For example, the park helps protect a key water catchment area that eventually feeds Lake Victoria.¹²⁸ However, despite its value to conservation, the case of Mount Elgon National Park is marred by historic and present political injustices towards indigenous populations. Conservation and

¹²⁷ Source: Lena Jeha, “Equity, Sustainability and Incentive-Based Conservation Measures: Community Reflections from Mt. Elgon, Uganda” (PhD diss., University of York, 2016), 85, <https://ethos.bl.uk/OrderDetails.do?uin=uk.bl.ethos.696094>.

¹²⁸ Miriam van Heist, “Accompanying report with the land unit map of Mount Elgon National Park,” (Mbale: IUCN report, 1994), <http://dx.doi.org/10.13140/RG.2.2.17062.11846>.

livelihoods have been in tension with each other since the colonial era, and local resistance and conflict lie at the heart of the park-people relationship at Mount Elgon.¹²⁹

By the time it was formally elevated to National Park status in Uganda in 1993 and the Uganda Wildlife Authority took responsibility of its management, Mount Elgon had already been a conflict hotspot. The indigenous people who lived in and around the park had already experienced a shrinking of land use and access since the 1930s (discussed in Chapter I) but many had returned to establish households in the protected area in the 1960s and 1970s. Following the end to a decade of civil strife, in 1986, conservation came back onto the political agenda. At this time the United States, via the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), played a large role in influencing the Ugandan government to convert many of its Forest Reserves into National Parks, including Mount Elgon, contributing \$30 million towards the effort.¹³⁰ The evictions of the 1990s displaced around 100,000 Ugandans, and evictions continued into the 2000s.¹³¹ Conflict systematically flares between the Uganda Wildlife Authority and local communities. Such conflict not only damages indigenous livelihoods, it also sometimes damages the very object of protection, the park.¹³²

On the Kenyan side, the park evolution took a different course. Much of what is now Mount Elgon National Park was cleared of inhabitants for European settlement schemes (known as the White Highlands) during colonial rule. Then, following independence and many indigenous claims to land rights in and around the forest, governments attempted varying resettlement schemes, most with disastrous results. Resettlement schemes primarily occurred in the 1970s, 1990s, and 2005. Many scholars have studied the corrupt nature of these resettlement schemes, which were largely

¹²⁹ Linda Norgrove and David Hulme, “Confronting Conservation at Mount Elgon, Uganda.” *Development and Change* 37, no. 5 (2006): 1093–1116, <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-7660.2006.00514.x>.

¹³⁰ Petursson and Vedeld, “Rhetoric and reality in protected area governance,” 166–177.

¹³¹ Vedeld et al., “The Political Economy of Conservation at Mount Elgon, Uganda,” 186.

¹³² Nilufar Matin et al., “Group Inequality and Environmental Sustainability: Insights from Bangladesh and Kenyan Forest Commons,” *Sustainability (Basel, Switzerland)* 6, no. 3 (2014): 1462–88, <https://doi.org/10.3390/su6031462>.

influenced by political patronage, as discussed in Chapter II.¹³³ The Kenyan government designated much of the park-adjacent areas for large-scale agriculture in the early 1990s. The Kenyan side of the park also adjoins to the Mount Elgon Forest Reserve, a protected area of 74,000 hectares, administered by the Kenyan Forest Department.

Mount Elgon National Park's history, on both sides of the transected border, is a complicated one of contradictory claims, corruption, tension, and conflict since at least the colonial era, and thus it is within that context that current interpretations of the situation must emanate.

Approximately two million people currently live in the administrative state districts bordering Mount Elgon National Park and the Forest Reserves on the Kenyan side. The bordering districts are Trans Nzoia and Mount Elgon. On the Ugandan side, three districts border Mount Elgon National Park, with populations totaling approximately 1.7 million people, according to the most recent 2014 census: Kapchorwa, Sironko, Mbale. Combined, nearly four million people currently experience, or previously experienced, the effects of exclusionary conservation at this site.

Mount Elgon National Park is not a particularly popular tourist destination, as it lacks “charismatic” attractions, or awe-inducing megafauna, like those found in Serengeti National Park. Instead, it offers “non-charismatic” biodiversity, which is a niche market for eco-tourism. However, low levels of tourism are not from a lack of effort. The Kenyan Wildlife Service website describes its approximately 500 square mile area of Mount Elgon National Park as “Untamed Wilderness, Secluded Splendor.”¹³⁴ Such claims refer back to Western and precolonial misconceptions of Africa as pristine and uninhabited, but reveal how East African states continue to apply such discourses to conservation spaces to appeal to tourists and thus increase opportunities for capital.

¹³³ Robert Simiyu, *Militianisation of Resource Conflicts: The Case of Land-based Conflict in the Mount Elgon Region of Western Kenya* (Pretoria: Institute for Security Studies, 2008).; Boone, “Land Conflicts and Distributive Policies in Kenya,” 75–103.; Claire Médard, “‘Indigenous’ Land Claims in Kenya: A Case Study of Chebyuk, Mount Elgon District,” in *The Struggle over Land in Africa Conflicts, Politics & Change* (Pretoria, South Africa: Human Sciences Research Council Press, 2010).

¹³⁴ “Mount Elgon National Park,” Kenyan Wildlife Service, accessed August 15, 2021, <http://www.kws.go.ke/content/mount-elgon-national-park>.

Both the Uganda Wildlife Authority and Kenyan Wildlife Service are charged with the enforcement of conservation goals for the park. Both organizations carry out security operations for the parks and interact, to varying degrees, with park neighbors. However, a key difference between the two approaches is that the Uganda Wildlife Authority negotiates resource access agreements with amicable locals, whereas the Kenyan Wildlife Service follows a strict fortress policy, in which locals cannot enter the park. The Kenya Forest Department manages Mount Elgon Forest Reserve and the Trans-Nzoia Forest Reserve, which each border the national park in Kenya. Local Kenyan communities pay the Kenya Forest Department for access to the forest reserves. Thus, while the management of the Kenyan portion of the national park is very different from the Ugandan side (access versus no access), the Kenyan forest reserves do allow for indigenous resource access. Of these organizations, the Kenyan Wildlife Service is the best equipped organization, with good facilities and infrastructure. The Kenya Forest Department is poorly equipped. The Uganda Wildlife Authority is characterized as being modestly equipped but having poor infrastructure.¹³⁵ These differences in park management will be further discussion in the adaptations section.

1. Livelihood Impacts

The Bagisu, Sabiny and the Benet are the primary indigenous people who were displaced on the Ugandan side. The Benet, sometimes referred to as Ndorobo, are a notable subset of the Sabiny group because they lived on the Mount Elgon moorlands for about 200 years. In contrast, the Sabiny primarily inhabited Mount Elgon's lowlands. On the Kenyan side, the Sabaot and Ogiek people live near Mount Elgon. The Ogiek are one of the only Kenyan indigenous groups with a "strong and near universally recognised claim to original and continued residence in a particular area."¹³⁶ Both the Ogiek and Sabaot are subsets of the larger Kalenjin ethnic group. The 2019 census did not disaggregate the

¹³⁵ Jón Geir Petursson, Paul Vedeld, and Arild Vatn, "Going Transboundary? An Institutional Analysis of Transboundary Protected Area Management Challenges at Mt Elgon, East Africa," *Ecology and Society* 18, no. 4 (2013): 28, <https://doi.org/10.5751/ES-05729-180428>.

¹³⁶ Gabrielle Lynch, "Kenya's New Indigenes: Negotiating Local Identities in a Global Context," *Nations and Nationalism* 17, no. 1 (2011): 157, <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1469-8129.2010.00465.x>.

Sabaot population from the Sabaot/Kony/Bong'omek grouping, but the combined population of that group was 296,374, and the Ogiek number 52,596.¹³⁷ The Sabaot can also be further disaggregated into the Soy and Mosop clans, differentiated by their traditional settlement area on Mount Elgon.

All indigenous groups in the Mount Elgon National Park area were originally nomadic pastoralists, but most have transformed into settled, intensive agriculturalists as a result of exclusionary conservation and lack of mobility and resource access.¹³⁸ Indigenous experiences with the park and forest reserves evaluated against the Cernea framework of Impoverishment Risks for Displaced Populations, indicate that the dispossessed indigenous people living adjacent to Mount Elgon National Park experience all of the model's impoverishment risks, although specific quantification over time is problematic.

Landlessness: Indigenous people have experienced recurrent landlessness as a result of protected area enforcement. As previously discussed, local indigenous people maintain varying levels of park resource access on the Ugandan side, but locals do not have any free and legal access to the park on the Kenyan side. Kenyans do, however, have the option to pay for temporary access to the forest reserves. The original allocation of Chepyuk lands to the Sabaot in 1974 was complicated by a general rush of other groups to take the fertile farmlands, followed by several botched government allocations and re-allocations of land in the 1970s, 1990s, and 2005.¹³⁹ These resettlement schemes caused landlessness for thousands of Sabaot and other groups and were intertwined with political patronage schemes.

¹³⁷ Kenya National Bureau of Statistics, *2019 Kenya Population and Housing Census Volume IV: Distribution of Population by Socio-Economic Characteristics* (Nairobi, Kenya: Kenya National Bureau of Statistics, 2019), 423, <https://www.knbs.or.ke/?wpdmpo=2019-kenya-population-and-housing-census-volume-iv-distribution-of-population-by-socio-economic-characteristics>.

¹³⁸ Himmelfarb, "In the Aftermath of Displacement," 102.

¹³⁹ Eija Soini, *Land Tenure and Land Management in the Districts Around Mount Elgon: An Assessment Presented to Mount Elgon Regional Ecosystem Conservation Programme* (working paper no. 49, World Agroforestry Centre, Nairobi, Kenya, 2007), 21.

Importantly, many of Kenya's land issues have direct linkages to colonial-era land grabbing and creation of the White Highlands, discussed in Chapter II. The post-independence government failed to complete land resettlement schemes, including its 1971 plan to resettle the Mosop/Ndorobo in Chepyuk. Continuing government failure to fully, or correctly, carry out resettlement schemes—Chepyuk I, II, and III—served to further tangle land claims and heighten tensions. When the Mosop and others attempted to gain land as part of Chepyuk III in 2005, the Soy, facing relocation, created the Sabaot Land Defense Force and carried out ruthless violence against its adversaries, mostly the Mosop. The government deployed the Kenya Defense Force to quell the violence in 2008.

Joblessness: Park-adjacent populations still rely on farming and livestock rearing as their primary occupations. Thus, landlessness has prompted joblessness or a decrease in income and opportunity. Previous incomes tied to the collection of resources from the forest have been also damaged. On the Ugandan side of the park, indigenous people still collect resources to a limited degree, as there are resource access agreements in place with the park managers (to be discussed in the adaptations section). However, the overall proportion of indigenous resource collection has dropped from over 70% to 30%.¹⁴⁰ Of those still collecting resources, the amount and variety of collection has also decreased. The Kenyan side does not allow any park access to park neighbors. There is an electric fence on the Kenyan side to help enforce the restriction.¹⁴¹ The Uganda Wildlife Authority and Kenyan Wildlife Service do employ some nearby residents for park management; however, the proportion of joblessness far outweighs the proportion of available park-related jobs. Restriction from, or a lack of access to, Mount Elgon National Park has direct negative impacts on job opportunities and overall household income.

Homelessness: Evictions from the protected area immediately resulted in homelessness for indigenous people, who then had to rebuild or consolidate households. Additionally, resettlement schemes, particularly on the Kenyan side, led to recurrent

¹⁴⁰ Vedeld et al., “The Political Economy of Conservation at Mount Elgon, Uganda,” 189.

¹⁴¹ Jón Geir Petursson, Paul Vedeld, and Arild Vatn, “Going Transboundary? An Institutional Analysis of Transboundary Protected Area Management Challenges at Mt Elgon, East Africa.” *Ecology and Society* 18, no. 4 (2013): 28–, <https://doi.org/10.5751/ES-05729-180428>.

homelessness for some. The conflict in 2007–8 between the Sabaot Defence Land Force, the Mosop, and the Kenyan military was particularly devastating to livelihoods. Although not explicitly connected to conservation, it was directly tied to land access and use in the Mount Elgon area. Many houses were burned down during this conflict, causing families to seek temporary shelter. Overcrowding in fewer houses threatens health, as communicable diseases spread easier.

Political Marginalization: Pastoralists and agriculturalists are systemically excluded from politics in both Kenya and Uganda.¹⁴² The coupling of pastoral or agricultural livelihoods with the additional cross-cutting cleavage of ethnicity around Mount Elgon National Park creates a situation of deep social segmentation and institutional exclusion. Institutional inclusivity refers to the degree a group can impact state decision-making. The Mount Elgon region is also geographically remote from the central locus of both states' political power and has historically been politically marginalized at the state level. For example, it was during the breakdown in governance during Uganda's Amin and Obote II regimes, the 1960s-1970s, that many indigenous groups re-entered the (then-gazetted) park boundaries to establish households, develop agriculture, and stake renewed claims on forest land.¹⁴³ In this way, state weakness coupled with the peripheral location allowed for re-taking of indigenous lands, but also set the stage for conflict when those groups were later evicted (again) in the 1980s. Moreover, many of these groups were uneducated and illiterate in the early stages of eviction and resettlement, furthering their susceptibility to marginalization at the hands of conservationists and the state.¹⁴⁴

In both Kenya and Uganda, post-colonial governments have participated in the politicization of land patronage, a type of social engineering, in attempts to stay in office

¹⁴² Colin Kahl, "Population Growth, Environmental Degradation, and State-Sponsored Violence: The Case of Kenya, 1991–93," *International Security* 23, no. 2 (1998): 80–119, <https://doi.org/10.1162/isec.23.2.80>.

¹⁴³ Norgrove and Hulme, "Confronting Conservation at Mount Elgon, Uganda," 1098.

