



MSc. BIODIVERSITY, CONSERVATION AND MANAGEMENT

TRACING COMMUNITY CONSERVATION
EVOLUTION, POWER RELATIONS AND
SUSTAINABILITY IN NORTHERN KENYA

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Abstract

The narrative of Fortress Conservation was based on strategies dominated by attempts to reserve places for nature, to separate humans from nature, and to prevent consumptive use or other forms of human impact. The counter-narrative of Community Conservation promises to reconcile conservation and development objectives, and ensure the interests of the local people are taken into account. This narrative is no panacea however, and in the evolution of community conservation in Kenya, several initiatives have fallen victim to poor governance or the lack thereof, or worse, the retrogression into the colonial model of conservation through exclusion. A new model of community conservation in Kenya is emerging, distinguished by the governance and leadership of umbrella bodies and land owner associations, state involvement and community buy-in in a new frontier of conservation on communal lands. This new model is reordering power relations and endeavours to foster socio-ecological resilience for and by communities.

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Abbreviations

- ACC: Africa Conservation Centre
- AWF: African Wildlife Foundation
- CONGO: Conservation Non-governmental Organisation
- ENGO: Environmental Non-governmental Organisation
- KWS: Kenya Wildlife Service
- KWT: Kenya Wildlife Trust
- NRT: Northern Rangelands Trust
- TNC: The Nature Conservancy
- NGO: Non-governmental Organisation
- PA: Protected Area
- PIKE: Proportion of Illegally Killed Elephants
- SORALO: South Rift Alliance of Land Owners
- STE: Save The Elephants

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TITLE: TRACING COMMUNITY CONSERVATION EVOLUTION, POWER RELATIONS AND SUSTAINABILITY IN NORTHERN KENYA**INTRODUCTION**

For decades, conservation strategies were dominated by attempts to reserve places for nature and to separate humans from nature, to prevent consumptive use and other forms of human impact (Adams & Hulme 2001b). This was the narrative of Fortress Conservation (Wells *et al.* 1992; Brockington 2002). Although the global tally now appears largely positive in terms of ecological success of Protected Areas (PAs) the fences-and-fines approach to conservation has lost its hegemony (Leader-Williams & Albon 1988; Inamdar *et al.* 1999; Adams & Hulme 2001a). It grows steadily more unpopular as critics call out its exclusionary tactics, and in Africa, erroneous depictions of Africans and their environment (MacKenzie 1987, 1989).

The counter-narrative of Community Conservation promises to reconcile conservation and development objectives, and ensure the interests of the local people are taken into account (Western & Wright 1994; Horowitz 1998; Berkes 2004). The narrative boasts 3 pillars: benefit, empowerment, and conservation (Murphree 2009; Dressler *et al.* 2010).

Benefit has been linked in several instances as much to material well-being as it has been to managerial input, and in this way linking back to empowerment (Barrow & Murphree 2001; Murphree 2009; Dressler *et al.* 2010). Because of its links to governance and sustained material well-being of communities, 'benefit' as it is termed here has been used as a global scorecard when attempting to quantify outcomes of the narrative. Unfortunately, viewing community conservation on this global plane has led to sweeping conclusions, often underpinned by "project bias" where successive regional evaluations use the same examples without questioning the nature of change at the local level (Chambers 1983; Adams & Hulme 2001a). Kenya may well be victim of this sort of evaluation, as different models¹ of conservation continue to evolve almost entirely independently and unchecked in several parts of the country, in some cases

¹ Model, in the context of this thesis refers to A schematic description of a system, theory, or phenomenon that accounts for its known or inferred properties and may be used for further study of its characteristics

quietly leading to spiraling retrogression both on the ideological and practical front. There is therefore a need to assess and examine this evolution, bringing to the fore themes that may or may not be replicable - but will surely be historically relevant as the country builds its unique brand of community conservation.

On empowerment, Mamdani (1996) puts forward an argument using political theory in reference to construction of political identities. It is based on the thesis that alienation of people from lands and other resources was a key strategy of imperial subjugation. Crucially, it continues to be the hallmark of conservation strategy in East Africa (Brockington 2004). It follows, therefore, that community conservation, with its connotations of inclusion, participation and equitable benefit sharing, promises a fundamental reversal of ideas and practices informing conservation. In this regard, questions of agency and power relations become central precisely because their implied attempt to re-order power relations between the heirs of the colonial legacy and their imperial subalterns (Kantai 2012, pers. comm.). Within this new context of community conservation the colonial ideal of exclusion and fixed hierarchies of authority and regulation (management) would be radically re-ordered, a situation that would have a material bearing on historically marginalised communities and groups.

Kenya's revolution in biodiversity conservation could scarcely be timelier. It was once believed both by State and imperialist (like in many places in the world) that "Inside the park are people quietly dedicated to intimately involved in trying to achieve the on the ground park protection" (Brandon 1998; Miller *et al.* 2011), while outside, the overwhelming reality a social context teeming with problems like poverty, conflict and lower levels of biodiversity." (Dressler 2010). This may be true in part today, but the last statement could not be more false and misleading. With over 60% of the country's wildlife population residing outside parks (Western *et al.* 2009b) often on communal lands, the need for all stakeholders to tie biodiversity conservation to communities is urgent. For that to happen however, there is an even greater need to build in socioeconomic and ecological resilience.

While in my literature review I tackle narratives and concepts underpinning community conservation in Kenya, along with the early governance history, using key informants' as well as community perspectives, the dissertation aims:

1. To examine key features of the evolution of community conservation in Kenya, and through the use of case studies, unearth themes that have distinguished Kenya's brand of community conservation.
2. To investigate the power relational role of prominent groups of actors in Northern Kenya and to synthesize what effects they have had on the direction of community conservation.
3. To illuminate elements fostering socio-economic and biological community conservation sustainability in Northern Kenya.

LITERATURE REVIEW

a) The amorphous entity of 'Community'

'Community' is said to be one of the most vague and elusive concepts in social science (Adams & Hulme 2001b). In the wider literary and historical context, constructs of community were based on Tonnies's formulation of *Gemeinschaft* and *Gesellschaft*, or community and society where community is painted as an organic whole (Harris 2001). This held great appeal to early conservationists. Filled with images of pristine ecosystems and innocent primitives, it may have been a kind of revitalization of the idea of the "Noble Savage" [sensu (Dryden 1670)]- for early conservationists, these genteel yet uncivilized tribes showed environmentally friendly tendencies.

With the entrance of the state and the market, these notions quickly changed- the state bemoaning the "people" who were an obstacle to efficient and "rational" organization of resource use (Agrawal & Gibson 1999) and the market drove new fears that those "benign tribesmen" would voraciously exploit any resource to extinction if commercial gain were involved (Hingston 1931). In much of colonial Africa, the state's governmentality-based solution in the creation of governable subjects [sensu(Foucault 1980)] was to delineate spatial and language based assemblages - "reserves" (as they

are known in Kenya), further solidifying their concept of community as small spatial units with homogenous social structures with shared norms (Agrawal & Gibson 1999). In so doing, many African states governed their subjects in isolation, and an early manifestation of Africa's Protected Area movement was the isolation of the local from certain natural resources. This construct of community was at the centre of fortress conservation [sensu: (Brockington & Homewood 1996)] whose legitimacy has waned in favour of the narrative of community conservation- discussed in greater depth in the next section.

Though community in conservation has become a powerful image, central to renewable and equitable resource management, part of the results of this dissertation discuss the hazards of ignoring how the strata within community –which is not at all homogenous- “affect the possibility of layered alliances that can span multiple levels of politics. Attention to these details is critical if policy changes surrounding community are to lead to outcomes that are sustainable and equitable.” (Murphree 2009)

b) Community Conservation: The genesis of the narrative

In East Africa, there are broad theories about why community conservation gained power and pragmatic legitimacy have been advanced. In the 1980s, three basic premises emerged (Hulme & Murphree 2001), giving Community Conservation a chance to spring forth.