¹⁴⁴ Anna Dirkse, "Master's Project: A Case Study of the 'Benet Land Problem' in Eastern Uganda" (UVM ScholarWorks, 2017), 13.

and temper conflict.¹⁴⁵ For example, from 1991–1993, the Moi regime in Kenya leveraged grievances associated with its ethnic, land-based patronage system to provoke ethnic conflict in the Rift Valley to the east of Mount Elgon National Park.¹⁴⁶ Similarly, districts surrounding the park, Chebyuk in particular, have been the subject of immense brokering, at both the tribe and national levels, as discussed in the Landlessness section. Land has become a resource for political patronage while also entrenching ethnic differences.¹⁴⁷ The state has used ethnic markers as “a means of restricting political power or economic benefits to a subgroup of the population.”¹⁴⁸ Kenyan regimes defined and redefined indigeneity to their benefit, and, in some cases, indigenous groups became squatters on their own traditional lands.¹⁴⁹ Minority ethnic groups like the Sabaot, Ogiek, and Benet continue to feel ignored and abused by Kenyan governments.¹⁵⁰

Economic Marginalization: Park-adjacent populations experience economic marginalization. Joblessness and lack of or reduced access to resources are two of the causal mechanisms triggering economic marginalization. Overall, the economic costs to park neighbors appear to outweigh any benefits.

A 2011 study of 80 households in Uganda measured this quantitatively, and it suggests that costs incurred constitute over 20% of total income, while park-related income accounts for only one percent of total household income.¹⁵¹ This indicates that the costs of conservation are unfairly placed upon the shoulders of those who have already been dispossessed of ancestral lands. Whereas before the creation of the national park, 72% of households collected resources from the forest reserve, now only 30% collect resources

¹⁴⁵ Boone, Lukalo, and Joireman, “Promised Land: Settlement Schemes in Kenya, 1962 to 2016.”

¹⁴⁶ Kahl, “Population Growth, Environmental Degradation, and State-Sponsored Violence,” 93.

¹⁴⁷ Médard, “‘Indigenous’ Land Claims in Kenya: A Case Study of Chebyuk, Mount Elgon District.”; Boone, “Land Conflicts and Distributive Policies in Kenya,” 75–103.

¹⁴⁸ Matin et al., “Group Inequality and Environmental Sustainability,” 1480.

¹⁴⁹ Médard, “‘Indigenous’ Land Claims in Kenya: A Case Study of Chebyuk, Mount Elgon District.”

¹⁵⁰ Matin et al., “Group Inequality and Environmental Sustainability,” 1472.

¹⁵¹ Vedeld et al., 2016, 190.

from the park.¹⁵² Similarly, 14% of households generated income from the forest reserve compared to two percent under the park concept.¹⁵³ Collaborative agreements did help assuage this dramatic change in resource access.

Social Marginalization and Disarticulation: Social disarticulation refers to a disruption in the “social fabric” of a group, where typical intra-group practices, relations, and self-organization are hampered or destroyed.¹⁵⁴ These types of disruptions are generally more difficult to perceive and evaluate, because they often manifest in intangible ways.¹⁵⁵ The indigenous groups displaced as a result of park creation have experienced social disarticulation in the form of a heightened sense of ethnicity and othering among groups of park neighbors. Identity categories have been formed and re-formed over time due to numerous resettlements, complicating claims to indigeneity. These untidy identities work to park authorities’ advantage, as they can dispute claims of indigeneity at the international level through a “rigid, state-arbitrated criterial approach” versus the more fluid, interactive conception of indigeneity to which resettled people ascribe.¹⁵⁶ Various forms of power inequalities have also emerged, those between citizen and state, citizen and park authorities, and citizen to citizen, as some ethnic groups garner advantages over others through better relations with park management.

An atmosphere of inter-tribe distrust and tribe-state distrust has also developed. In Kenya, tribes distrust state actions which appear to prioritize commercial interests over citizen interests. Up until the 1990s, Kenya was notorious for granting commercial logging rights to politically-connected private commercial ventures, considered outsiders by the local communities. Despite logging bans, elites have continued overexploitation of Mount

¹⁵² Gosalamang Ditiro, Paul Vedeld, and William Gombya-Ssembajjwe, “From Forest Reserve to National Park: Change in Legal Status and impacts on Livelihoods and Biodiversity Resources, Mt. Elgon, Uganda,” (working paper, Norwegian University of Life Sciences, 2008), v, <https://hdl.handle.net/11250/2680556>.

¹⁵³ Ditiro, Vedeld, and Gombya-Ssembajjwe, v.

¹⁵⁴ Cernea, “Risks, Safeguards and Reconstruction,” 3666.

¹⁵⁵ Cernea, 3666.

¹⁵⁶ Himmelfarb, “In the Aftermath of Displacement,” 183.

Elgon teak.¹⁵⁷ This resulted in a general atmosphere of mistrust and heightened competition. Not only were the indigenous people fighting amongst themselves for land and resources, but also against large commercial firms. Additionally, the inter-ethnic clan rivalry between the Soy and Mosop over Chepyuk settlement is a clear sign of social disarticulation, although that was tied to disputed post-colonial resettlement schemes, not a direct result of exclusionary conservation.

In Uganda, the park's creation heightened the pre-existing sense of distrust and conflict. The Bagisu and Sabiny had already been in competition over land tenure for decades, culminating in a 1965 civil war.¹⁵⁸ The Bagisu forced the Sabiny out of what is now Mbale district in the early 1960s. Evident of that conflict, one of the towns bordering the Mbale and Kapchorwa districts was named Namisuni, which means, "I chase you with a stick."¹⁵⁹ Later, in the 1970s, the Sabiny, now equipped with small arms after many served as soldiers under the Amin regime, and bitter with historical resentment, returned to their previous homestead, determined to push the Bagisu back out of the district. The Sabiny succeeded in taking back control of the district, killing thousands of Bagisu in the process.¹⁶⁰

The rivalry and mistrust among groups around Mount Elgon sparked international attention when a Belgian tourist was shot and killed while touring the park in 2008. The perpetrators likely misidentified the touring group as rival cattle thieves.¹⁶¹ After this event, the Uganda Wildlife Authority and Uganda People's Defense Forces evicted 4,000

¹⁵⁷ Aaron Russel et al., *Trends in Forest Conditions and Implications for Resilience to Climate Change under Differing Forest Governance Regimes*, Center for International Forestry Research (CIFOR), 2017, <http://www.cifor.org/library/6417/trends-in-forest-conditions-and-implications-for-resilience-to-climate-change-under-differing-forest-governance-regimes-the-case-of-mount-elgon-east-africa/>, 7.

¹⁵⁸ Penny Scott, *From Conflict to Collaboration: People and Forests at Mount Elgon, Uganda* (IUCN, 1998), <https://portals.iucn.org/library/sites/library/files/documents/FR-020.pdf>.

¹⁵⁹ Scott, 23.

¹⁶⁰ Scott, 24.

¹⁶¹ Chris Lang, "Uganda: Thousands of Indigenous People evicted from FSC-certified Mount Elgon National Park," *World Rainforest Movement*: 2008, <https://wrm.org.uy/articles-from-the-wrm-bulletin/section3/uganda-thousands-of-indigenous-people-evicted-from-fsc-certified-mount-elgon-national-park/>.

indigenous people, mostly Benet, and destroyed their homesteads. Some have claimed the Uganda Wildlife Authority used the killing as an excuse to evict the Benet, which has an adversarial relationship with the Authority.¹⁶²

Food insecurity: In addition to firewood, indigenous people rely on the park for water and game meat. Restricted access to game meat decreases available protein and calories for the affected groups. In some communities, households consume all the food they harvest in-house and experience food insecurity throughout the year.¹⁶³ A 2006 study of Mbale district in Uganda reveals that forest resources constituted a “significant and valuable” part of food security for bordering populations.¹⁶⁴ This indicates that outside food markets have not sufficiently reached this location so as to reduce reliance on the Mount Elgon ecosystem, or possibly that the people cannot afford food purchases.

An additional impact of barring land access and use within the park is an increase in human-wildlife conflicts. Park neighbors are common victims of wildlife crop raiding which threatens crop cultivation for both household consumption and income. Instead of being spread intermittently throughout the national park space, as they naturally might have settled, many of the populations have simply moved directly adjacent to the park’s borders. These denser populations have also concentrated the agricultural area, which in turn attracts wildlife predation. Wildlife raid both crops and livestock.

The Ugandan government’s increased focus on climate change has sparked some promising initiatives since 2010, which also serve to improve food security for those experiencing restricted access to and use of park land. Uganda’s agriculture sector development strategy and investment plan includes measures that have reached the Mount Elgon region. For example, initiatives have introduced high-yield, hybrid maize and new technical knowledge to improve farmers’ agricultural productivity and thus support better

¹⁶² Lang.

¹⁶³ Paul O. Ongugo et al., “Livelihoods, Natural Resource Entitlements and Protected Areas: The case of Mt. Elgon Forest in Kenya,” (Nairobi, Kenya: Kenya IFRI Collaborative Research Centre, 2011), <https://www.cbd.int/doc/case-studies/for/cs-ecofor-ke-02-en.pdf>.

¹⁶⁴ Susan Kigozi, “Contribution of forest resources to food security: A case study of Mount Elgon National Park, Mbale District” (Makerere University, 2008), <http://hdl.handle.net/10570/4822>.

food security for indigenous populations.¹⁶⁵ However, amidst these promising efforts, a 2014 Center for International Forestry Research report notes that “negative impacts on livelihoods immediately surrounding community livelihoods were also acknowledged as an ongoing source of tension.”¹⁶⁶

Increased Morbidity and Mortality: Conflicts over land use and access have resulted in increased morbidity and mortality, particularly among the Sabaot. During the 2007–2008 Kenyan conflict, young men and fathers were key targets for the conflict combatants, particularly for the army, and many women were left to support a family alone. The humanitarian crisis was so dire in that period that Médecins Sans Frontières (Doctors without Borders) deployed a contingent to provide medical services.¹⁶⁷ Even absent outright conflict, exclusionary conservation has resulted in poorer nutrition for indigenous people, which could negatively impact morbidity and mortality rates. The use of temporary shelters is associated with increased respiratory infections, as highly variable temperatures are especially hazardous when combined with the damp rainy season.

Loss of Access to Common Property: Across the board, indigenous people have experienced a decrease in access to what was communally held, indigenous land in the pre-colonial era. Common property is typically held and accessed freely by a group of individuals. In the creation of protected areas, the Ugandan and Kenyan states have turned previous common property into state-owned property that is systematically evaluated by the International Union for Conservation of Nature on its conservation merits. Generally, the previous and continuing atmosphere of land tenure insecurity forms the physical and psychological crux of many illegal, resistant indigenous coping strategies.

¹⁶⁵ Abwoli Y. Banana et al., “A Review of Uganda’s National Policies Relevant to Climate Change Adaptation and Mitigation: Insights from Mount Elgon,” Center for International Forestry Research, 2014, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/resrep02362>, 21.

¹⁶⁶ Banana et al., 22.

¹⁶⁷ *Mount Elgon: Does Anyone Care?* (Brussels, Belgium: Médecins Sans Frontières, 2008), https://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/1292992/1002_1242242848_msf-mtelgon-may2008.pdf.

2. Indigenous Adaptations

This section will evaluate how indigenous peoples displaced by and residing near the park have adapted to exclusionary conservation. The adaptation spectrum varies from peaceful to confrontational and includes both small-scale livelihood adaptations and violence. Indigenous adaptations to dispossession and political injustice have included park manager-park neighbor conflict, especially in Uganda, and ethnic conflict over park-adjacent land, particularly in Kenya. Challenges to both parastatal and state hegemony are readily apparent, as are differences in value judgements between the two levels. However, outright conflict is not the primary adaptation mechanism. Overall, adaptations on both sides of the park indicate a varying spectrum of adaptations which can include livelihood changes, resistance both within and outside of the conservation schema, and violent actions.¹⁶⁸

Adaptations by the Bagisu, Benet, and Sabiny in Uganda

A study of Ugandan citizens' perceptions of conservation programs in and around Mount Elgon indicates widespread support for conservation concepts, but a need to incorporate conflict resolution into an educational program to prevent past resentments from overcoming progress towards collaboration.¹⁶⁹ Collaborative community arrangements between the Uganda Wildlife Authority and indigenous groups began around 2005, with later fieldwork finding that 58% of nearby communities feel they are involved in park management.¹⁷⁰ However, the underlying, historical resentments based in insecure land tenure and access remain.¹⁷¹

During nearly two years of fieldwork in the early 2000s studying the Bagisu and Sabiny on Ugandan side of Mount Elgon National Park, scholars noted the varied portfolio

¹⁶⁸ Norgrove and Hulme, "Confronting Conservation at Mount Elgon, Uganda," 1093–1116.

¹⁶⁹ Joseph Oonyu, "Conservation Education and the Attitudes of Local Communities Living Adjacent to Mt. Elgon National Park, Uganda," *Applied Environmental Education & Communication* 8, no. 3–4 (2009): 153–164, <https://doi.org/10.1080/15330150903269258>.

¹⁷⁰ Ditiro, Vedeld, and Gombya-Ssembajjwe, "From Forest Reserve to National Park," 10.

¹⁷¹ Ditiro, Vedeld, and Gombya-Ssembajjwe, 10.

of adaptations in reaction to park exclusion and changing conservation dynamics. They categorized a wide range of adaptations, including livelihood adaptations, as “weapons of the weak,” or actions taken by people outside traditional, state hegemonic structures: in this case, park authorities and the government.¹⁷² Bagisu, Benet, and Sabiny adaptations include: changes to cultivation and grazing strategies (both legal and illegal), resource access agreements with the Uganda Wildlife Authority and Forest Department, and general income diversification through non-traditional employment, or jobs outside of the normal arenas of agriculture and resource gathering for re-sale.

The Bagisu and Sabiny currently rely on covert resistance to adapt to livelihood changes and counter the hegemony of conservation.¹⁷³ Resistance measures range from illegal planting practices to booby trapping roadways to prevent the passage of park authorities to bribing authorities for expanded cultivation rights.¹⁷⁴ Covertly, some Ugandan park neighbors have actually turned their participation in conservation into a reverse weapon. That is, they often times ostensibly support the conservation agenda by signing agreements with park management, but then undermine that very agenda through covert actions. This “calculated conformity” serves to gain the appearance of adherence to the hegemony of conservation, while simultaneously pursuing self-interest.¹⁷⁵ For example, they may sign onto collaborative management agreements, but on a daily basis, engage in illegal activities: “Apparent conformity with park management strategies is a cover for a range of counterhegemonic struggles that operate around the park on a daily basis.”¹⁷⁶

In response to restricted access to forest resources, some indigenous people have signed resource use agreements with the Uganda Wildlife Authority; these allow collection

¹⁷² Norgrove and Hulme, “Confronting Conservation at Mount Elgon, Uganda,” 1093–1116.

¹⁷³ Norgrove and Hulme, 1093–1116.

¹⁷⁴ Norgrove and Hulme, 1093–1116.

¹⁷⁵ Norgrove and Hulme, 1093–1116.

¹⁷⁵ Norgrove and Hulme, 1112.

¹⁷⁶ Norgrove and Hulme, 1105.

of specific park resources, like firewood and bamboo shoots, or specific activities, like beekeeping. Bagisu, Sabiny and Benet communities continue to rely on the ecosystem for bamboo, which provides fuelwood for cooking and poles for building.¹⁷⁷ Notably, those signing such agreements typically already have good relations with park authorities.¹⁷⁸

Some people have changed their agricultural production methods or sought non-traditional employment in reaction to land dispossession. For example, some have signed onto *Taungya*, or temporary, farming agreements with the Uganda Wildlife Authority. This practice allows indigenous people to cultivate land inside the park for up to five years.¹⁷⁹ Other farmers have engaged in “guerrilla agriculture,” or illegal planting and cultivation within the protected area without any agreements with the authorities.¹⁸⁰ Others have simply changed the crops they cultivate.

Other park neighbors have turned to non-traditional employment, such as jobs linked to park management. The “multiplier effects” of job opportunities in and around the parks have provided limited opportunities for Ugandan park neighbors.¹⁸¹ For example, people secured jobs directly with the Uganda Wildlife Authority, while others found employment with park-adjacent tourist infrastructure, including tourist businesses, artisan craft stores or petrol stations.¹⁸² As of 2015, 107 local people held Mount Elgon National Park employment positions, or 53% of the 201 available positions.¹⁸³

Lastly, some Ugandan park-adjacent communities have opted to sign onto participatory park management contracts, allowing them to benefit from tourism revenue

¹⁷⁷ Banana et al., “A Review of Uganda’s National Policies Relevant to Climate Change.”

¹⁷⁸ Vedeld et al., “The Political Economy of Conservation at Mount Elgon, Uganda,” 188.

¹⁷⁹ Vedeld et al., 188.

¹⁸⁰ Cavanagh and Benjaminsen, “Guerrilla Agriculture?,” 725–45.

¹⁸¹ Vedeld et al., “The Political Economy of Conservation at Mount Elgon, Uganda,” 189.

¹⁸² Vedeld et al., 189.

¹⁸³ Vedeld et al., 189.

sharing programs and other collaborative agreements, including ecotourism.¹⁸⁴ Other top-down initiatives also stimulate revenue sharing activities. Revenue sharing involves park authorities, like Uganda Wildlife Authority, sharing a certain percentage of park visitors' admittance fees with park neighbors. In fact, the Uganda Wildlife Authority is legally bound by the Uganda Wildlife Act of 2000 to share 20% of park entry fees with the bordering parishes.¹⁸⁵ However, in practice, these disbursements tend to be conditional on the community's relationship with the Uganda Wildlife Authority. For example, in one record of remittances, of the three neighboring Ugandan park districts, only two received all of the annual revenues in 2002 and 2006.¹⁸⁶ Another top-down initiative that serves to improve livelihoods is community revolving funds, introduced by the East African Community/Lake Victoria Basin Commission's Mount Elgon Regional Ecosystem Conservation Programme.¹⁸⁷ These funds filter through community-based organizations and NGO intermediaries, then to individuals and communities.¹⁸⁸

Adaptations by the Sabaot and Ogik in Kenya

As a consequence of the atmosphere of mistrust and competition in and around Mount Elgon National Park on the Kenyan side, indigenous groups like the Sabaot and Ogik have, in some cases, actually accelerated forest extraction, and thus degradation, in fear.¹⁸⁹ When they fear expulsion or short-lived access, people tend to maximize short-term access and its associated benefits. Groups have also been known to change the crops they grow, similar to communities in Uganda. Like on the Ugandan side, some farmers prefer to plant eucalyptus, a quick growing crop, as opposed to something which grows

¹⁸⁴ Norgrove and Hulme, "Confronting Conservation at Mount Elgon, Uganda," 1094.

¹⁸⁵ Vedeld et al., "The Political Economy of Conservation at Mount Elgon, Uganda," 189.

¹⁸⁶ Vedeld et al., 189.

¹⁸⁷ Vedeld et al., 189.

¹⁸⁸ Vedeld et al., 189.

¹⁸⁹ Matin et al., "Group Inequality and Environmental Sustainability," 1471.

slower, for fear of losing their crop yield through displacement.¹⁹⁰ Others have taken to deforestation at faster rates under fear of short-notice removal.¹⁹¹

The primary adaptive strategy of farmers to the problem of human-wildlife conflicts, relative to the less popular options of abandoning land or constructing fences, is to employ household children to prevent wildlife property exploitation. This time-intensive task, which can average over ten hours a day, sometimes involves taking children out of school to do the job.¹⁹² This represents another third-order effect of exclusionary conservation: decrease in education. If families cannot adequately subsist because of the first- and second-order effects of exclusionary conservation (first, exclusion, then increased human-wildlife conflict), they may keep children at home and out of school (third-order effect) to maximize their scarce land and resource access.

On a national scale, with regards to land and resource access, park adjacent populations have been known to use available political space to negotiate and re-negotiate access to land and resources with the Ugandan government. For example, the Benet people, through the Benet Lobby Group, fought for legal recognition of their indigeneity within Mount Elgon National Park. The battle began in 2003 and the Benet won legal recognition in 2005; however, the Uganda Wildlife Authority has continued to block their park access, which will be discussed later in more detail.

On a larger, supranational scale, indigenous groups experiencing exclusionary conservation have also attempted to appeal to larger organizations, outside of the state, on the basis of ethics and rights of indigeneity. For example, scholars note an increase in discourses of indigeneity to “to strengthen moral and legal claims to land and resources, to access new domains of action and cultivate new channels of patronage.”¹⁹³ The Ogiek have been the clearest example of this strategy. For example, the Ogiek experienced

¹⁹⁰ Matin et al., 1471.

¹⁹¹ Matin et al., 1471.

¹⁹² Vedeld et al., “The Political Economy of Conservation at Mount Elgon, Uganda,” 190.

¹⁹³ Lynch, “Kenya’s New Indigenes: Negotiating Local Identities in a Global Context,” 148–67.

landlessness in 2009, when the Kenya Forestry Service ordered them to leave the Mau Forests.¹⁹⁴ However, after a long legal battle, and with help of NGOs, the Ogiek won land access rights in the African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights, implicating the Kenyan government in rights violations.

Conflict has erupted at many points in the districts surrounding Mount Elgon National Park. These conflicts reflect grievances over historical and current land dispossessions alongside failed resettlement schemes.¹⁹⁵ The most recent conflict occurred from 2005–2007 in Kenya, when inter-ethnic land conflicts exploded into violence, prompting the government to deploy the Kenyan military. Although not unique to Mount Elgon National Park, Gender and Sexual Based Violence (GSBV) has also been a major consequence of conflict in the areas around the park. The 2005–2007 conflict involved an alarming amount of GSBV against women before, during, and after the conflict at the hands of enemies, the military, and their own husbands. In contrast, men primarily experienced GSBV during the conflict at the hands of enemies.¹⁹⁶ Such widespread abuse of women in and out of overt conflict represents an institutionalized subordination of women. Scholars are beginning to link such subordination to peace-building, and have shown that, as women continue to experience subordination in political and economic processes, it has negative effects on post-conflict peace.¹⁹⁷ Thus, by amplifying GSBV, conservation and conflict may depress the potential for a long-lasting peace.

The Kenya Wildlife Service is a parastatal organization with sole jurisdiction over all of Kenya's national parks. Additionally, it serves a supervisory role in management of

¹⁹⁴ "African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights v. Republic of Kenya, ACtHPR, Application No. 006/2012 (2017)," ESCR-Net., accessed October 23, 2021, <https://www.escr-net.org/caselaw/2017/african-commission-human-and-peoples-rights-v-republic-kenya-acthpr-application-no>.

¹⁹⁵ Simiyu, *Militianisation of Resource Conflicts*.

¹⁹⁶ Pamela Kimkung and Cristina Espinosa, "The Gender Dimensions of Violence and Conflict: The Case of Inter-Ethnic Land Conflict in Mt. Elgon, Kenya," *International Journal of Development and Conflict* 2, no. 3 (2012): 1250018, <https://doi.org/10.1142/S2010269012500184>.

¹⁹⁷ Corey Barr, "Making connections: Bridging transitional justice and security sector reform to confront conflict-related sexual and gender-based violence," *The Fletcher Journal of Human Security* 26 (2011): 5–23, <https://sites.tufts.edu/praxis/files/2020/05/1.-Barr.pdf>.

national reserves, like the Mount Elgon Forest Reserve and the Trans-Nzoia Forest Reserve. The Service was created through the Wildlife Conservation and Management Act of 1989. The Kenyan Wildlife Service is linked to the government via the Ministry for Tourism and Wildlife, which provides ultimate oversight and budgetary functions.¹⁹⁸ Its director is presidentially-appointed, making it susceptible to politics. However, it also largely autonomous from the state, in the sense that everyday management and decision-making is led by a Board of Trustees.¹⁹⁹ The Kenyan Wildlife Service governance approach to Mount Elgon National Park is characterized at “strict protectionism” (no access for citizens), enforced through coercive power and legal instruments.²⁰⁰

In its management of the Mount Elgon Forest Reserve and the Trans-Nzoia Forest Reserve, which is governed by the Forestry Act, the Kenya Forest Department carries out a more relaxed, anthropocentric approach to the indigenous populations.²⁰¹ The Kenya Forest Department is generally poorly equipped.²⁰² Local communities are allowed to pay for access, although some households cannot afford to pay for access, so they harvest in the forest without permission.²⁰³ However, these explicit buffer zones, in the form of forest reserves, on the Kenyan side of Mount Elgon National Park seem to dampen the negative livelihood effects on the Sabaot and Ogiek.

¹⁹⁸ Robert E. Hall, *The Kenya Wildlife Service: A Case Study of Parastatal Organization*, Office of Arid Lands Studies (Tucson, AZ: University of Arizona, 1995), https://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/pnabz626.pdf, 7.

¹⁹⁹ Hall, *The Kenya Wildlife Service: A Case Study of Parastatal Organization*.

²⁰⁰ Jón Geir Petursson, Paul Vedeld, and Arild Vatn, “Going Transboundary? An Institutional Analysis of Transboundary Protected Area Management Challenges at Mt Elgon, East Africa,” *Ecology and Society* 18, no. 4 (2013): 28, <https://doi.org/10.5751/ES-05729-180428>.

²⁰¹ Petursson, Vedeld, and Vatn, 28.

²⁰² Petursson, Vedeld, and Vatn, 28.

²⁰³ Jón Geir Petursson, Paul Vedeld, and Arild Vatn, “Going Transboundary? An Institutional Analysis of Transboundary Protected Area Management Challenges at Mt Elgon, East Africa,” *Ecology and Society* 18, no. 4 (2013): 28, <https://doi.org/10.5751/ES-05729-180428>; Ongugo et al., “Livelihoods, Natural Resource Entitlements and Protected Areas: The Case of Mt. Elgon Forest in Kenya,” 6.

3. Adaptations Review and Consequences

This case study of Mount Elgon National Park and its corresponding forest reserves indicates some fundamental similarities and differences in park experiences for Ugandan and Kenyan indigenous groups. On both sides, the prohibition from access to traditional livelihood resources within the park has forced the surrounding populations into physically smaller areas, and they now must achieve a livelihood within that smaller space. Thus, the relocation of people immediately surrounding the park potentially serves to degrade the park-adjacent land further.

Ugandan groups encounter a park authority that has acted unevenly towards groups and is liable to corruption. As such, park neighbors on the Ugandan side have historically fought, and are actively fighting, for continued land use and access. They resist the hegemony of conservation through covert and overt tactics. Continuous, covert subordination of park authorities perpetuates the sense of distrust between neighbors and authorities. It also tends to leave these groups in a vicious cycle at the local level, without triggering response or accommodation from the state.

In contrast, access to forest reserves on the Kenyan side seems to have cushioned the impact of exclusion from the park itself. Park neighbors in Kenya have, likely due to strict Kenyan Wildlife Service measures, largely acquiesced to the park boundaries, but have nonetheless been involved in multiple nearby ethnicity-based conflicts regarding land use and access. Rather than confront park authorities, like on the Ugandan side, Kenyan indigenous groups tend to confront each other, as seen in the civil strife from 2005–2008. This overt violence then triggered a state response.

One takeaway from this case study is that breakdowns in state-level governance, like in Uganda from the 1970s to mid-1980s and in Kenya from 2005 to 2008, result in political space and physical opportunities for indigenous groups to reassert land claims and take chances to subvert park authorities. Groups took advantage of these opportunities to encroach within protected areas boundaries or attack other rival groups. Thus, it may follow that, as East African states experience increased political instability, the chance of land grabbing or land rights reassertions may also increase. As a result, indigenous people may

prey on political instability as opportune times to challenge exclusionary conservation's restrictions.

One consequence of conflict is the entrenchment of parastatal organization hegemony, like the Uganda Wildlife Authority and Kenyan Wildlife Service. Mount Elgon National Park's long history of low-intensity skirmishes and higher-intensity inter-ethnic conflict has an important implication for future park-people dealings. The Uganda Wildlife Authority and Kenyan Wildlife Service have institutionalized their own hegemony over park neighbors. Violent evictions and park enforcement tactics point to the militarization of conservation, or "green militarization."²⁰⁴ One recent anecdote points to how this institutionalized hegemony can continue to threaten indigenous people, even after regaining access to ancestral lands. In 2020, Uganda's President Museveni restored traditional lands within Mount Elgon National Park to the Benet people through a Memorandum of Understanding.²⁰⁵ It gave the Benet legal, structured access to the park, including access to cultural sites and cattle grazing areas.²⁰⁶ However, reports from the ground indicate that the Uganda Wildlife Authority has continued to resist the Benet's access and continues to abuse them.²⁰⁷ The Uganda Wildlife Authority has reportedly committed systematic human rights atrocities against indigenous people who attempt to gain rightful access to park resources, including beatings, arrests, rapes, and other violence. The central government's reach to Mount Elgon National Park is tenuous. Barring a necessity for military deployments, as in Kenya in 2007, the Uganda Wildlife Authority may continue to infringe upon the Benet people's rights.