The first was the simple, suddenly apparent “self-evident” need to involve communities in conservation in what was a preserve of the state (Barrow & Jennings 2001). It was the age when people began to question the “received wisdom” (Leach & Mearns 1996) about such theories as Garrett Hardin's “Tragedy of the Commons” (Hardin 1968). As (mis-)applied to the people living in African savannas, had led to “astonishingly high levels of exclusion, displacement, and pauperization of rural peoples.” (Brockington *et al.* 2006; Agrawal & Lemos 2007). It was the beginning of a hazy realization that the people who had lived with the wildlife over generations had some knowledge about how

to manage, or could be marshalled to protect the resources around them (Adams & McShane 1996; Adams & Hulme 2001a).

The second premise was the concept of “Sustainable Development” stemming from the Bali Action Plan, 1982 (Wilshusen *et al.*, 2002), the 1983 World Commission on Environment and Development’s report, ‘Our Common Future’(Brundtland 1987) and later 1992 Earth Summit. The idea presented was that poverty eradication was a necessary and fundamental requirement for environmentally sustainable development. In many developing countries, this mushrooming into Integrated Conservation and Development Projects (ICDPs), championed by some conservation NGOs (Nelson 2009; Brockington & Scholfield 2010b, a; Fletcher 2012). This would also have great bearing on the evolution of community conservation.

Thirdly, as the wheels of neoliberalism began to turn in the 1980s, a paradigm shift also occurred in conservation in East Africa, from “nature-loving” or “biophilic” tendencies [sensu (Ladle *et al.* 2011)]- to more instrumental based approaches, inspired by sustainable development and the “use of natural resources as potential to develop materially” (Ehrlich & Ehrlich 1992). Though some ethnic groups such as the Maasai had already “deployed this to their advantage at various points in history”, using the prominence of their ethnicity in the European imagination as currency (Hughes 2007), the idea that “nature must pay its way” gained traction for several other communities during this period, and the use of market incentives began to be explored to shape the structures for conservation.

The ambition behind these premises though, was only skin deep in its intention to create the momentum for communities to lead the way in conservation. Beneath the push for community conservation lay a plethora of unreconstructed colonial notions about the governance of the African environment. The former will remain a subject of discussion throughout this review, while the latter has translated to governance structures that continue to be reshaped on the road to true decentralization, as discussed below.

c) Early days: Kenya's governance history in its infancy

Initially, East African states, post-independence, developed community conservation ideologies with foundations partly in inherited, colonially-derived political structures based on centralized control of resources (Mamdani 1996) and partly in new African ideologies. Using readings from Barrow, Roe (IIED, 2008), Western as well as first-hand information from a former director of KWS who was part of the implementing process, I provide the governance history in Kenya.

Kenya's community conservation began in the late 1970s as purely Park Outreach strategies described as, "seeking to enhance the biological integrity of national parks, reserves by working to educate and benefit local communities and enhance the role of protected areas in local plans." (Barrow et al 2001) This was first tried out in the wildlife dispersal areas of Amboseli National Park in 1974-1976, aimed at allowing the Maasai pastoralists who lived in the area to benefit from park fees from the newly commissioned park (Western 1982). This was later used as a model to expand tourism during the creation of other parks and reserves around the country, such as Maasai Mara, and Samburu.

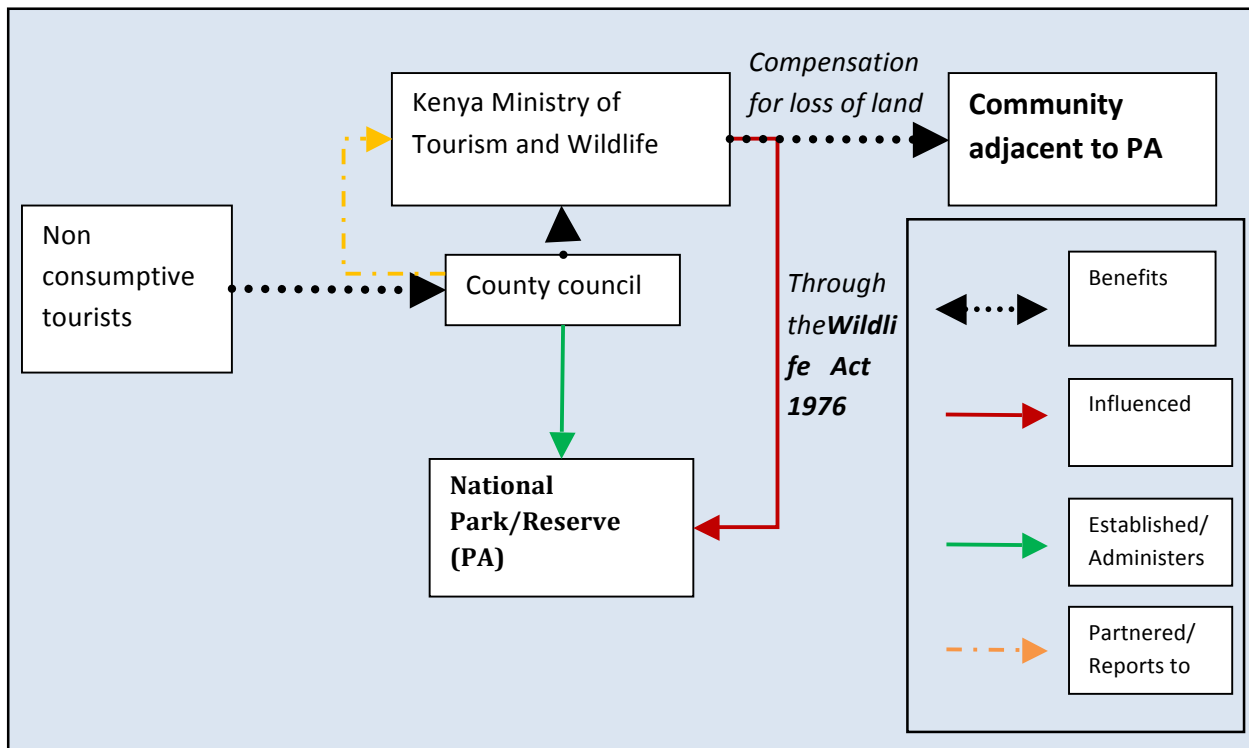


Figure 1: Schematic showing an early Community Conservation model in Kenya (Source: Own)

As the schematic above shows, the first model for community conservation was entirely a state led and administered prototype, with benefits oriented more to the wider Kenyan

economy than to the communities surrounding national parks, who were only compensated for their land loss and provided with alternative sources of water for their livestock (Western 1982). In this way, Kenya took up a partially neoliberalist approach to early community conservation, believing that compensation was equivalent to wildlife paying its way outside of parks (Barrow & Murphree 2001).

(Pimbert & Pretty 1994) have put forward a typology to describe how people can participate in development programmes:

Participation Typology	Roles assigned to local people
Passive	Told what is going to happen/already happened. Information belongs to professionals.
Information giving	Answer questions from extractive researchers but not able to influence analysis.
Consultative	Consulted. External agents listen to your views on an external, pre-defined problem.
Functional	Form groups to meet predetermined objectives. Done after major decision is taken, but may become self-dependent.
Interactive	Joint analysis and actions. Use of local institutions. People have a stake in changing/maintaining structures.
Self-Mobilizing/Empowerment	Take decisions independent of external institutions. May challenge existing arrangements or structures.

The Amboseli case described above fits comfortably into the Passive category, the professionals referred to in this case being the State, County Council and international NGOs such as WWF, IUCN and AWF.

Although the Amboseli model was replicated elsewhere, it failed at the crux of its mission, which was to confer tangible benefits to the community (Western 1982). It was only in the early 1990s when the Kenya Wildlife Service introduced the Community Wildlife Service - aimed at minimizing human wildlife conflict while enabling local people to benefit from living in PA adjacent areas (Barrow & Murphree 2001)- when more effective changes were felt. At this time Kenya saw an explosion of community

conservation initiatives at a national level. Below is a table showing these initiatives as synthesized from readings of Western 1997, key informant interviews and the KAWCSO Draft report. (Please see next page for table 1).