²⁰⁴ Elizabeth Lunstom, "Green Militarization: Anti-Poaching Efforts and the Spatial Contours of Kruger National Park," *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 104, no. 4 (2014): 816–832, <https://doi.org/10.1080/00045608.2014.912545>; Nancy Lee Peluso, "Coercing Conservation?: The Politics of State Resource Control," *Global Environmental Change* 3, no. 2 (1993): 199–217, [https://doi.org/10.1016/0959-3780\(93\)90006-7](https://doi.org/10.1016/0959-3780(93)90006-7).

²⁰⁵ Shua Wilmot, "The Benet people in Uganda Continue to Suffer from Gross Human Rights Violations," International Work Group for Indigenous Affairs, May 5, 2021, <https://www.iwgia.org/en/uganda/4366-uganda-benet-2021.html>.

²⁰⁶ Wilmot, "The Benet people in Uganda Continue to Suffer from Gross Human Rights Violations."

²⁰⁷ Wilmot, "The Benet people in Uganda Continue to Suffer from Gross Human Rights Violations."

The variation of livelihood adaptation strategies, ranging from active resistance to changes in farming strategies, highlights the heterogeneity of the rural populations surrounding Mount Elgon. Indigenous people, and even those who share the common condition of dispossession, are in no way homogenous. Clearly, exclusionary conservation impacts livelihoods in a variety of ways, and the resulting adaptations appear to be diverse in this evaluation of Mount Elgon National Park. The third order consequences of conflict near Mount Elgon National Park and exclusionary conservation are notable and include conflict, non-state hegemony over indigenous people, increases in Gender and Sexual Based Violence (GSBV), and increased degradation of surrounding forest and savannah.

In sum, the indigenous groups surrounding Mount Elgon National Park in Kenya and Uganda have experienced deep livelihood injustices as a consequence of the creation of Mount Elgon National Park. Despite their resilience, many of their adaptations further undermine their welfare and positionality to state and parastatal hegemony. The consequences of their adaptations may serve to worsen their plight and the lands on which they live.

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IV. CASE STUDY II: SERENGETI NATIONAL PARK, TANZANIA

Exclusionary conservation has estranged the Maasai from their traditional range lands in northwestern Tanzania. The Maasai migrated to the Serengeti area approximately 200–250 years ago.²⁰⁸ In the Maasai language, Maa, Serengeti means “the place where the land runs on forever” or “endless plains.” However, the Maasai were evicted from what is now Serengeti National Park, and instead of being endless, their land is now constrained and divided into conservation enclosures. As recently as this year, the Tanzanian government has continued systematic evictions from areas of Maasai resettlement and has instituted changes in land use policy in those areas, making livelihood adaptations to changes a continuous struggle. The focus of this case study will be the experiences of those dispossessed from the Serengeti and resettled in the Ngorongoro Conservation Area and adjoining Ngorongoro district. Ngorongoro Conservation Area is bounded by Loliondo Game Controlled Area to the north, agricultural areas to the south and east, and Serengeti National Park to the west.²⁰⁹ Park neighbors have challenged land use restrictions through political and legal means while simultaneously adapting their lifestyles to dispossession through livelihood diversification. The net effect of Maasai adaptations has been a strengthening of cultural identity and Maasai-ness, alongside international recognition. However, state exploitation has not ceased.

²⁰⁸ J Terrence McCabe, Paul W. Leslie, and Laura Deluca, “Adopting Cultivation to Remain Pastoralists: The Diversification of Maasai Livelihoods in Northern Tanzania,” *Human Ecology: An Interdisciplinary Journal* 38, no. 3 (2010): 323, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10745-010-9312-8>.

²⁰⁹ Randall B. Boone et al., “Cultivation and Conservation in Ngorongoro Conservation Area, Tanzania,” *Human Ecology: An Interdisciplinary Journal* 34, no. 6 (2006): 810, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10745-006-9031-3>.

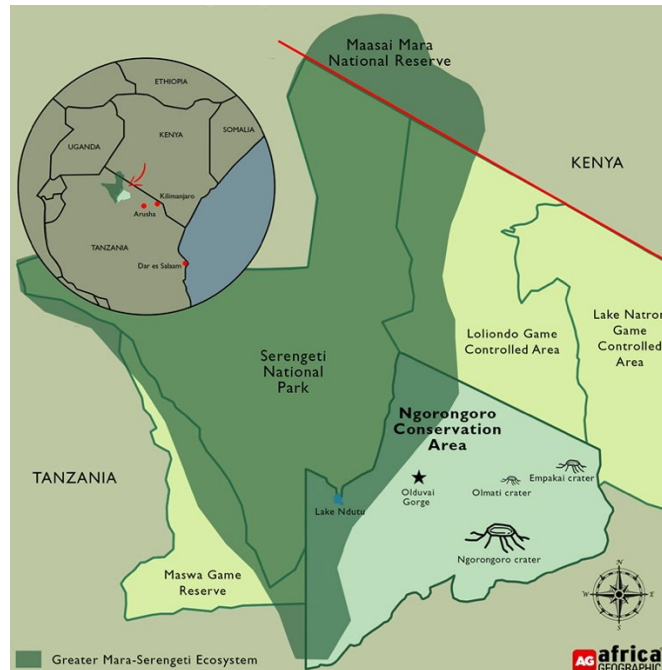


Figure 2. Serengeti National Park and Ngorongoro Conservation Area.²¹⁰

A. LIVELIHOOD IMPACTS AND ADAPTATIONS OF THE TANZANIAN MAASAI

The Maasai are a pastoralist ethnic group. Cattle ownership forms the backbone of Maasai culture, both socially and economically, and livestock ownership is the element around which authority and prestige revolve. The Maasai creation myth designated the Maasai people as the only rightful owners of cattle. This indigenous group currently resides in what many call Maasailand, approximately 150,000 square kilometers of land in northern Tanzania and southern Kenya. The area of study in Tanzania, the Ngorongoro Conservation Area and adjoining Ngorongoro district, are both located on the eastern perimeter of Serengeti National Park. In the leadup to the creation of Serengeti National Park in 1954, there were approximately 11,000 Maasai with over 300,000 cattle and small stock in the area of both Ngorongoro Conservation Area and present-day Serengeti

²¹⁰ Source: “Ngorongoro Conservation Area: Africa’s Eden – A Land Before Time,” Africa Geographic Stories, July 22, 2021, <https://africageographic.com/stories/ngorongoro-conservation-area/>.

National Park.²¹¹ About 1,200 of those Maasai, with about 40,000 livestock, were directly evicted from their homes for the creation of the park and relocated with the rest of the population in the Ngorongoro Conservation Area.²¹² However, the majority of the Maasai population in northwest Tanzania depended on large swaths of present-day Serengeti National Park for use as seasonal livestock grazing areas.²¹³

Ngorongoro Conservation Area is a joint land use area in which conservation, tourism, and indigenous livelihoods are intended as multiple, simultaneous uses. Originally, this meant that both pastoralism and cultivation were permitted within its bounds.²¹⁴ However, the government has repeatedly revoked and reinstituted cultivation rights of the Maasai in Ngorongoro Conservation Area over time. The government first banned cultivation in Ngorongoro Conservation Area in 1975, lifted the ban in 1992, banned and reinstated cultivation within a month in 2001, and again prohibited subsistence cultivation in 2006.²¹⁵ These bans have fluctuated in reaction to Maasai constituencies and international conservation organizations.²¹⁶

The conservation area includes the Ngorongoro Crater, home to one of the largest global proportions of megafauna and a critical part of the famous Great Migration, in which over two million wildebeest and other animals migrate between Kenya and Tanzania.²¹⁷

²¹¹ Kaj Århem, *Pastoral Man in the Garden of Eden: The Maasai of the Ngorongoro Conservation Area, Tanzania*, (Uppsala, Sweden: The Nordic Africa Institute, 1985), 29, <http://nai.diva-portal.org/smash/get/diva2:277704/FULLTEXT01.pdf>.

²¹² Århem, 29.

²¹³ Århem, 29.

²¹⁴ J Terrence McCabe, "Risk and Uncertainty Among the Maasai of the Ngorongoro Conservation Area in Tanzania: A Case Study in Economic Change," *Nomadic Peoples*, New Series 1, no. 1, Risk and Uncertainty in Pastoral Societies (1997): 57, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/43123510>.

²¹⁵ J Terrence McCabe, "Sustainability and Livelihood Diversification Among Maasai of Northern Tanzania," *Human Organization* 62, no. 2 (2003): 100–111, <https://doi.org/10.17730/humo.62.2.4rwr1n3xptg29b8>; Anuradha Mittal and Elizabeth Fraser, *Losing The Serengeti: The Maasai Land that was to Run Forever* (The Oakland Institute, 2018), <https://www.oaklandinstitute.org/sites/oaklandinstitute.org/files/losing-the-serengeti.pdf>.

²¹⁶ McCabe, "Risk and Uncertainty Among the Maasai," 58.

²¹⁷ McCabe, "Risk and Uncertainty Among the Maasai," 56.; "The Great Migration," Serengeti National Park, accessed October 23, 2021, <https://www.serengeti.com/great-migration-africa.php>.

Home to 115 mammals, including the “Big Five” (elephants, lions, rhinos, buffaloes, and leopards), the crater is also a prime tourist destination.²¹⁸ The Ngorongoro Conservation Area is the leading economic contributor of all Tanzanian conservation sites, contributing 38% of total national park revenue and attracting almost half of all international tourists.²¹⁹

Maasai constitute 97% of the Ngorongoro Conservation Area’s inhabitants, and thus Maasai will be the focus of this case study.²²⁰ As limits on agriculture have waxed and waned over time, the Maasai have adapted. Meanwhile, tourism companies and private, third-party ventures have induced further friction, and state repression has arguably adapted as well.²²¹ Overall, the exclusion of the Maasai from Serengeti National Park served as a forcing mechanism for the Maasai to adapt to geographic constraints, and conservation policy in their resettlement area, the Ngorongoro Conservation Area, has served to exacerbate a state of uncertainty, due to fluctuating restrictions, and it has made livestock rearing riskier, due to higher prevalence of livestock diseases.

1. Livelihood Impacts

The dispossessed Maasai people living adjacent to Serengeti National Park experience some of the dangers in the Cernea framework of Impoverishment Risks for Displaced Populations; however, the extent to which these risks are entirely attributable to exclusionary conservation, relative to modern state-building more generally and state-based shifts to the market economy, is unclear. What is clear is that, for the Maasai, the casual mechanism underlying some of their impoverishment is the loss of mobility due to

²¹⁸ Ashoka Mukpo, “As Tourists Flood a Tanzanian Park, the Maasai Say They’re Being Pushed Out,” *Mongabay*, September 10, 2021, <https://news.mongabay.com/2021/09/as-tourists-flood-a-tanzanian-park-the-maasai-say-theyre-being-pushed-out/>.

²¹⁹ Edwin W. Harris et al., “A Learning Network Approach to Resolve Conservation Challenges in the Ngorongoro Conservation Area,” *African Journal of Ecology* 59, no. 1 (2021): 327, <https://doi.org/10.1111/aje.12815>.

²²⁰ Susan Charnley, “From Nature Tourism to Ecotourism? The Case of the Ngorongoro Conservation Area, Tanzania,” *Human Organization* 64, no. 1 (2005): 75–88, <https://doi.org/10.17730/humo.64.1.u8fer0aap3ceg4a1>; McCabe, “Risk and Uncertainty Among the Maasai,” 56.

²²¹ Benjaminsen et al., “Wildlife Management in Tanzania,” 1087–1109.

dispossession of land caused by exclusionary conservation. Generally, the loss of mobility due to conservation has resulted in deeper poverty and marginalization. The causal chain continues, with poverty also causing social disarticulation of traditional practices, like community support and marriage.

Landlessness: Maasai traditionally relied on shifting land use patterns, a risk-spreading technique, for their pastoral livelihood, because rain and drought patterns can be erratic in Sub-Saharan Africa and livestock survival largely relies upon environmentally-driven, flexible movement. The Maasai experienced a decrease in available land due to the creation of Serengeti National Park, but not complete landlessness, since they were resettled in Ngorongoro Conservation Area where their livelihoods were intended to coexist alongside conservation. However, the enclosure of Serengeti National Park limited accessible pasture land and water sources for the Maasai, key elements of pastoralist livelihoods. Therefore, exclusionary conservation resulted in a degree of landlessness that directly disrupted traditional Maasai livelihoods.

Joblessness: For Maasai, wealth is a direct function of livestock ownership, and livelihoods traditionally revolved around livestock herding and production. Maasai traditionally herd cows, sheep, and goats. For the Maasai, livestock is akin to currency or a savings bank.²²² They are subsistence-oriented, rather than entrants into the global consumer-driven economy.²²³ Livestock represent the ability to support a household, as it can be sold for grain and agricultural labor, if necessary. Through the mechanism of landlessness, or the reduction in available grazing and herding land, Maasai experience increased insecurity of subsistence needs, but not full joblessness. Rather, land reduction and restrictions create a decrease in the scope of their job – livestock herding and production – and thus a decrease in overall opportunities.

²²² G. Nasieku Tarayia, “The Legal Perspectives of The Maasai Culture, Customs, and Traditions,” *Arizona Journal of International & Comparative Law* 21, no. 1 (2004): 191, <http://arizonajournal.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/Tarayia.pdf>.

²²³ Igoe, *Conservation and Globalization*, 5.

Exclusionary conservation and redirection into smaller, more concentrated areas can also lead to more disease prevalence among cattle, including exposure to tsetse flies and tick-borne diseases.²²⁴ Diseased livestock not only have increased mortality, resulting in direct losses of pastoral wealth, but they also produce less milk, impacting food security. Therefore, Maasai do not experience joblessness in the traditional, market sense, but a decrease in assets, subsistence needs, and opportunity.

Homelessness: The original evictions from Serengeti National Park left Maasai temporarily homeless, yet resettlement into the Ngorongoro Conservation Area assuaged that issue. However, recent struggles related to Maasai homelessness are closely connected to third-party, foreign investment by United Arab Emirates-based Ortello Business Corporation and Tanzania Conservation Limited, and many believe these third-party interests are driving government action.²²⁵ Tanzania Conservation Limited is a sister company to Boston, Massachusetts-based Thomson Safaris, which set up its own nature reserve, Enashiva Nature Reserve, which it uses for luxury safari experiences.²²⁶ Ortello Business Corporation flies wealthy hunters into Ngorongoro District via its private airstrip. In 2009, a Tanzanian paramilitary unit and Ortello Business Corporation representatives reportedly burned down 200 Maasai *bomas*, or family compounds.²²⁷ The government claimed it was to protect the area from further environmental degradation due to the Maasai's use of subsistence agriculture. In 2017, the Tanzanian government ordered the clearing of a disputed 150,000-hectare area for what it claims will serve as a wildlife corridor and buffer zone around Serengeti National Park.²²⁸ As a result, over 185 *bomas* were burned and 20,000 people evicted.²²⁹ Many Maasai and NGOs have decried these

²²⁴ Ann May and Francis Ndipapa Ole Ikayo. "Wearing Illkarash: Narratives of Image, Identity and Change Among Maasai Labour Migrants in Tanzania," *Development and Change* 38, no. 2 (2007): 285, <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-7660.2007.00412.x>.

²²⁵ Mittal and Fraser, *Losing The Serengeti: The Maasai Land that was to Run Forever*, 24.

²²⁶ Mittal and Fraser, 13.

²²⁷ Mittal and Fraser, 18.

²²⁸ Mittal and Fraser, 20.

²²⁹ Mittal and Fraser, 21.

government actions as human rights abuses done in the interest of foreign investment schemes. Legal arbitration surrounding these evictions is still ongoing. Therefore, the Maasai experience of homelessness did not end with the creation of Serengeti National Park.

Political Marginalization: In the general sense, the Maasai are historically economically, culturally, and politically marginalized.²³⁰ Pastoralists are more at risk of state marginalization than other, more settled, populations because of their lifestyles. Not only do they view land in a customary, flexible way, they normally do not build enduring infrastructures to stake their claims on land they temporarily use.²³¹ Such transience resists state accountability. State-builders rely on taxation, and states face more difficulty in taxing nomadic populations, like pastoralists, because of their transient nature. Taxes also serve to keep governments accountable to taxpayers. Thus, the Maasai, experiencing less state legibility, likely experience less political inclusivity and representation due to their livelihoods.

However, political marginalization of the Maasai is not exclusively a result of state creation of protected areas. Post-independence elites intentionally highlighted the otherness of the Maasai during their consolidation of power.²³² This otherness continues to impact Maasai positioning to the state today. For example, the Tanzanian school system instructs children in Swahili and English.²³³ This represents another barrier to better livelihoods, as many Maasai primarily speak Maa.²³⁴ Maasai villages experience shortages of fundamental infrastructure services, like water and healthcare facilities.²³⁵ Lastly,

²³⁰ Igoe, *Conservation and Globalization*, 4.

²³¹ Bluwstein, “Resisting Legibility,” 4.

²³² Vanessa Wijngaarden, “Maasai Perspectives on Modernity: Narratives of Evolution, Nature and Culture,” *Critical African Studies* 13, no. 2 (2021): 197–215, <https://doi.org/10.1080/21681392.2020.1850303>.

²³³ “Report on the State of Pastoralists’ Human Rights in Tanzania: Survey of Ten Districts of Tanzania Mainland 2010/2011,” Parakuiyo Pastoralists Indigenous Community Development Organisation (PAICODEO), 74.

²³⁴ “Report on the State of Pastoralists’ Human Rights in Tanzania,” 74.

²³⁵ “Report on the State of Pastoralists’ Human Rights in Tanzania,” xiii.

Maasai have low rates of representation in decision making bodies.²³⁶ Therefore, rather than serving as the impetus for marginalization, conservation schemes have deepened pre-existing marginalization by restricting or prohibiting traditional Maasai land use, which in turn limits adaptive capacity.

Since the late 1990s, the Maasai have also increasingly experienced “green militarization,” similar to the groups in the Mount Elgon case studies. Around Serengeti National Park, Tanzanian parastatals tasked with conservation have increasingly used violence and military tactics to carry out evictions.²³⁷ Alongside the state, the Tanzania National Parks Authority has applied narratives of otherness to pastoralist groups, like the Maasai, to justify the extension of violence in the name of conservation.²³⁸ Conservationists also use extinction narratives to justify such treatment, connecting species extinction rates to human actions.²³⁹ However, the difference is, the link between extinction and people is no longer viewed as solely caused by poaching, but also by general livelihoods. These linkage between pastoralist livelihoods, species extinction, militarization, and conservation are disquieting, and the field continues to evaluate its implications. This discourse and deteriorating treatment of the Maasai is essentially a form of political marginalization, in which the Maasai are viewed as lesser Tanzanians, on account of their cultural practices and traditional land uses, making them more vulnerable to exploitation in the practice of conservation.

Economic Marginalization: As discussed, the Maasai have become economically marginalized as a result of exclusionary conservation, because of their growing inability to practice traditional economic activities. If no action is taken to buttress the Maasai livestock sector against growing populations and livestock sector inefficiencies, by 2040, about 300,000 people will be “condemned to dispossession and absolute poverty or to

236 “Report on the State of Pastoralists’ Human Rights in Tanzania,” xiii.

237 Teklehaymanot G. Weldemichel, “Othering Pastoralists, State Violence, and the Remaking of Boundaries in Tanzania’s Militarised Wildlife Conservation Sector,” *Antipode* 52, no. 5 (2020): 1496–1518, <https://doi.org/10.1111/anti.12638>.

238 Weldemichel, “Othering Pastoralists,” 1500.

239 Weldemichel, “Othering Pastoralists,” 1496–1518.

emigration without any skills or decent job opportunities.”²⁴⁰ Thus, economic marginalization, or poverty, appears to be increasing over time as a result of exclusionary conservation and the subsequent impacts and adaptations, alongside population growth.

Social Marginalization and Disarticulation: The Maasai generally carry an attitude of mistrust towards authority and betrayal based on the past injustices by the British and Tanzanian government. They live in fear of continued evictions, restrictions, and repression.²⁴¹ The local perception is that agricultural bans fluctuate at the whim of state elites.²⁴²

Over time, Maasai culture has lost its sense of warriorhood and bravery, which were strong social themes in the period when Maasai roamed the land freely, without restraints.²⁴³ Increased sedentarization due to required livelihood changes has destroyed the basis for this warrior identity among the population.²⁴⁴ Additionally, the decrease in livestock herd-population proportions has had reverberations beyond the resettlement areas of this study. Declining livestock herds have damaged the Maasai mutual assistance system, or *engelata/ewoloto*, which once served to tie communities together across regions.²⁴⁵ In this system, cattle were once swapped and shared when fellow Maasai were in need.

The decrease in available land and subsequent decrease in people-to-cattle proportions has also likely gradually changed Maasai marriage practices. The imbalance has implications for traditional marriage practices and family size, as Maasai do not have as much livestock and thus, less access to cash, making them less able to support large

²⁴⁰ Pablo Manzano, and Lucas Yamat. *Livestock sector in the Ngorongoro District: Analysis, shortcomings and options for improvement* (Wasso and Dar es Salaam, Tanzania: Ngorongoro District Council and GIZ, 2018), 29, <http://dx.doi.org/10.13140/RG.2.2.33893.86240>.

²⁴¹ Mittal and Fraser, *Losing The Serengeti: The Maasai Land that was to Run Forever*.

²⁴² Mittal and Fraser.

²⁴³ May and Ndipapa Ole Ikayo, “Wearing Illkarash,” 275–99.

²⁴⁴ Homewood, Kristjanson, and Trench, *Staying Maasai?*, 30.

²⁴⁵ May and Ndipapa Ole Ikayo, “Wearing Illkarash,” 286.

families or traditional practices of polygyny. Overall, there is a general decline in polygyny and family size.²⁴⁶ Additionally, some Maasai men are now forced to delay marriage because they cannot pay the brideprice. Brideprice requirements represent a potential conflict multiplier, as they disproportionately disadvantage poorer young men, exacerbating their sense of inefficacy within their traditional culture. The conflict literature reveals that this pattern of young male grievance makes the demographic more vulnerable to extremist recruitment.²⁴⁷

Food Insecurity: Maasai traditionally depended entirely on cattle for food, drinking its milk and blood and only occasionally eating meat.²⁴⁸ However, exclusionary conservation has shifted Maasai reliance from cattle to a combination of subsistence farming, cattle, and food aid. High levels of malnutrition and hunger are presently epidemic around Serengeti National Park and within the Ngorongoro Conservation Area, and the Maasai began voicing concerns about food shortages in the 1980s, about five years after the first cultivation ban.²⁴⁹ Based upon notable declines in Maasai well-being, the government passed an emergency measure in 1991 that allowed Maasai households to cultivate one acre using hand tools.²⁵⁰ As of 2000, livelihoods had improved because households could then grow about 16% of their diets; however, the Maasai of Ngorongoro Conservation Area still cultivate only about 0.12 hectare per person, an area far smaller than surrounding areas.²⁵¹

²⁴⁶ Davud K Nkedianye et al., “Comparative Social Demography, Livelihood Diversification and Land Tenure Among the Maasai of Kenya and Tanzania,” *Pastoralism : Research, Policy and Practice* 10, no. 1 (2020): 2, <https://doi.org/10.1186/s13570-020-00165-2>.

²⁴⁷ Valerie M. Hudson and Hilary Matfess, “In Plain Sight: The Neglected Linkage between Brideprice and Violent Conflict,” *International Security* 42, no. 1 (2017): 7–40, https://doi.org/10.1162/ISEC_a_00289.

²⁴⁸ Tarayia, “The Legal Perspectives of The Maasai Culture, Customs, and Traditions,” 191.

²⁴⁹ Mukpo, “As tourists flood a Tanzanian park, the Maasai say they’re being pushed out.”; McCabe, “Risk and Uncertainty Among the Maasai,” 58.

²⁵⁰ Boone et al., “Cultivation and Conservation in Ngorongoro Conservation Area, Tanzania,” 811.

²⁵¹ Boone et al., 811.

In 2011, 200 Maasai children in Ngorongoro district succumbed to a measles outbreak, exacerbated by existing malnutrition.²⁵² In 2012–3, approximately 500 children from 30 villages were taken to hospitals due to malnutrition.²⁵³ The Maasai living in Ngorongoro Conservation Area receive what they (and human rights activists) claim is insufficient food aid in the form of maize flour. As a result, many families are forced to sell cattle to buy sufficient food. The creation of Serengeti National Park clearly impacted the food security of those pushed into smaller, less productive areas of land.

Increased Morbidity and Mortality: As discussed, malnutrition and starvation have caused increased morbidity and mortality among the region’s children. Additionally, scientists have found that Maasai adults experience higher rates of hypertension and high blood pressure, which they linked to higher rates of animal consumption due to fluctuating restrictions on agriculture in Ngorongoro Conservation Area.²⁵⁴ Lastly, park authorities have reportedly killed Maasai who trespass into Serengeti National Park, another clear link between conservation and mortality. Thus, the lack of mobility and flexible land use has had direct impacts on Maasai health and survivability. However, natural and rapid population growth has continued within the area. For example, resident population growth within the Ngorongoro Conservation Area has sharply increased from about 10,000 in 1954 to almost 100,000 people in 2018.²⁵⁵

Loss of Access to Common Property: It is not property, per se, but communal land tenure that the Maasai lost as a result of colonial and post-colonial land policies. As described in Chapter II, colonial and post-colonial policies have centralized land tenure at the state level and have abolished customary tenure. Thus, the Maasai have lost their customary land tenure and are frequently manipulated by the interests of state authorities.

²⁵² Mittal and Fraser, *Losing The Serengeti: The Maasai Land that was to Run Forever*, 24.

²⁵³ Mittal and Fraser, 26.

²⁵⁴ Ester J Diarz et al. “Red Meat Consumption and Its Association with Hypertension and Hyperlipidaemia Among Adult Maasai Pastoralists of Ngorongoro Conservation Area, Tanzania,” *PloS One* 15, no. 6 (2020), <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0233777>.

²⁵⁵ Harris et al., “A learning network approach to resolve conservation challenges,” 326–31.

Overall, the traditional Maasai pastoralist lifestyle has been in decline since colonial times, but conservation has exacerbated and deepened the livelihood damages experienced by this indigenous group. Exclusionary conservation has negatively impacted living standards. The reduction and restriction in land access and use has reduced cattle ratios. Restrictions on subsistence agriculture in the resettlement areas and dependence on insufficient food aid has degraded food security. Fieldwork has shown that conservation policy in Ngorongoro Conservation Area created marked quantitative differences in health and economic statuses between Maasai residing there and Tanzanians residing in the adjacent Loliondo Game Controlled Area.²⁵⁶ The Maasai are not the only Tanzanian pastoralists that have been undergoing livelihood diversification since the 1950s; however, conservation policy has constrained their ability to adapt to such changes and has added another level of stressors, like uncertainty stemming from recurrent bans on cultivation.²⁵⁷ The net impact of conservation on the Maasai is a loss of their traditional livelihoods.

2. Indigenous Adaptations

Far from the representations of only two extremes, usually either of young warriors shepherding livestock through a pristine natural environment or of poor families languishing in refugee camps, Maasai pastoralists have largely adapted to exclusionary conservation and the loss of customary lands in a multitude of ways in between those two extremes, including wage labor migration, increased adoption of cultivation, and other such livelihood diversification strategies.²⁵⁸ Thus, the general theme of Maasai adaptations has been diversification, of livelihoods in general, but particularly of income-creating

²⁵⁶ Kathleen A. Galvin et al., “Compatibility of Pastoralism and Conservation? A Test Case using Integrated Assessment in the Ngorongoro Conservation Area, Tanzania,” in *Conservation and Mobile Indigenous Peoples: Displacement, Forced Settlement, and Sustainable Development*, ed. Dawn Chatty and Marcus Colchester (Herndon, VA: Berghahn Books, 2002), 55–6.