Matching the growth of the initiatives was the growth in number of conservancies² of various categorizations. The World Parks Congress has defined these conservancies as private protected areas (Goriup 2005). Private protected areas are also placed in different categories including long term private ownership, group ranches, state-owned but community managed land and so on (Carter *et al.* 2008). In Kenya, there has been no legally or constitutionally recognized status for the growth of these private protected areas, and the body of literature on their evolution and reasons for their expansion is modest. This dissertation hopes to fill in some of the gaps in this area.

² A conservancy (in Kenya) is the unofficial name given to parts of communal lands set aside and used for conservation purposes.

Table 2: Chronology of National-level Community Conservation initiatives in Kenya. (Source: Own)

Governance Structure	Years in Existence	Objective	Actors involved	Results
Community Wildlife Service	1991- present	Park outreach: To support KWS by sharing benefits from parks with communities	KWS	Slow progress at the onset, but continues to function and has grown to incorporate the KWS or state arm of community conservation
Protected Area Wildlife Service (PAWS)	1991-1996	-To give support to KWS to create and draft new legislation for wildlife	World Bank, bilateral development partners, the State	Fizzled out.
Conservation of Biodiverse Resource Areas (COBRA)	Mid- 1990s	-To facilitate creation of a national wildlife federation	USAID, the State	Fizzled out, but created opportunities followed up by CORE
Kenya National Wildlife Association (KNWA)	1995	-To advance aspirations and needs of communities and private land owners -To come up with a position on wildlife utilization	Private Wildlife Forums: Nakuru Wildlife Forum, Kajiado Wildlife Forum, Taita Wildlife Forum, Laikipia Wildlife Forum, Amboseli/Tsavo Group Ranches Association, and Machakos Wildlife Forum.	Failed. Reasons: Conflict of interests Lack of independence Lack of institutional infrastructure, Inadequate representation, Weak governance at the regional levels, poor resourcing and a weak policy framework to support the organization
Conservation of Resources through Enterprise (CORE)	2000	-To build support for and help institutionalize regional forums under the National Wildlife Forum	USAID, the State (i.e Ministry of Tourism and wildlife)	Failed. Reasons: Weak governance, Political competition, Insufficient representation and Lack of legislative support and formal capacity to drive the organization.
Kenya Wildlife Working Group (KWWG)	2005-2007	-To advance aspirations and needs of communities and private land owners	Initially by land owners and communities- used as vehicle by the Ministry of Tourism and Wildlife to advance state-community shared goals	Competing interests Weak leadership Limited government support and legislative framework Lack of institutional infrastructure

The table above shows many of these initiatives failing for one reason or another. Often it was chalked up to limited government support, legislation and competing interests. When one initiative was winding down, another replaced it but unfortunately suffered the same fate. Looking deeper, this begs policy makers to look at the current initiatives and see if the mistakes made in these earlier editions of Community Conservation have been corrected. Further, it asks that time be taken to understand the narrative, specific to Kenya, which may present the conceptual challenges that have been manifested in these failed initiatives.

d) Disentangling the values and narratives behind community conservation in Kenya

The narratives and values behind every conservation mechanism are highly influential in shaping the direction policy and practice will take (Adams & Hulme 2001a). In the formation of the global protected area movement, for example, different countries took on the idea based on diverse values: In America, National Parks and Wilderness areas represented both the American people's independence and their ability to take a step back to assess the effects of modernity (Jepson & Ladle 2010). Thus, their protected areas were to be vast unmanaged areas, largely "untrammelled by man" (Jepson & Whittaker 2002). In contrast, many protected areas in Britain, beginning with Hampstead Heath in the 1860s were set up for people to be able to escape their polluted industrial cities and enjoy nature (Ladle *et al.* 2011).

The push for protected areas in Africa was partially from the "Wise Use Movement"[*sensu* (Ladle *et al.* 2011)] drawn from experiences of governors in colonies who viewed nature as natural resources in need of management (Grove 1992), but stemmed primarily from the need to protect wildlife from "barbaric hunting practices"(Jepson & Ladle 2010; Ladle *et al.* 2011). These practices comprised a combination of overzealous sport hunting by settlers and tourists, but were in fact more skewed towards African subsistence and trading traditions (Hingston 1931; Adams & McShane 1996). In Kenya, this translated to the setting up of Protected Areas, and later community conservation initiatives, geared towards international tourists, (originally both trophy hunting and safari tourists in search of the elusive "wilderness."

Wilderness is an emotive term discussed and disputed under various topics revolving around conservation. From an ecological standpoint, wilderness is many times grouped with other

concepts like “naturalness” and the idea of “pristine landscapes”- concepts that have come under heavy scrutiny from the paleo-ecological perspective (Hobbs *et al.* 2010) because many areas that were thought to be untouched by man, or were considered total wilderness or pristine have been proven to have had human habitation, which in many cases shaped the landscape formations in those areas (Willis *et al.* 2010).

Wilderness is also problematic in its assumptions of a *tabula rasa* and therefore open for colonial possession (Adams & McShane 1996). Similar assumptions drove much European settlement in Africa and would later result in competing claims over the newly settled lands – the root of many of Africa’s liberation struggles (Cronon 1995; Beinart 2000; Hughes 2007).

e) Power relations and their role in community conservation

As gleaned from narrative the themes discussed, community conservation in Kenya and its links to wilderness intertwined with foreign imaginings bring to light an underlying question about the true drivers of the emerging narrative, and indeed the process on the ground. This dissertation pays special attention to the power dynamics in Kenya, and though an inductive grounded theory approach was used, transcripts were investigated for claims by critics that community conservation is a shallow and perhaps even deceitful facade designed to hide old-style preservation, with its harsh colonial legacy of policing, eviction and misanthropy (Neumann 1997).

Several authorities on community conservation emphasize participation, empowerment and community ownership as defining pillars in the success of community conservation (Adams and Hulme 2001; Brockington 2002; Murphree *et al.* 2009). Often, more emphasis is placed on benefit creation and on the conservation aspects, but faulty power relations could lead to overdependence, elite capture, arbitrary exclusion of certain groups (Homewood 2004) and eventually community opposition to all conservation efforts. Murphree (2009) has linked effective empowerment to “legitimate boundaries, members and leadership, which has the right to plan for and use its resources, to determine the modes of that usage, benefit fully from their resources, determine the distribution of such benefits, set by-laws for management and negotiate with other social actors.”

Before such a utopia is reached however, more often than not rural people only see centralized power in the person of the State which rules through strict edicts and vetos of unauthorized initiatives (Murphree et al 2009). The only escape, critics posit, is either through links of patronage, or through non-compliance leading to a “socially constructed stalemate” (Lee 1993). In Kenya, this may be said to be true in the rampant poaching situation, although other factors also fuel the practice. The promise of community conservation in power relations is the potential to rise above all this, and even beyond biophysical relationships or species specific sustainability. The real utopia is the creation of systems resilience- the ability of the human species to deal with uncertainty, change and shocks in our relations with each other and with the environment; in this is the embodiment of sustainability.

f) The Scorecard: can community conservation get it right and sustain it?

Far from the utopia described above, the major hurdle community conservation is facing on a global scale is that it is deemed to have failed in achieving simultaneous ecological and social success (Miller *et al.* 2011). While initially there seemed to be consensus that community conservation was evidently the “right approach” to combat the evils of fortress conservation while developing communities (Adams & Hulme 2001), voices have been raised over the last decade, contending that conservation and development goals, though both essential in their own respects, are incompatible and should be delinked because the mixed objective fail to serve either objective (Kramer *et al.* 1997; Terborgh 1999; Redford & Sanderson 2000; Berkes 2004). Still others contend that conservation is development in itself and should not be conceptually or practically separated out from it (Brockington & Scholfield 2010b).