²⁵⁷ J. Terrence McCabe, “Giving Conservation a Human Face? Lessons from Forty Years of Combining Conservation and Development in the Ngorongoro Conservation Area, Tanzania,” In *Conservation and Mobile Indigenous Peoples: Displacement, Forced Settlement, and Sustainable Development*, ed. Dawn Chatty and Marcus Colchester (Herndon, VA: Berghahn Books, 2002), 69–75.

²⁵⁸ McCabe, Leslie, and Deluca, “Adopting Cultivation to Remain Pastoralists,” 321–34.

opportunities. Livelihood diversification is not new or unique to East African pastoralists. In fact, scholars have noted this theme among pastoralists from the Sahel to Mongolia.²⁵⁹

The Maasai's switch from pure pastoralism to agropastoralism through the adoption of cultivation is not recent, yet park-adjacent Maasai have increasingly relied on cultivation to supplement their livelihoods over the past thirty years.²⁶⁰ While the increased reliance on agriculture is also broadly attributable to multiple changes in cultural norms and risk factors, like market liberalization, conservation-induced dispossession is one such cause. The villagization program of the 1970s exposed Maasai communities to extensive cultivation practices for the first time.²⁶¹ Therefore, governmental land use changes arguable helped develop this adaptation strategy, as Maasai gained the requisite skills for cultivation, largely through the exposure to, and emulation of neighbors. When cultivation bans are in place, the primary adaptation strategies of Maasai are to illegally infiltrate the forest to collect wood for resale or to sell their cattle in order to buy more food, since the aforementioned food aid is insufficient. When cultivation bans are lifted, the Maasai are more secure in multiple ways. For example, in a 1995 restudy of the Maasai in the conservation area after the cultivation ban was lifted in 1992, there were marked positive changes in the population.²⁶² Changes included increases in family-grown crops ratios in diets, lower percentages of herd sales, improved nutrition among children under five, and improvements in the relationship between conservation authorities and the community.²⁶³

Some Maasai have liquidated livestock wealth and re-invested that wealth into other ventures, including real estate and small businesses, like restaurants.²⁶⁴ Some even

²⁵⁹ McCabe, Leslie, and Deluca, 323.

²⁶⁰ McCabe, Leslie, and Deluca, 321–34.

²⁶¹ McCabe, Leslie, and Deluca, "Adopting Cultivation to Remain Pastoralists," 321–34.

²⁶² McCabe, "Giving Conservation a Human Face?," 72.

²⁶³ McCabe, 72.

²⁶⁴ Homewood, Kristjanson, and Trench, *Staying Maasai?*, 319.

liquidate their livestock to buy real estate for the express purpose of creating a pastorally-based community.²⁶⁵

Another livelihood diversification tactic is contractual participation in tourism and safari ventures with tourism companies, some of which fall under the umbrella of Community Wildlife Management. Some Maasai leaders have chosen to build relationships and sign contracts with tourism companies. This began in the early 1990s, when tourism companies were looking for camping and safari options near national parks.²⁶⁶ Loliondo, a village within Ngorongoro district, quickly became one of the prime targets for wildlife tourism agreements, due to its proximity to Serengeti National Park and the fact that area villages had previously agreed to tourism contracts.²⁶⁷ Overall, though, Maasai involvement in tourism fails to provide “significant alternatives to livestock (and crops) despite their apparent potential.”²⁶⁸ Proponents of these Serengeti tourism initiatives note its additional indirect benefits, such as more state developmental projects nearby, but most villagers claim promised development projects do not materialize.²⁶⁹

The Maasai historically and presently increase their political participation in response to continuing exploitation in the name of conservation. They have established their own NGOs, including the Ngorongoro Pastoralist Survivalist Trust, and have engaged other national and international NGOs in attempts to gain political influence.²⁷⁰ They have also participated in protest and demonstration activities. For example, in 2013, Maasai protestors attempted to block the Ngorongoro Crater tourist gates, and Maasai women have conducted sit-ins in defiance of the Ortello Business Corporation hunting block

²⁶⁵ Homewood, Kristjanson, and Trench, 319.

²⁶⁶ Homewood, Kristjanson, and Trench, 321.

²⁶⁷ Homewood, Kristjanson, and Trench, 322.

²⁶⁸ Homewood, Kristjanson, and Trench, 32.

²⁶⁹ L. Emerton, and I. Mfunda, *Making Wildlife Economics Viable for Communities Living Around the North West Serengeti, Tanzania* (working paper, London and Nairobi: IIED Evaluating Eden and IUCN-EARO Biodiversity and Economics, 2008).

²⁷⁰ Homewood, Kristjanson, and Trench, *Staying Maasai?*.

expansions.²⁷¹ These political reactions from below have been slow to gain traction at the state level, however.

Another form of adaptation, and a corollary to political participation, is vocalizing abuses at international fora. At the 2004 World Conservation Congress sponsored by the International Union for Conservation of Nature, a Maasai leader made a notable assertion, “we are enemies of conservation,” while also stating Maasai were the “original conservationists.” He argued that the Maasai are enemies of modern conceptions of conservation, largely based on exclusion and displacement of indigenous people, because his own people have been built-in stewards of the environment for their entire existence. Conservation, as many Maasai see it, is an outsider, alien force, pushed upon their livelihoods at the behest of political elites.²⁷² A body of evidence suggests that pastoralism and environmental conservation can be compatible, yet policies have dictated the separation of pastoralists from conservation areas.²⁷³

The Maasai have also resorted to illegal activities, like hunting and gathering within Serengeti National Park, sometimes with fatal consequences. The Carnegie Council tracked the death of at least 57 people between 1983 and 1998 at the hands of Serengeti National Park game rangers.²⁷⁴ While Tanzanian law does not permit executions, it appears that, in these cases, park officials overstepped their bounds during park law enforcement. The Maasai have, at times, also neglected conservation prohibitions on grazing and engaged in grass burning. While controlled burning of rangelands is a traditional pastoral technique for land resilience and protection against pestilence, it has not been permitted in the Ngorongoro Conservation Area since the 1960s.²⁷⁵

Social adaptations are also apparent, including changes to marriage age. As a result of insufficient livestock, some Maasai men are forced to delay marriage in order to remit

²⁷¹ Mittal and Fraser, *Losing The Serengeti: The Maasai Land that was to Run Forever*, 20.

²⁷² Igoe, *Conservation and Globalization*, 172.

²⁷³ Århem, *Pastoral Man in the Garden of Eden*, 98.

²⁷⁴ Veit and Benson, “When Parks and People Collide.”

²⁷⁵ Århem, *Pastoral Man in the Garden of Eden*.

brideprice payments.²⁷⁶ Conversely, families sometimes encourage other men to marry earlier than usual (around 16 or 17), as an insurance policy that they will return home from labor migration.²⁷⁷ Additionally, Maasai women have expanded their traditional livelihood repertoire. For example, their participation in protests represents a fracture in social norms, as the Maasai culture is paternalistic and traditionally views women as subordinate to men.²⁷⁸

One key adaptation to shrinking indigenous landscapes and subsequent lack of sufficient income is large-scale urban labor migration, which began in large numbers in the mid-1990s. This is primarily a practice of Maasai men, but some women also migrate. Migrant women are usually the wives or mothers of the men and primarily take a supportive role versus seeking employment. Those that do work, tend to go to markets to sell beads and other small wares.²⁷⁹ Men typically work in the city for a few months to earn enough to purchase livestock, then return to their homesteads. The network of urban Maasai have created a job exchange mechanism that allows for these short-term job prospects to remain in place and available on a rotational basis. There is even variation in urban wage-earning strategies of men, from the more popular security guard jobs, to hair braiding, to making jewelry.²⁸⁰

A key sub-adaptation of urban labor migration is the maintenance of Maasai identity in the midst of urban life. Maasai migrants continue to display outward symbols of their Maasai identity using traditional attire, especially their unique red-checked *shuka* robes and colorful beads to emphasize their culture. By doing so, they hope the perception of Maasai as brave, honest warriors will help them find jobs.²⁸¹ However, many labor

²⁷⁶ May and Ndipapa Ole Ikayo, "Wearing Illkarash," 289.

²⁷⁷ May and Ndipapa Ole Ikayo, 293.

²⁷⁸ Aud Talle. *Women at a Loss: Changes in Maasai Pastoralism and Their Effects on Gender Relations* (Stockholm, Sweden: Dept. of Social Anthropology, University of Stockholm, 1988).

²⁷⁹ May and Ndipapa Ole Ikayo, "Wearing Illkarash," 289.

²⁸⁰ May and Ndipapa Ole Ikayo, 293.

²⁸¹ May and Ndipapa Ole Ikayo, 279.

migrants also experience discrimination and maltreatment as a result of this tactic.²⁸² Maasai report feeling a sense of foreignness among the modern features of city environments, and most have disdain for city life. As a result, they tend to routinely converge at *iloipi*, Maasai gathering spots, which serve as a support system for wage labor migrants.²⁸³ They also frequently visit their rural homesteads. Thus, wage labor migration helps the Maasai remain, foundationally, pastoralists. Migration is ‘the new cattle rustling,’ and wearing traditional garb in the city is their ‘new spear’ in the fight against poverty.²⁸⁴ Labor migration and the maintenance of outward Maasai-ness is an adaptation strategy which shows that Maasai are generally attempting to “retain essential Maasai-ness” in the midst of social disarticulation.²⁸⁵ They are not assimilating, but actually re-asserting their identity as pastoralists in ways that help them navigate the modern world.²⁸⁶

Generally, many of the diversification tactics of the Maasai to exclusionary conservation over time have increasingly prioritized short-term gains over long-term survival.²⁸⁷ In reaction to dispossession and subsequent or worsening poverty, Maasai have progressively ignored traditional indigenous rangeland management rules.²⁸⁸ Thus, urgent, short-term needs have trumped long-term preservation principles. It appears that, as the levels of political, economic, and social marginalization increase over time for the Maasai near the Serengeti, so too does their calculus to prioritize the short-term over the long-term strengthen.

In attempts to adapt to the conservation of Serengeti National Park and their consequent dispossession of land tenure, the Maasai have largely shifted to nontraditional ways of providing for their families.²⁸⁹ Maasai have turned to such diversification efforts

²⁸² May and Ndipapa Ole Ikayo, 293.

²⁸³ May and Ndipapa Ole Ikayo, 293.

²⁸⁴ May and Ndipapa Ole Ikayo, 294.

²⁸⁵ May and Ndipapa Ole Ikayo, 292.

²⁸⁶ May and Ndipapa Ole Ikayo, 279.

²⁸⁷ McCabe, “Risk and Uncertainty Among the Maasai,” 61.

²⁸⁸ Manzano and Yamat. Livestock sector in the Ngorongoro District, 10.

²⁸⁹ Sambu, “Wildlife Conservation in Kenya and Tanzania and Effects on Maasai Communities.”

as increased agriculturalism, participation in tourism, political participation, urban labor migration, and shifts in family relations. Rather than reinvent their core identity, though, Maasai are continually reasserting and bolstering their identity amidst conservation resettlement and the associated restrictions. They are flexible to changing circumstances, but only so far as to incrementally adjust their identity and way of life, not erase it.

3. Adaptations Review and Consequences

The consequences of Maasai livelihood diversification and other adaptations are primarily those of overt antagonism in their relationship with conservation authorities, more dependency on nontraditional ways of life with simultaneous attempts to enhance their sense of group-ness, changes to social relations and health, and discursive and legal battles with the state.

The Maasai's deep resentment towards the conservation authorities of Serengeti National Park and Ngorongoro Conservation Area and their sometimes overt displays of opposition tend to further alienate the Maasai from traditional state and parastatal authorities. If state authorities see this group as an impediment to conservation goals, they are less likely to invite them into policy-making dialogue.

In the many ways described above, the Maasai continue to adapt in order to remain the same. That is, they hold their culture dear, and attempt to adapt only enough so as to remain Maasai. This adaptation strategy likely enhances their groupness and their degree of social segmentation from the rest of Tanzanian society, increasing their "otherness" in the eyes of non-Maasai Tanzanians and the government. Increased otherness might contribute to more social discrimination. High degrees of groupness can potentially "facilitate the formation of conflict groups" and exploitation by state elites.²⁹⁰ Therefore, it is important that Maasai leaders recognize the potential for state manipulation of their distinct group.

Urban migration has numerous potential social and health consequences. One social consequence is extended family separation, especially of young men who venture to

²⁹⁰ Kahl, "Population Growth, Environmental Degradation, and State-Sponsored Violence," 80–119.

cities in search of income. Often, they leave elders, wives, and children at home. This can increase the livelihood strain on those left in rural areas. One health consequence of urban labor migration is increased exposure to venereal disease. For example, Maasai labor migrants are at increased risk factors for HIV/AIDS contraction, both owing to higher rates in cities and to less knowledge of disease prevention.²⁹¹ However, in a study on urban labor migrants, most of the men said they do not sexually interact with non-Maasai women because such acts would be shameful.²⁹²

The last consequence of both conservation and Maasai adaptations to exclusion and resettlement is discursive and legal battles between government authorities and the Maasai. The Maasai have repeatedly appealed to the Ngorongoro Conservation Area Authority, a government organization in charge of law and order in the Ngorongoro Conservation Area. They have amplified their marginalized voices through online activism and use of media coverage. A petition started in 2013 has over 2.2 million virtual signatures in support of preventing further Maasai evictions from Ngorongoro District.²⁹³ The Maasai have found limited success using these tactics.

The Maasai have worked with multiple NGOs, activists, and think tanks to highlight their plight. For example, they worked with the Oakland Institute on its publication, *Losing the Serengeti: The Maasai Land that was to Run Forever*, which sparked widespread outrage when it highlighted the Tanzanian regime as complicit with private companies in human rights abuses in the Ngorongoro region. The Tanzanian government was quick to take the offensive against this NGO and dispute the report's claims. The Tanzanian Minister of Natural Resources and Tourism, Mr. Hamisi Kigwangalla, lambasted the report on Twitter stating "Fake report! Most of the information in the report is not true and you can't teach us how to handle our internal affairs. The land is ours, the Maasai people are ours, the wildlife is ours and everything," and "Activists

²⁹¹ Ann May and J. Terrence McCabe, "City Work in a Time of AIDS: Maasai Labor Migration in Tanzania," *Africa Today* 51, no. 2 (2004): 3–32, <https://doi.org/10.1353/at.2005.0010>.