Community conservation has therefore to prove itself resilient as a counter-narrative to fortress conservation in practice. The only avenue is to create structures that promote both ecological and socio-economic sustainability. In Southern Africa, and well formulated wildlife laws have given opportunity for safari hunting to be a sustainable option, both ecologically as provided for by its abundance of wildlife, and socioeconomically as safari hunting has proved more resilient to economic shocks (Murphree 2009). Zoning in on Northern Kenya, so far, eco-tourism is the

main preserve of conservancies (NRT 2008). Although it has provided a first step in getting communities on their feet economically, it is an unstable market that desperately needs supplementing. With ubiquitous interests in wildlife abundance and safety drawn from bedrocks of colonial notions as well as science oriented NGO donors, Northern Kenya also has to prove its ecological sustainability. In the past, a periodically undertaken mammal census was sufficient, or where possible, a more detailed survey of the density and distribution of large mammals was carried out (Okello 2005). Today, conservancies in Northern Kenya are faced with the daunting task of finding innovative ways to achieve these three-pronged goals, the bulk of which will be analysed in the results.

STUDY AREA

The study was primarily carried out in Samburu and Laikipia districts in Northern Kenya located at 1.1667° N, 36.6667° E covering 21,000km² and 0.41667°N, 36.750000° E covering 9500km² respectively (OCHA 2012) within private protected areas, as well as 4 conservancies: Nasuulu, Nakuprat, WestGate and Kalama as shown below.

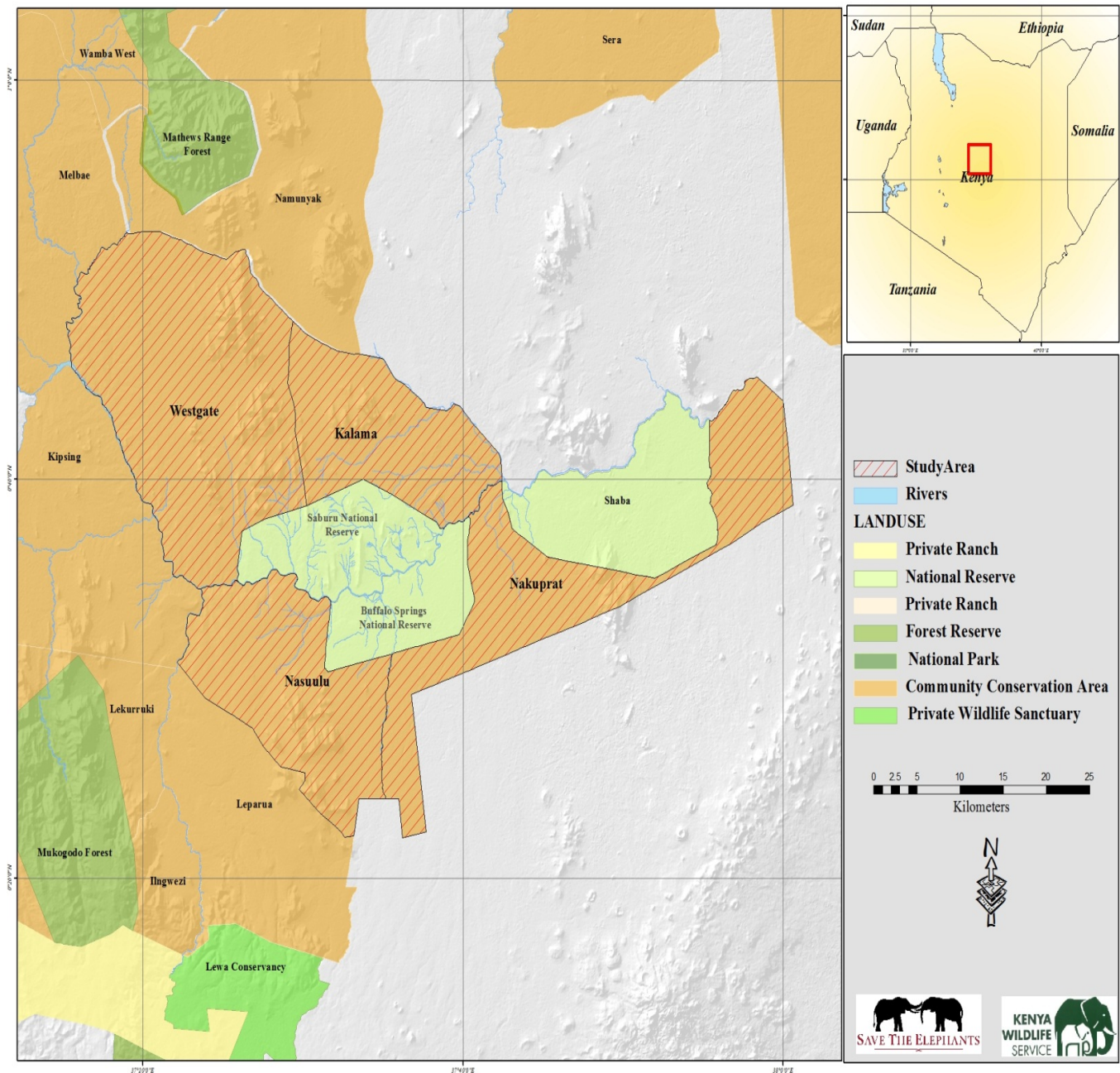


Fig 2: Map Showing study area in Samburu district. 4 main conservancies shaded in diagonal lines

The Conservancies are all part of the Northern Rangelands Trust (NRT) (brown areas in the map above), an umbrella body whose goal is to develop “community-led institutions as a foundation for investment in community development and wildlife conservation.” (NRT 2010). Specifically, I chose the 4 conservancies above because they form the immediate buffer zone to the National Reserves. As such, they were accessible and more secure than many far flung conservancies, yet provided richly contrasting approaches to community conservation. Laikipia is the locus of the Private Conservancies- from where conservation in Northern Kenya sprung.

Notably, the entire region has had a tumultuous history. Pastoralist communities have long engaged in cattle rustling - a cultural practice or mechanism of restocking livestock decimated by drought and disease. With continued neglect by government (Muteru 2009a), this practice became a major economic activity in the struggle for resources. Cyclic drought episodes, exacerbated by global Climate Change (FAO 2008), have wreaked havoc in the region, further depleting livestock, limiting pasture and water, aggravating food insecurity for the region (Muteru 2009b) thus driving the cattle thieving practice, as well as poaching for meat and ivory (Kahindi *et al.* 2010). More poignantly, the proliferation of small arms and light weapons, concentrated heavily in Samburu, has made these attacks more devastating (Amene 2009).

Predictably, this insecure environment has not created the most conducive conditions for conservation and tourism. Yet private land owners, mostly white settler families who moved into the Laikipia region post-1911 (Hughes 2007), began wildlife based tourism as early as the 1980s (Craig 2012, Dyer 2012, pers. comm.). Most of these settlers were originally game hunters, but with the across-the-board hunting ban of the 1970s (Wildlife Conservation and Management Act 1976), many turned their efforts and resources to cattle ranching and then to tourism (Dyer 2012, pers. comm.)

As the notion of private conservation took hold in the 1990s, Laikipia’s ranchers soon began to establish their own private conservancies. . NRT was formed in 2004. Significantly, Samburu and Laikipia were not the only districts where an umbrella body overseeing conservancies was initiated. The South of Kenya too has its own distinct history and challenges, and has come to form an organic umbrella entity- the South Rift Alliance of Land Owners (SORALO) similar to NRT (map shown below). Though I did not visit the site, key informants from here were

interviewed about various aspects of conservation history in the South as a contrast to the North, and a conservancy– Shompole– formed the basis for a contrasting case study for conservancies not formed under umbrella entities.