²⁹² May and Ndipapa Ole Ikayo, "Wearing Illkarash," 29.

²⁹³ "Stand with the Maasai," AVAAZ, last modified April 7, 2013, https://secure.avaaz.org/campaign/en/stand_with_the_maasai_sp/.

cook up these things for their own gains.”²⁹⁴ This is one example of how the Maasai have leveraged their potent identity to engage with NGOs and highlight their plight at the hands of the Tanzanian state. They have also engaged with civil society groups in calls to increase Maasai representation on decision-making bodies and to allocated larger proportions of tourism revenues to the Maasai.

On the legal front, the Maasai have a long history of battling the state in court and at the local level. The Maasai first took to judicial redress in 1912, when they issued a lawsuit against the British government for land rights violations.²⁹⁵ At present, there are ongoing judicial proceedings based on the aforementioned land disputes with Tanzania Conservation Limited. However, some Maasai believe that the Tanzanian government is intentionally stalling judicial proceedings regarding their land rights.²⁹⁶ Tanzania’s Local Government Act of 1982 opened avenues for village-level legal actions.²⁹⁷ For example, the Maasai in Loliondo, Ngorongoro District demonstrated local opposition to government plans to establish a state-controlled Wildlife Management Area and abolish all community tourism contracts.²⁹⁸ However, many of these local level efforts, including creation of by-laws and village use plans, are experimental, leaving them vulnerable to future state interference.²⁹⁹

²⁹⁴ Dr. Kigwangalla, H. (@HKigwangallaTwitter), “Fake report! Most of the information in the report is not true and you can’t teach us how to handle our internal affairs. The land is ours, the Maasai people are ours, the wildlife is ours and everything...why should it concern you? Is it your means of ‘survival’ or ?” May 11, 2018, 11:29 a.m., <https://twitter.com/HKigwangalla/status/995008010035585030>.; Dr. Kigwangalla, H. (@HKigwangallaTwitter), “There are no any human rights violations. Activists cook up these things for their own gains. I went there and asked the people to volunteer any violation and there was none,” May 11, 2018, 2:21 p.m., <https://twitter.com/HKigwangalla/status/995051252894650369>.

²⁹⁵ Aman W. Kabourou, “The Maasai Land Case Of 1912: A Reappraisal,” *Transafrican Journal of History* 17, no. 1 (1988): 1–20, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/24328688>.

²⁹⁶ Jason Patinkin, “Tanzania’s Maasai battle game hunters for grazing land,” BBC, April 18, 2013, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-22155538>.

²⁹⁷ Homewood, Kristjanson, and Trench, *Staying Maasai?*, 324.

²⁹⁸ Homewood, Kristjanson, and Trench, 326.

²⁹⁹ Homewood, Kristjanson, and Trench, 326.

In the case of the Maasai who were resettled within the Ngorongoro Conservation Area and Ngorongoro District for the creation of Serengeti National Park, it quickly becomes clear that indigenous people adapt to circumstances as necessary, but that those adaptations can have their own consequences.

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V. CONCLUSION

A. SYNTHESIS OF DOCUMENTED ADAPTATIONS ACROSS CASE STUDIES

Exclusionary conservation is a territorial practice with observable social, cultural, economic, and political consequences. However, isolating the effects of these practices is difficult because multiple, simultaneous processes are always at play, and some of the observed mechanisms of change may be exogenous from conservation schemes themselves. Some examples of concurrent processes impacting indigenous people in East Africa include environmental degradation, climate change, population growth, urbanization, globalization, modernization, and democratization, to name a few. Therefore, it is highly likely that indigenous livelihoods and adaptations were being impacted by forces in addition to exclusionary conservation during the period of study.

Particularly on the Kenyan side of Mount Elgon, it is difficult to untangle the exact causal mechanism of some ethnic group adaptations over time, owing to the deep political connection between land and ethnicity since independence. Conservation is a land use action that has certainly dispossessed groups, but in this case, so too is political patronage. For example, the Sabaot creation of its own ethnic militia, the Sabaot Land Defence Force, was more a reaction to continuing land insecurity due to high politics than to exclusionary conservation.³⁰⁰

The two conservation areas studied, Serengeti National Park and Mount Elgon National Park, are also very different from each other, in that they were established in very different periods, and Serengeti National Park has been a national park for more than twice as long as Mount Elgon National Park (63 years versus 28 years). Serengeti National Park does not allow any indigenous access, but the Ugandan side of Mount Elgon National Park does. The onset of exclusionary conservation at Mount Elgon National Park was also more gradual than at Serengeti National Park (over the course of 70 years rather than 20 years).

³⁰⁰ Gabrielle Lynch, "The Wars of Who Belongs Where: The Unstable Politics of Autochthony on Kenya's Mt Elgon," *Ethnopolitics* 10, no. 3–4 (2011): 391–410, <https://doi.org/10.1080/17449057.2011.596671>.

Lastly, on average, 300,000 tourists visit Serengeti National Park a year. It even won the TripAdvisor Travelers Choice Award for the Best National Park in the World in 2021.³⁰¹ In stark contrast, Mount Elgon National Park hosts an average of 3,000 visitors a year – 1/100th of Serengeti National Park. The indigenous groups surrounding the two parks are also diverse, with distinctive histories, ethnic bonds, and cultural practices, among other differences.

For all the differences between the parks and the indigenous people, however, the two parks share one significant element – state delegation of power to park authorities. While the respective governments do have a stake in a healthy tourism sector, their transfer of hegemony over parks to parastatal organizations like Tanzanian National Parks Authority, Ugandan Wildlife Authority, Kenyan Wildlife Services, and the Kenyan Forest Department, means they leave everyday administration, and thus interaction with indigenous people, to other actors. This decentralization of power can lead to varied, uneven approaches to the neighboring indigenous people.

Overall, the case studies reveal the adaptations to exclusionary conservation and its displacement or access restrictions to be more similar than different, even across state borders, different ethnic groups, and different park authorities. While these indigenous groups' experience with conservation has not been the same, their adaptation strategies display many similarities.

B. SIMILAR ADAPTATIONS TO PROTECTED AREAS-INDUCED DISPLACEMENT: WHY AND WITH WHAT CONSEQUENCES?

Despite marked differences in number of park visitors and the ethnic groups themselves, ethnic group adaptations to exclusionary conservation display multiple commonalities. The two main categories of adaptations in both case studies are legal actions (livelihood changes, resource access agreements, building relationships with park authorities and tourism companies, use of courts, NGOs) and illegal actions (encroachment and uncoordinated resource gathering). As described, ethnic groups near both parks have

³⁰¹ “Travelers’ Choice 2021: National Parks — World,” TripAdvisor, accessed August 14, 2021, <https://www.tripadvisor.com/TravelersChoice-NationalParks-cTop10-g1>.

sometimes turned to subversive activities to circumvent park restrictions. These include prohibited acts like hunting, guerilla agriculture, grass burning, and covert resource collection.

There are, however, two noteworthy differences in adaptations between the groups near Mount Elgon National Park and Serengeti National Park: degrees of violence and urban migration. Violence in and around Mount Elgon National Park has been substantially worse than around Serengeti National Park, particularly during the civil strife from 2006–2008. However, this conflict had stronger links to other underlying factors other than conservation - historical land tenure instability, recent elections, and land patronage practices, as politicians had been linking ethnicity to land titling for about three decades in an effort to win elections. This incited indigenous mobilization, like the creation of the Sabaot Defence Land Force, to fight back amidst land insecurity. Human rights abuses were particularly widespread during that period, and media estimates over 1,000 deaths occurred during the unrest. Additionally, the area around Mount Elgon National Park lends itself to more conflict, simply due to the greater variety of ethnic groups. The Maasai are the predominant group in the Ngorongoro Conservation Area and Ngorongoro District, but a patchwork of groups lives around Mount Elgon National Park. Perceptions of relative deprivation, or seeing differences in experiences between one's own group and another group, can contribute to inter-group competition and conflict. Additionally, the Maasai experience a high salience of ethnic and cultural identity, as demonstrated by their efforts to remain Maasai, even in the midst of changing livelihood activities. The strength of ethnic identity is less clear for the groups around Mount Elgon National Park.

Turning to urban migration, the Maasai have a long-standing history of using this adaptive practice. Large-scale urban migration began in the 1990s. As a result, the Maasai also have pre-existing urban social networks in some Tanzanian cities, like Dar es Salaam. This existing network for Maasai migrants provides opportunities for employment networking, housing, and a sense of community.³⁰² In contrast, the smaller indigenous

³⁰² Collette Mortreux and Jon Barnett, "Climate Change, Migration and Adaptation in Funafuti, Tuvalu," *Global Environmental Change* 19 (2009): 105–112, <https://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.gloenvcha.2008.09.006>.

groups near Mount Elgon do not have a documented tradition of migration, likely owing to their land tenure insecurity and ability to negotiate access into the park and forests with corrupt authorities. Whereas the Ngorongoro Conservation Area and its surrounding areas are largely savannah plains, the areas around Mount Elgon National Park are heavily forested, which provides more cover for illicit activities, giving Mount Elgon populations greater latitude for illegal livelihood adaptations.

1. Why Are Adaptations Similar?

Indigenous groups turn to a relatively confined spectrum of adaptations, both legal and extralegal, because of their pastoralist pasts and position to state political elements. The Maasai, Bagisu, Sabiny, Benet and Sabaot were all originally some form of pastoralists, but have since adopted partial or intensive agriculture. Pastoralists communities historically relied on cattle raiding and occasional violence as traditional processes of conflict resolution.³⁰³ The groups around both national parks also experience a low degree of political inclusivity within their states and are stuck beneath dual hegemonic forces: the state and parastatal organizations. This positionality sometimes triggers the pastoralist groups' propensity towards violence when the tradition of negotiating access to resources fails.³⁰⁴

Political inclusivity refers to the degree that state institutions account for, and involve, a group.³⁰⁵ Low political inclusivity is akin state marginalization. All indigenes in the case studies are historically marginalized based on their rural livelihoods and failure to develop in the eyes of the state. In all three states, pastoral livelihoods are largely invisible to the state, and while that previously might have benefitted the people, it now muffles their voices after their transformation into more settled populations.³⁰⁶ This

³⁰³ Homewood, Kristjanson, and Trench, *Staying Maasai?*, 6.

³⁰⁴ J Terrence McCabe, "Turkana Pastoralism: A Case Against the Tragedy of the Commons," *Human Ecology: An Interdisciplinary Journal* 18, no. 1 (1990): 81–103, <https://doi.org/10.1007/BF00889073>.

³⁰⁵ Kahl, "Population Growth, Environmental Degradation, and State-Sponsored Violence," 90.

³⁰⁶ Bluwstein, "Resisting Legibility."

potentially leaves the groups more vulnerable to state exploitation as exclusionary conservation schemes continue to evolve. Just as exposure to physical environmental stressors can be “mediated or exacerbated by political marginalization and state capacity,” it appears as though conservation-induced stressors, like dispossession, are exacerbated by existing marginalization and low state capacity.³⁰⁷

Despite differences in land tenure regimes in the case study countries, rural residents in all states are still largely unable to gain land titling or recognition of customary land. Governmental discrimination towards rural indigenous groups manifests in their willingness to facilitate or ignore elite and third-party land grabbing. Elites remain both better positioned to take advantage of privatization initiatives and better positioned to affect government policy on land tenure, creating a potent mix when projects are proposed to governments. The Tanzanian government has allowed foreign companies like Ortello Business Corporation and Tanzania Conservation Limited to co-opt conservation areas for business around Serengeti National Park, dodging indigenous inputs and furthering their plights. Around Mount Elgon National Park, commercial companies also took advantage in a different way. Largely outside of government reach, they worked to get licensing for forest exploitation through parastatal organizations, like the Kenyan Forest Department. A 2001 independent analysis by the Mount Elgon Integrated Conservation and Development Project revealed that the Kenyan Forest Department continued to issue licenses to RaiPly, a commercial logging company, despite a 1986 Presidential Ban on logging practices in the forest.³⁰⁸ This is another example of lack of government enforcement in and around the parks. Parastatal and third-party entities enjoy a level of freedom, corruption has taken root, and exploitation of indigenous people has followed. This persistent exploitation after conservation-induced dispossession adds insult to injury.

³⁰⁷ Clionadh Raleigh, “Political Marginalization, Climate Change, and Conflict in African Sahel States,” *International Studies Review* 12, no 1. (2010): 81, <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-2486.2009.00913.x>.

³⁰⁸ Mineke Laman, Beatrice Khamati, and Patrick Milimo, *Mount Elgon Integrated Conservation and Development Project (MEICDP): External Evaluation*, IUCN, 2001, https://www.iucn.org/downloads/mt_elgon_eval_final.pdf.

Some scholars distill three options for groups experiencing land grabbing: “resistance, acquiescence, or incorporation.”³⁰⁹ As noted, state and third-party entities have continued to conduct land grabbing around parks since official enclosure. However, as the case studies reveal, indigenous groups who have experienced exclusionary conservation tend to operate across the spectrum, but mostly in the resistance and incorporation realm. Resistance is clear in the acts of guerilla agriculture and illegal resource gathering. Incorporation is demonstrated in their use of relationships with park authorities and tourism companies to achieve better livelihood outcomes.

Each of these ethnic groups’ experiences and adaptations are refracted through existing institutions, but those institutions – hegemonic parastatals, rural discrimination in land tenure systems, and indigenous cultural bias towards violence to fix injustice – are largely congruent in East African states. Therefore, in the cases of indigenous reactions to Mount Elgon National Park and Serengeti National Park, ethnic groups are operating within similar structures, and their agency is constrained within that structure because of continuing marginalization.³¹⁰ Politically irrelevant populations are largely ignored by governments and are forced to engage in self-help, sometimes violent and sometimes acquiescent.