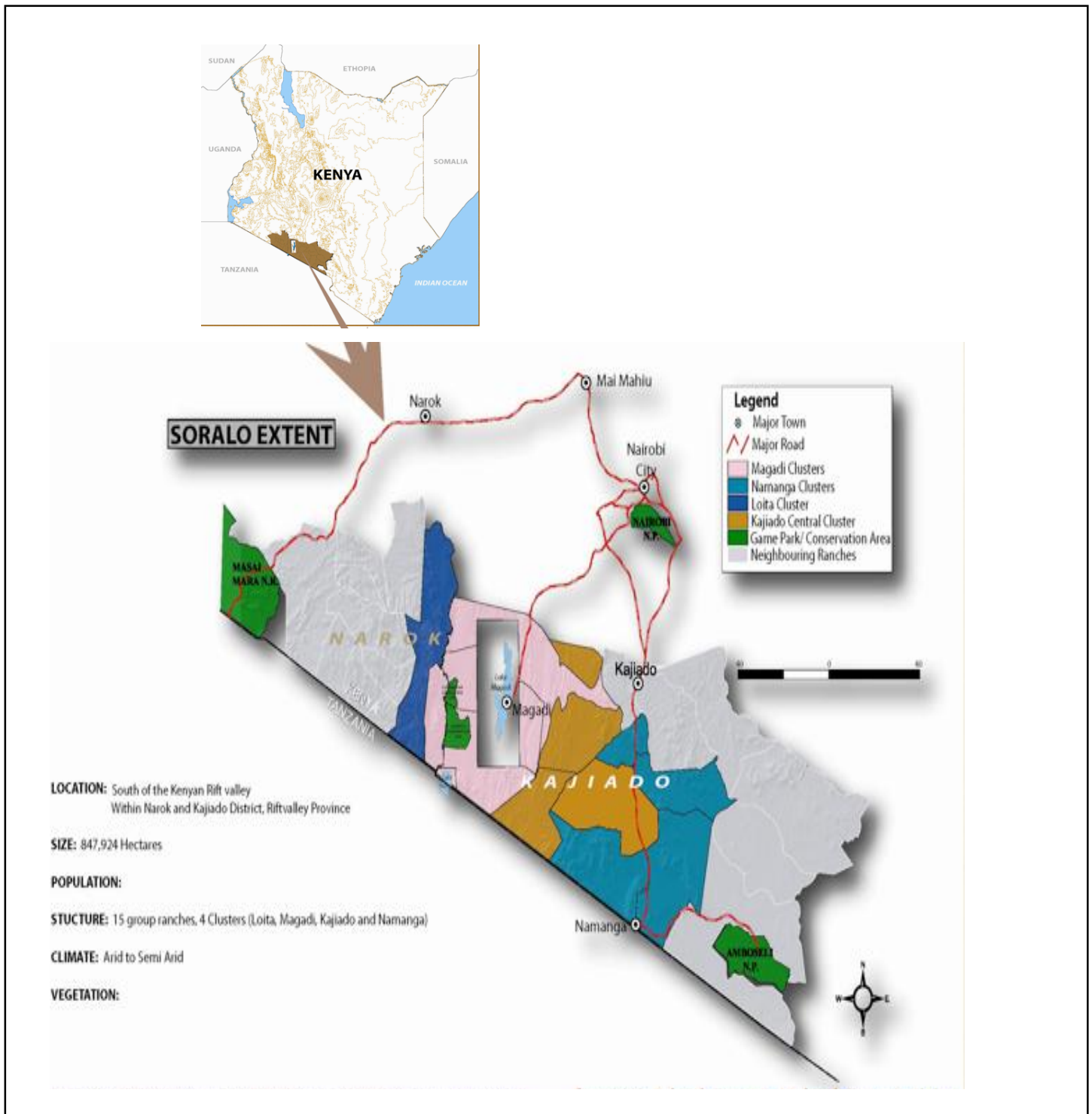


Fig 3: Map of SORALO- Shompole Conservancy part of Kajiado Cluster [in brown](Source SORALO 2010)

METHODS

I conducted my research for this thesis from mid June to late July. I designed a three-tiered study where I split my respondents into 3 hierarchical categories based on their position in conservation management and implementation:

1) Top conservation management, Kenya wide: This category included people holding positions of authority whose personalities have helped shape community conservation policy and governance, a factor often overlooked in tackling conservation history and evolution (Barrow & Murphree 2001). This group comprised a mix of stakeholders, including past and present Kenya Wildlife Service (KWS) Directors, officials of the umbrella bodies SORALO and NRT, private land owners, conservation scientists, Wildlife Forum and NGO officials. Often, these categories overlapped. The range of informants were selected provide a balanced picture of the issues shaping evolution. I interrogated them to tease apart power dynamics in both the North and the South and also gave insight into the State's involvement in community conservation.

2) Conservancy managers and other officials within conservancies: This group is directly involved in the implementation of community conservation. They often have both an intimate knowledge of the communities incorporated into the conservancy and the power relations behind leadership, as well as hands-on experience on how wildlife is managed within the conservancy.

3) Community members: This is a diverse group of people in terms of ethnicity, age, gender and social status. These people were involved in the study as they are the people directly affected by the development of the conservancy, the policies drafted and the implementation of community conservation models used within the conservancy.

Each category was treated differently in terms of methods used to receive more distilled answers on policy and evolution, management and effects.

Approximately half of my time was spent in Samburu and Laikipia Districts which are described in the Study Area. In Laikipia, I spoke to 2 private land owners. In Samburu, four conservancies were chosen where research on categories 2 and 3 was carried out. These

conservancies were: WestGate, Kalama, Nakuprat and Nasuulu. These were chosen for four reasons. Firstly, age of the conservancy was considered on the basis that newer conservancies would provide clearer information on power relations between communities, managers and the initiators of the conservancies. The process of committee selection was sought as an indicator of (downward) accountability. The older ones would be more useful in showing the changing reasons for conservation and would also provide information about sustainability of community conservation through lessons learnt.

Secondly, ethnicity was considered crucial in determining different perceptions and reasons for support or dislike of conservancies by community members. Although ethnicity has been used in conservation in Africa to create conservation “heroes” and “villains”(Moore 2010), this premise did not yield much by way of contrasting results. However, the changing meanings of the term “community” were also assessed using conservancies with different ethnic groups sharing ownership.

Lastly, accessibility and security were factors that were considered together before undertaking the field study.

The rest of my time was spent in Nairobi and Nanyuki conducting research on the first category, top conservation management as described above. I also attended a meeting of the state (KWS) and the Land Owner Associations/Umbrella Bodies.

Three primary methods were chosen: key informant interviews, questionnaires, and personal observation, the latter was done by attending meetings of managers, visiting sites of interest such as buffer zones and visiting community rangers’ posts. The justification and specific approaches for each method will each be described in turn. New and unpublished legislative information was also obtained through attendance of on-going policy framing meetings. To obtain data on ecological sustainability, I received raw data and maps from Save the Elephants. These will also be presented in the results.

a) Research Constraints and Limitations

Although interesting combinations of factors existed outside of the conservancies chosen, the size and capability of the vehicle available for my study; roads in serious disrepair and the

sheer distances involved in addition to time constraints confined me to conservancies closer to Samburu and Buffalo Springs National Reserves.

Closely related to this was the possibility of insecurity the further the destinations were from the road. February 2012 saw clashes where 5 people were killed in cattle rustling raids (Kosgey 2012)]. In accordance with regulations, I avoided these insecurity hotspots. Nevertheless, I believe the data from the conservancies visited contained the required combination of factors to build my understanding of the governance evolution and sustainability of community conservation, as well as the underlying power relations at the manager and community levels.

Also related to security and time constraints was the challenge of visiting several parts of conservancies selected where different ethnic groups resided. Strict advice from my hosts within the national reserve was to visit areas closer to the reserve (between 1-2.5 hours' drive away). The driving distance and speed of conducting interviews (each took approximately 1.5 hours) also limited my sample size.

Although many informants could comment knowledgeably on Shompole conservancy in the South Rift, my results would have been considered more robust if I had been able to visit the conservancy personally to receive first-hand information from the resident communities. Critical to building a wholesome picture of the events was the interview with the tour operator, who I could not reach during my research period.

b) Data Collection

i. Key informant interviews

History and perceived history are two different things, yet often they are merged into one and the same especially when written records are less readily available (Hughes 2007). The history of community conservation in Kenya- this is in terms of policy governance frameworks, key players involved as well as changing narratives and case studies – has only been partially documented. Conducting key informant interviews with top conservation officials was an important way to piece together this history.