2. A Potential Consequence of Similar Adaptation Strategies—Instability

Similar adaptation strategies across indigenous groups indicate an inclination towards active struggle when the groups are unable to secure land tenure or livelihood security. Across all three case studies, exclusionary conservation has provoked or exacerbated poverty, violence, and low degrees of political inclusivity. These three indicators - widespread poverty, past resort to violence, and low political inclusivity - are

³⁰⁹ Ruth Hall et al., “Resistance, Acquiescence or Incorporation? An Introduction to Land Grabbing and Political Reactions ‘from Below,’” *The Journal of Peasant Studies* 42, no. 3–4 (2015): 467–88, <https://doi.org/10.1080/03066150.2015.1036746>.

³¹⁰ Elsa Reimerson, “Between Nature and Culture: Exploring Space for Indigenous Agency in the Convention on Biological Diversity,” *Environmental Politics* 22, no. 6 (2013): 992–1009, <https://doi.org/10.1080/09644016.2012.737255>.

also indicators of conflict and instability.³¹¹ The Serengeti National Park case reveals particularly deep connections between conservation-linked poverty and social disarticulation, manifesting itself as damage to traditional systems of mutual assistance and marriage practices.³¹² For the Maasai, the risk of intra-group conflict is highest around Serengeti National Park, simply because they represent the overwhelming majority of inhabitants. However, around Mount Elgon National Park, the risk of inter-group conflict is highest because there are numerous indigenous groups with conflicting historical claims.

Compounding this increased risk of conflict is the growing militarization of conservation. This trend, coined “green militarization,” points to government use of military and paramilitary “techniques, technologies, and partnerships in pursuit of conservation.”³¹³ A retired military general leads the Tanzania Wildlife Management Authority, which manages nearly 80% of Tanzania’s protected area landmass, but not national parks.³¹⁴ However, the slow evolution of the application of military tactics to dissuade illegal indigenous actions in and around national parks has the potential to mobilize groups in defense. In concert with such militarization, states are increasingly applying scarcity narratives to exclusionary conservation schemes to justify resource control at elite levels.³¹⁵ This type of narrative is especially evident in the Tanzanian government’s relationship with foreign investors.

C. LESSONS LEARNED

This thesis represents an effort to bridge the gap between conceptions of conservation at a distance (like those of a Western graduate student) and conceptions of

³¹¹ Raleigh, “Political Marginalization, Climate Change, and Conflict in African Sahel States,” 69–86.; Kahl, “Population Growth, Environmental Degradation, and State-Sponsored Violence,” 80–119.

³¹² May and Ndipapa Ole Ikayo, “Wearing Illkarash,” 286.; Hudson and Matfess, “In Plain Sight: The Neglected Linkage between Brideprice and Violent Conflict,” 7–40.

³¹³ Lunstrom, “Green Militarization,” 817.

³¹⁴ “TAWA,” Tanzania Wildlife Management Authority, accessed October 23, 2021, <https://www.tawa.go.tz/>.

³¹⁵ Weldemichel, “Othering Pastoralists,” 1496–1518.

conservation as a part of daily life (like the indigenous people in this study). The goal has been to establish a deeper understanding of indigenous adaptations to exclusionary conservation in the region. Clearly, outsiders must move past a romantic, utopian attitude of East African land and peoples to see the malevolent outcomes associated with exclusionary conservation.

This research also recognizes the consequences of the fact that “Everyone ‘knows’ the Maasai,” while no one knows the Sabaot.³¹⁶ The Maasai are globally recognized and more studied in comparison to the smaller, less prominent groups surrounding Mount Elgon National Park, and they have used this visibility to their advantage. Greater international visibility and fame rooted in their unique image affords the Maasai alternate avenues for advancement and attention. For example, the Maasai image as “ambassadors of mobility,” has allowed the group to engage in fundraising, thus increasing awareness of their plights.³¹⁷ In fact, Maasai-ness has even been culturally appropriated. Thousands of companies, from Louis Vuitton to Land Rover, have appropriated the Maasai culture for marketing.³¹⁸ The Maasai Intellectual Property Initiative Trust seeks to connect business use of Maasai-ness with financial returns for the Maasai people.³¹⁹ While this initiative is still under development, it could help provide the Maasai a sustainable income stream to offset struggles associated with exclusionary conservation.

Additionally, the civil strife on the Kenyan side of Mount Elgon from 2006–2008 likely dissuaded field research for a time, and therefore, further metrics on exclusionary conservation’s impacts. Many studies of the indigenous people around Mount Elgon National Park fail to differentiate clearly between groups in the final research findings,

³¹⁶ “Being Maasai: Ethnicity and Identity in East Africa” in *Eastern African Studies*, ed. Thomas Spear and Richard Walle (London: Currey, 1993).

³¹⁷ Noel B. Salazar, *Momentous Mobilities: Anthropological Musings on the Meanings of Travel* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2018), 67

³¹⁸ Cordelia Hebblethwaite, “Brand Maasai: Why nomads might trademark their name,” BBC, May 28, 2013, <https://www.bbc.com/news/magazine-22617001>.

³¹⁹ Meg Brindle and Natalia Florman, “The Maasai Intellectual Property Initiative: a 20th-Century Model for Turning Assets into Income,” *Journal of Fair Trade* 2, no. 2 (2021): 5–12, <https://doi.org/10.13169/jfairtrade.2.2.0005>.

making comparison between groups imprecise and possibly fallacious. Overall, it was easier to distill clear livelihood adaptations in the Maasai in the Serengeti National Park case study than the adaptations of the Bagisu, Sabiny, Benet, Sabaot and Ogiek in the Mount Elgon National Park study.

This thesis has also demonstrated the maladroitness of slating indigenous people as solely victims. While certainly vulnerable, they are also resilient and work to adapt to circumstances. Rather than being powerless, indigenes can exert power in creative ways. Problems filter through cultural context, creating unique forms of resistance, which can transform and disrupt ideas and institutions, like conservation, in ways that policy makers may not anticipate.³²⁰ Rather than thinking in terms of paternalistic interventions to ‘save’ indigenous peoples, outsiders must consider the strength, knowledge, and creativity of these people to affect their own circumstances.

Indigenous groups, even those that display enduring cohesion, are not homogenous and represent many individual interests. One cannot look past the role of individuals within ethnic groups in negotiating exclusionary conservation and displacement. Individuals experience conservation-induced displacement through their own unique lens of needs and values, similar to how those experiencing threats from climate change do so.³²¹ Even though this thesis distills livelihood adaptations at the group level, there is still much variation beneath. Ultimately, it is clear that conservation is not employed on a blank slate, and adaptations are fluid and multidirectional.

Lastly, these case studies helped illuminate the divergence between Western conceptions of national parks and the ground truth in East Africa. Whereas in states like the United States, national parks may serve as a centripetal force, serving to unite people and create a sense of commonality and nationalism, thereby strengthening the state, national parks in East Africa appear to be doing the opposite.³²² Instead, national parks

³²⁰ Igoe, *Conservation and Globalization*, 134.

³²¹ Mortreux and Barnett, “Climate Change, Migration and Adaptation,” 105–112.

³²² Lynn Ross-Bryant, *Pilgrimage to the National Parks: Religion and Nature in the United States*, Vol. 1, (London: Routledge, 2013), <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203094464>.

appear to impart a sense of otherness and solidify bonds along ethnic lines versus national lines. Certainly, it is an imperfect analogy, as the United States' foray into exclusionary conservation transpired a century before East Africa's. Additionally, the injustices wrought upon Native Americans in the late 1700s in the creation of national parks are markedly dissimilar from indigenous Africans' experiences today.

D. IMPLICATIONS

Conservation schemes have evolved over time, but in the case of East Africa, the fortress mindset still reigns supreme. The top-down and increasingly parastatal nature of decision-making tramples indigenous livelihoods and forces sometimes maladaptive choices. Resources users – the indigenous people on the ground – tend to have a better understanding of the realities of conservation than do state bureaucrats and even conservation NGOs.

Dispossession in the name of conservation has far-reaching impacts on indigenous people, both immediately and in the long-term, as they adjust their livelihoods to restricted land access and use. Some conservation-induced impacts have clear connections to indigenous adaptations while the causal chain for other impacts is more difficult to establish, particularly for effects which may have developed naturally or in response to other stimuli.

Although indigenous groups are far from homogenous, the impacts of displacement and subsequent adaptations are strikingly similar within the region of East Africa. Despite this, there is no simple solution or prescription for conservation in East Africa because there are still myriad differences in ethnic groups, biospheres, and regimes. A trending recommendation in field research is to improve communication and trust between the people, conservationists, and social scientists.³²³ By understanding the spectrum of adaptations to exclusionary conservation, policymakers can better predict such actions in the case of expanding conservationist aims. There is also value in continuing to reimagine alternatives to exclusionary conservation, like community-based initiatives.

³²³ McCabe, "Giving Conservation a Human Face?," 74.

The similarity in livelihood adaptations across diverse groups indicates that indigenous people can become a destabilizing force after experiencing exclusionary conservation. This could manifest as resource-based conflicts, both intergroup and towards park and state authorities. Further research might do well to tease out and highlight possible causal pathways between exclusionary conservation and conflict. Just as environmental scarcity has been identified as a conflict multiplier or as having catalytic effects, dispossession due to exclusionary conservation might pose a similar risk.³²⁴

Land tenure insecurity has historical and enduring linkages into broader themes of state and regional insecurity across the African continent. In West Africa for example, the dissolution of traditional pastoral lifestyles coupled with state incompetence and abuse has fueled insecurity because indigenous people become more susceptible to recruitment by armed extremist groups that promise avenues to reestablish traditional livelihoods.³²⁵ Thus, exclusionary conservation, by exacerbating land insecurity, may serve as another trigger of unrest.

The case studies evaluated here indicate that the local-level valuation and authority of national parks are not yet settled in East Africa. Indigenous people are not yet ready to accept exclusionary conservation writ large, particularly when such schemes induced forced displacement from ancestral lands or require continual negotiations for land access and use. Indigenous people are not entirely trapped within these structural forces, and the world may yet witness indigenous agency move to the forefront in East Africa. The Nobel Prize-winner in Economics, Elinor Ostrom, reminds us: “There is no reason to believe that bureaucrats and politicians, no matter how well meaning, are better at solving problems

³²⁴ Colin P. Kelley et al., “Climate Change in the Fertile Crescent and Implications of the recent Syrian Drought,” *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences (PNAS)* 112, no. 11 (2015): 3241–3246.

³²⁵ Mathieu Pellerin, *Listening to Herders in the Sahel and West Africa: What is the Future for Pastoralism in the Face of Insecurity?* (Niger: Réseau Billital Maroobé, 2021), 3, <https://www.maroobe.com/images/DOCS/Synthetic%20Report-Patoralism%20and%20Insecurity%20in%20the%20Sahel%20and%20West%20Africa-%20RBM.pdf>.

than the people on the spot, who have the strongest incentive to get the solution right.”³²⁶ Indigenous people, while certainly victims of exclusionary conservation, have agency to challenge the structure in which they find themselves.³²⁷

At the state level, East African governments appear to be facing a continual tension between international conservation goals, with the important role of mitigating climate change, and the welfare and development of their populations. When East African governments face a choice between conservation and development, conservation tends to eclipse development.³²⁸ Generally, the governments are intent to avoid aggravation of land issues. Such avoidance is not particularly surprising, because many land-owning elites are embedded within state power structures and they do not want to threaten their own land rights. Thus, if land claims are not convenient to their goals, governments tend to ignore indigenous claims or frame historical rights as ‘irredeemable,’ intent to erase the past.³²⁹

In 2010, the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity recommended that every state conserve at least 10% of its biome for conservation, with a goal of 17% by 2020, known as Aichi Target 11.³³⁰ The global average of protected areas currently stands at 15%.³³¹ However, the goals continue to climb, with a new “30x30” goal, intended to protect 30% of the biosphere by 2030.³³² Sixty countries have signed on, including Uganda

³²⁶ “Resource Governance, Tragedy of The Commons and Ostrom | GEOG 430: Human Use of The Environment,” Penn State Department of Geography, accessed August 14, 2021, <https://www.e-education.psu.edu/geog430/node/606>.

³²⁷ Reimerson, “Between Nature and Culture: Exploring Space for Indigenous Agency, 1005.

³²⁸ McCabe, “Giving Conservation a Human Face?,” 75.

³²⁹ Otieno Aluoka, “Maasai Demand Return of Ancestral Lands: Kenya’s World Famous Maasai People Are Demanding Back Their Ancestral Lands, Signed Away by an Illiterate Chief to the British a Hundred Years Ago. They Now Argue That the Lease Has Expired and the Land Should Come Back to Them. The Government Does Not Agree. A Major Stand-Off Is in the Offing. Otieno Aluoka Reports from Nairobi,” *African Business*, no. 302 (2004): 52–.

³³⁰ Catherine Corson, “Territorialization, Enclosure and Neoliberalism: Non-State Influence in Struggles over Madagascar’s Forests,” *The Journal of Peasant Studies* 38, no. 4 (2011): 703–26, <https://doi.org/10.1080/03066150.2011.607696>.

³³¹ “The World Now Protects 15% of Its Land, But Crucial Biodiversity Zones Left Out,” IUCN.

³³² “HAC Member Countries,” High Ambition Coalition for Nature and People, accessed August 14, 2021, <https://www.hacfornatureandpeople.org/hac-members>.

and Kenya, and Tanzania has already reached this goal.³³³ Environmental scientists have stated that anywhere between 30–80% of the world’s biomass should be protected to halt biodiversity loss.³³⁴ Meanwhile, more than one third of the world’s surface is still traditionally owned, used, or occupied by indigenous peoples.³³⁵ While many conservation goals and policies give lip service to protection and appreciation of indigenous interests and livelihoods, many fail to consider the place these groups occupy in relation to their respective regimes. Surely, the international establishment can formulate a better construct to achieve such lofty conservation goals... if not just for East Africans, then for the world.

³³³ “HAC Member Countries,” High Ambition Coalition for Nature and People.

³³⁴ Stephen Woodley et al., “A Review of Evidence for Area-based Conservation Targets for the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework,” *PARKS*, no. 25.2 (December 5, 2019): 31–46, <https://doi.org/10.2305/IUCN.CH.2019.PARKS-25-2SW2.en>.

³³⁵ Kathy MacKinnon et al., “Strengthening the Global System of Protected Areas Post-2020: A Perspective from the IUCN World Commission on Protected Areas,” *Parks Stewardship Forum* 36, no. 2 (2020): 290, <https://doi.org/10.5070/P536248273>.

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