These interviews were conducted in formal settings but in a semi-formal way, using and rephrasing guiding questions which allowed the informant to speak freely, after which I was able to pick out the key themes emphasized. All interviews took between 1-3 hours and were recorded and transcribed. The key informants were chosen through a “snowball” approach where I would ask for the informant’s opinion on who I could talk to about specific subjects. 13 key informants were selected for the study, 9 agreeing to be named in Appendix 1, while the rest will remain anonymous. The key informant interviews were also used to get a clearer picture of the overarching question within this study: who is driving community conservation and is it sustainable? On sustainability, they also provided information on a wide range of themes that may contribute to success or failure of initiatives, and of umbrella bodies.

One key informant gave specific details on a conservancy in the South Rift Valley set up outside the aegis of an umbrella body, and what transpired in the 10 year period up until 2011. This will form a critical contrast within this dissertation as all other conservancies studied are within the Northern Rangelands Trust.

ii. Questionnaires

For categories 2 and 3, questionnaires were used (see Appendices 2 & 3). A semi-structured interview was used for the four managers, one a regional coordinator overseeing the selected conservancies. During the NRT annual general meeting held on 25th June, 10 short-answer questionnaires were also handed out to managers from 10 different conservancies.

Community questionnaires were translated into local languages by 2 research assistants and were administered in 4 conservancies, two recently formed i.e. Nakuprat and Nasuulu (2011 and 2012 respectively) and comprising mixed ethnicities, while the other two i.e. Kalama and WestGate are older (2002 and 2005) and consist of single ethnicities. Each conservancy has an average of 6000 occupants spread out in villages over an average of 880-5000ha. The random walking technique was employed to select respondents (Lyon 2000). The random walk technique does not present a strict random sampling frame, but aims to survey a representative area by speaking to people who are available and willing. It is an efficient means of data collection (i.e. repeat visits are not undertaken if people are not in) which is in line with past power relational studies in the past [e.g. (Jones 2007)]. Since the conservancies

are large, research assistants drove to at least two different locations within each conservancy as they used the technique to produce more robust results. Interviews took 1-2 hours to administer and 26 people were interviewed in total.

Some results were obtained by the use of likert scales of 'strongly disagree' to 'strongly agree' which were analysed by simple multiplication from -2 to +2 and added up. An overall positive score showed strong agreement with the statement while an overall negative score showed disagreement.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

CHAPTER 1: EVOLUTION OF COMMUNITY CONSERVATION

Kenya is evolving a new breed of conservation, based determinedly on communal lands and spearheaded by umbrella bodies encompassing several conservancies within one area. This section endeavours to fulfil the first aim stated through examination of the South Rift which continues to grapple with imperial ideologies and poor governance as the new umbrella bodies of land owner associations emerge; here special focus is given to Shompole Conservancy. It also scrutinizes themes distinguishing the North as a new approach to conservation and inspects the State's roll-out of new legislation.

a) Community Conservation evolution and divides between Northern and Southern Kenya

i. The South: The long road to a model Community Conservation

90% of tier 1 key informant interviews pointed out that conservation evolution differed greatly between the North and the South of Kenya.

The South sticks to the stereotypical definition of "community," having "an [assumed] isomorphism of place, space and culture." (Agrawal & Gibson 1999; Greiner 2012). Indeed the South is home to the Maasai community, an iconic pastoral ethnic group (Hughes 2007). Although the tribe is composed of separate sub-groups which now have dynamic interests, community conservation in the South is helped along by this isomorphism of culture, which includes among other things a traditional respect for wildlife, confirms the Chairman of the South Rift Alliance of Land Owners (SORALO).³

One taken-for-granted foundation that the chairman did not mention was the isomorphism of space -- in the form of common land tenure -- consolidated in the group ranch system⁴.

³ Interview with the Chairman of the South Rift Alliance of Land Owners (SORALO), 21st June 2012.

⁴ A group ranch is defined as a livestock production system or enterprise where a group of people jointly own freehold title to land, maintain agreed stocking levels and herd their livestock collectively which they own individually (Ministry of Agriculture, 1968). This system was developed for pastoralists, articulated in the Lawrence (1966) Mission Report which

Because many Maasai continued to live in group ranches, practicing pastoralism, it was easy to promote community conservation from one ranch to another. Now, the land tenure system is very fluid, making provisions for land use change (Thompson & Homewood 2002; Western *et al.* 2009a; Sundstrom *et al.* 2012). As a result, many Maasai families have sold their land to wheat and other land users (Western *et al.* 2009a). The privatization and subdivision of Maasai group ranches are considered a major threat to traditional livestock herding [and therefore conservation- which depends upon the continuation of this lifestyle] (Seno & Shaw 2002; Homewood *et al.* 2009). This makes it understandable for umbrella bodies of the mid-2000s such as SORALO to want to coalesce as much land for their cause as possible. The Chairman emphasizes:

“So between Mara and Amboseli, there are 14 group ranches so what we did was to unite the 14 ranches so then we have a platform to work together as one.”

Before the arrival of umbrella bodies, conservancies often replicated the colonial parks model; this led to seriously inequitable sharing of resources, hardly ever reported in the literature.

An anonymous former official of the Kenya Wildlife Trust (KWT) gives insights into the pitfalls of the colonial model quoted under various themes in the table below:

Themes	Quotes
Endurance of colonial repression	“In Amboseli, an investor ⁵ leased a place - they’ve taken the whole 30,000ha, locking everyone else out. And the lease fees were a pittance – they were something like 2M shillings, that’s USD\$25,000 a year – for a place with elephants and lions. I was scandalized... But the investor was an old enterprise, signing the original leases in the 1940s with the equivalent of thumb prints as consent, putting in a clause stipulating a 5% increase per annum.”
Propagation of	They [the investors] decided “philanthropically” to build the community a

advised that land registration in pastoral areas should be on a group rather than on an individual basis (Lawrence 1966) and later cemented in law in the Group Representative Act of 1968.

⁵ Investor was named during the interview but will be kept anonymous for legal reasons

wilderness at the community's expense	school at [...], behind a hill. I didn't understand why they chose the site for the school, and all the other development that was to follow was to be behind that hill. Until someone let it slip that that hill was the only barrier in the horizon as one looked from the lodge to Mt Kilimanjaro. I worked out that the camp owners were basically contriving to hide these people in their own land, wanting people to move behind that hill so that they could continue to perpetuate their wilderness, to tell their clients "there is nothing here".
Corrupt organizational structure	"The second evil is the organizational structure that was adopted. From the looks of it, it could be a good thing because it creates easily accessible management, bank accounts etcetera...but it also makes it so that there are only three signatures necessary to make something happen. This means you only have three people to bribe or convince. These three people have the authority to sign over the entire community land."
Exploration of alternatives to conservation	"But even though some [Maasai] wore <i>shukas</i> ⁶ , they were land economics graduates. Someone actually calculated the value of tomato farming on a 5 acre plot in a swamp and saw that the value he would get would be far more than the value gotten from the tourism fees of the entire area."

These statements bear proof of the continued existence of an imperialist mode of wildlife conservation via accumulation and exclusion. It obviously affects the matrix of conservation in the South. Power relations, benefits and even sustainability are compromised in this model. From an ecological standpoint, the last tabulated statement proves this model as a disadvantage for wildlife as well.

⁶Shukas: Traditional attire signifying to many a sign of ignorance or lack of formal education.

The community conservation model that initially replaced the colonial model (although in some places in the South, the colonial model is still operational) works in the following basic steps as described by 3 key informants⁷ and shown in a simple step-schematic below.

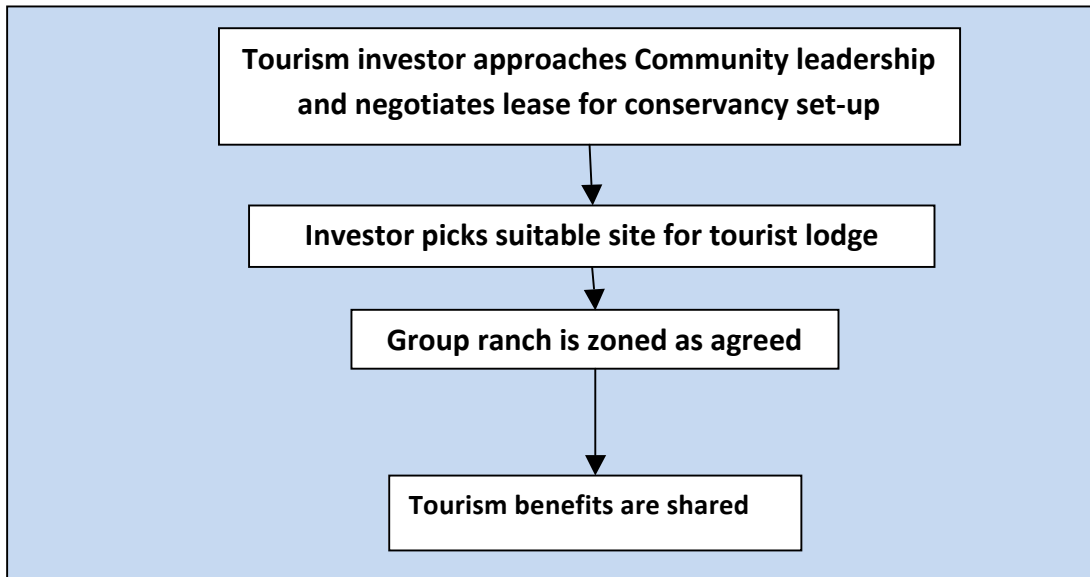


Figure 4: Model 2: Steps to conservancy set-up (Source: Own)

This model is based on the assumption that the community and investor are in a relationship of trust created by the expected mutual benefits resulting from the partnership; that both have access to the same basic information (Nunkoo & Ramkissoon 2012). The case study below pieced together from interviews shows the pitfalls of this model. No academic literature or reports have been produced on the most recent history of this conservancy (2011-2012), therefore this information is based on interviews of trusted informants.

ii. Case Study: Shompole Conservancy

The Shompole group ranch, located in south eastern Kenya near Lake Natron overlooking the Great Rift Valley, covering 62,700 hectares was registered in 1979 under the Land Representative Act (SORALO 2010). From its inception, Shompole which hosts 2000 registered members, had pastoralism as its primary land use (Kamanga, pers. comm.). In 2000, the community leadership formed Shompole Community Trust (referred to as a

⁷ Information obtained from: Secretary of SORALO, Director, Shompole Conservancy, Laikipia Wildlife Forum Executive Director, Chairman of SORALO.

conservancy). They were approached by a tour operator and agreed to branch into eco-tourism⁸. Both parties signed a 15 year agreement with a 30/70 split in profits to the investor, providing for the community to accrue stock in the company such that by the 9th year, the latter would hold a majority. The land was then zoned: 10,000ha was allocated as the conservation buffer zone- only used for grazing by the community for 3-4 months out of the year, and 824ha formed the core conservation area on which a luxurious lodge was built. The conservancy attracted high-end clientele for several years and scooped the UNDP Equator Initiative Award in 2006 (Equator-Initiative 2006) for best in eco-tourism. All the while the investor had not honoured the agreement. The investor had been paying the community conservation fees (similar to Protected Area park fees which tourists pay for game drives), but not bed-night or any other fees since the agreement's inception. From what informants quoted as clients' fees, while the community merely got USD\$360 per night, the investor was potentially making up to USD\$18,000 for the same period. In 2011 the community sought redress from the area Member of Parliament who was also the powerful Minister for Internal Security. An arbitration process was initiated thereafter to draw up an ameliorated agreement. The first process ended in a stalemate after the community felt the mediator was partial. A second course of action was initiated involving local and international NGOs and three lawyers. It yielded an agreement acceptable to the community but which the investor rejected. Some members of the community went to seek further legal assistance from KWS, but abandoned the process midway.

In September 2011 the lodge closed, allegedly for renovations. Some time later, the investor returned to the property with approximately 120 administration police, packed up the lodge equipment and furniture and left. Shompole lodge has not opened since. From top government actors, the reason was plain:

"This guy had not been paying the community fees! Can you imagine? For a whole 10 years! He just kept claiming he had never broken even."⁹

⁸ Interview with a Director of Shompole Conservancy, 24th July 2012.

⁹ Interview with the Director, Kenya Wildlife Service, 20th July 2012.

From a governance perspective, the issues are far more complex. Below are some of the themes surrounding the pitfalls of the model in Figure 3 described above:

Information Asymmetry: The Conservancy leadership lacked education and information. Thus when the original agreement was being drafted, the community was at a disadvantage. Additionally, even though they sought legal help and advice, they did not know what sort of advice would have placed them on the best grounds, both legally and economically:

“At the time I was the only guy out of all of us who had any sort of experience with this kind of thing. But the guy had a lot of expertise and knowledge about how these things are done....We had lawyers who came in, but this did not help at the time because there was no [state] legal framework to guide us. Then we also had a problem because the lawyer we got was purely legal-oriented... looking to make us safe. We did not have a business lawyer who could say ‘This will be good for you financially’ or, ‘this makes sense from a business perspective.’”¹⁰

According to the informant, the other party was able to remove a key clause entitling the community to a review of terms after 5 years – making the 15 year agreement continuous with no chance of review. The community was locked into a deal that was not in their best interests.

Conflict Resolution by wielding political muscle: One key feature of this case study is that the first port of call in conflict resolution was the use of political leadership of the area to save the situation. In 2011, the community sought help from area MP, the late Professor George Saitoti.

“We asked the member of Parliament to choose between the community and the investor. Saitoti decided to call a meeting the following Monday to resolve the issue. At the meeting, the investor did not speak... Saitoti then told us to choose a neutral arbitrator and gave us one month to resolve the matter and report back to him. He told Anthony that though they were friends, he did not want to sacrifice his votes from the community for him, so he wanted the matter resolved amicably.”¹¹

This underscores the dangers of political involvement in dealing with conservation governance. Often Kenyan politicians serve whichever side has the most immediate

¹⁰ Interview with a Director of Shompole Conservancy, 24th July 2012.

¹¹ Interview with a Director of Shompole Conservancy, 24th July 2012.

advantage (Hughes 2007). It is thus possible that the exigencies of politics become pivotal in dispute resolution. Conservancy governance has to provide a more stable procedure to deal with matters that are so integral to the success of conservancies.

Cultural Insensitivities: In unravelling a myriad of lessons learnt while studying the cultural context of community-based conservation “interventions,” Waylen and colleagues hold that local cultural context has considerable influence on [community] conservation outcomes (Waylen *et al.* 2010). Though they thoroughly investigate the place of engagement with local institutions influencing conservation outcomes, these interventions often ignore the importance of sensitivity to cultural norms in creating a cohesive environment for the sustainability of initiatives. In Shompole’s case, the deal clearly provided for the community to increase their shareholding, but did not provide a structure for this to occur. It was expected that the community members would sell herds of livestock and invest their money; but culturally, a people for whom livestock is regarded as true wealth have serious conceptual challenges with this arrangement, unless it was modified in their favour.

Indications of Elite Capture: Though no proof of this is available, informants in the state used language that indicated the possibility that this was not a cut and dry situation:

“...Anyway, when they were finally fed up, some community members came to KWS for legal advice- it seemed that up until that point only a few people within the community had been benefitting.”¹²

It was revealing that she did not say “community leadership” or “leaders” came to seek legal advice.

Defined as a phenomenon where resources transferred for the benefit of the communities are usurped by a few powerful groups, elite capture is common in situations where there is clear stratification of power, influence or education; those benefitting normally resting on the more advantageous end of the divide (Dutta 2009).

Furthermore, when KWS offered “open-ended, non-binding and voluntary” legal advice – the few members of the community who had elicited assistance from the government did not follow

¹² Interview with KWS Assistant Director, Community Enterprises on 26th July 2012.

through- a response that seemed “surprising” to KWS officials, who chalked it off as “governance issues.”

Suspicious of elite capture were also heightened when informants were prodded on why exactly they did not pursue the matter as a criminal offence. It was intimated that aside from the two mediation processes mentioned, “a few of us” sat in unsuccessful talks aimed at brokering a new deal with the investor who had failed to honour his end of the deal for an entire decade. Having spoken freely for over an hour about the injustice, the informant simply shook his head and shrugged, “it’s a long story.”

NGO and budding umbrella body arbitration: Overall I term this a success. Africa Conservation Centre (ACC), Africa Wildlife Foundation (AWF) and SORALO were involved in the second stage of arbitration. One achievement is the drafting of a new set of arrangements that the community can now use when approaching an investor.

“The agreement that [the lawyer] had drawn up ... was rock solid. We can have that as a base agreement for whoever wants to come in to invest in Shompole.”

Shompole conservancy was one of the founding members of the umbrella body, the South Rift Alliance of Land Owners (SORALO) in 2004. Although the primary objective of the body was to share lessons learnt and provide a platform for policy development, a possible reason why SORALO did not or could not act expeditiously was that it was not involved in the crafting of the original deal – which had tight legal restrictions – the community had signed off on unknowingly.¹³

Nevertheless, the formation of SORALO was the next step in the evolution and creation of a more effective community conservation model than the one discussed above. The umbrella body now boasts a membership of 14 group ranches in the South Rift, and has since gained international and, more importantly, national recognition.

“So one of the things that we have done recently, towards the end of last year, is to bring these organizations together e.g. Taita, NRT, SORALO etc to create a platform where we can be able to lobby appropriately to be able to inform the government of what we have done and the

¹³ Interview with the Chairman of the South Rift Alliance of Land Owners (SORALO), 21st June 2012.

direction that we would like to take as communities that are involved in conservation, an action that has worked very well so far. Together we were able to work towards the new wildlife bill and policy, which is now going to be adopted here in Kenya. This means that we have injected a lot of practitioners' knowledge on what we would like to see happen."¹⁴

The model being administered is similar to the Northern Rangelands Trust Model discussed below.

iii. The North: New Models for Community Conservation

Information gathered in this section is obtained from transcribed interviews with an NRT regional coordinator, conservancy managers, Forum directors and land owners, as well as from NRT reports.

As a result of Lewa Wildlife Conservancy's (see map in Fig 2) lack of capacity to effectively partner with a burgeoning number of communities interested in conservancy establishment, Lewa initiated the umbrella body called the Northern Rangelands Trust in 2004, which has since created a template for community conservation governance in Northern Kenya.

The strength of the Trust is in 3 distinct bastions which are an upgrade to the previous model. I will describe 2, and then focus on the most crucial and distinct feature of this brand of community conservation.

Governance first: Sensitivity to culture is incorporated through the recognition of local institutions, particularly the council of elders. Although not directly incorporated into the umbrella body structure, these elders are the fulcrum of conservancy initiation as they are the authors of conservancy establishment. Put another way, instead of NRT approaching communities, it is the elders accompanied by other community elite that approach NRT to discuss conservancy formation. The community is sensitized on voting procedures after-which each clan or ethnic group elects a board member to represent its interests. All conservancy staff are then appointed by the board from among the community. Downward accountability is facilitated through at least quarterly meetings with the community. [please refer to Fig. 7 in Chapter 2 a. iii) for more insight].

¹⁴ Interview with the Chairman of the South Rift Alliance of Land Owners (SORALO), 21st June 2012.

Training and Education: In the Shompole Conservancy example, educational asymmetry was a major drawback as those at the negotiating table did not have the know-how to negotiate favourable terms with the investor. Education would also have been crucial in managerial roles.

It is important to be able to communicate the effects of new conservancy structures to senior officials and effectively convey messages to the community to create a trail of accountability. Very little of this is actually possible without certain levels of formal education. NRT policy therefore stipulates that managers must have at least diploma level qualifications in general or wildlife management (NRT 2010).

Other than the prerequisite qualifications for managers, NRT also carries out training of various personnel. This is summarized in a table below, obtained from conservancy managerial staff.

Position	Pre-requisite qualification	In employment training	Reason and benefits
Manager	Diploma level qualification or higher in wildlife and or general management	Refresher Training in management, report writing. Training in leadership development, rangeland holistic management training	To equip the manager to handle the conservancy, and create standardized reporting to NRT administrative unit between conservancies.
Accountant	Certified Public Accountants (CPA) or Association of Chartered Certified Accountants (ACCA)	Budgeting and Report writing	To keep accurate accounts and records
Grazing committee	None	buffer zone creation and maintenance, rangeland holistic management training, conflict resolution	To enable the committee to manage the grass resources of the conservancy, train the community and solve disputes as they arise
Community rangers	None, though wildlife related studies would be a useful addition	Paramilitary wildlife conservation training at Kenya Wildlife Service training headquarters in Manyani	To effectively conduct wildlife surveys, assessments, tracking and apprehension of wildlife law breakers, familiarization with practical wildlife laws
Women's groups within community enterprise	None	Ornament design and production	To raise the standards of traditional jewellery

		Business management	production to international levels To develop entrepreneurial skill among the women
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iv. Security: The Achilles Heel of the North; Redefining 'Community'

The distinguishing feature of community conservation evolution in the North of Kenya is how the need to deal with security has shaped the process. Private conservancies first sought security for wildlife on and off their property, thus driving them to seek security for their neighbours. Since then, with the advent of the NRT, security has taken a much more central role for both wildlife and people. Instead of a heavy focus on production of benefits and their distribution, NRT made maintenance of safety its first priority.

For example, the first employees of conservancies include community rangers. These rangers are equipped with vehicles, radios and weapons to conduct patrols. Although this action has been criticized as the "militarization of the North"¹⁵ these rangers are the first line of defence in a bid to quell any incident, both poaching-related, and in the fight against cattle rustling. With the proliferation of conservancies all over the North, community rangers now form a band of immediate radio communication which functions as a tracking unit from one conservancy to the next.¹⁶

The mandate of community rangers is a state and NRT partnership. Because it provides security for wildlife, the Kenya Wildlife Service (KWS) co-funds and conducts paramilitary training of rangers who undergo the same rigorous 3 month training as regular KWS rangers.

Security is not simply the absence of palpable harm, but the creation of a safeguarded lifestyle. The foremost way in which this is being achieved is through employment and how it is procured and carried out. Employment of community rangers, managerial staff through the conservancy board embodies a new lifestyle— a situation hitherto unknown— of the potential of the conservancy. It may also be instrumental in sowing the seeds of predictability with regard

¹⁵ Interview with the Executive Director of the Indigenous Movement for Peace Advancement and Conflict Transformation (IMPACT), 5th July 2012.

¹⁶ Information from this paragraph obtained from Conservancy managers, community rangers and personal observation.

to their occupation of the area. A statement about employment from an NRT official aptly demonstrates this:

“People now have employment *from home*. I mean spend the night with their family and go to work the next day; that didn't happen at all, not in Northern Kenya. [Previously] You were a night watchman and you worked in Nairobi for 3 months or 6 months with all the evils associated with working away from home.”

Additionally, the correlation between security and employment is bolstered from a conceptual and practical point of view when community rangers from warring ethnic groups having to live together. Though they may have formed the conservancy together through the meeting of the councils of elders, these different ethnic groups normally live in delineated separate areas within the group ranches. The employment of equal numbers of rangers who have to live together and carry out patrols together is a first step in the building of a social bond of trust within mixed-tribe conservancies. In this way, employment has been used to redefine the concept of community at a social level. This is true of Nasuulu conservancy, established in late 2011 where the Samburu, Borana, Somali and Turkana share the conservancy and Nakuprat conservancy in early 2011, where Turkana and Borana share the conservancy.



Picture 1: NRT elders and Save the Elephants staff blessing the newly commissioned community scout team, equally representing each of the four tribes inhabiting the Nasuulu Conservancy (Source: STE)

Nasuulu conservancy manager recalls:

“In the beginning it was not easy. You know, these people were so suspicious of each other. Each one was prepared to fight the other because they have all been told traditionally that the other tribe is not friendly, is dangerous. But slowly by slowly, night after night you could see them realize that this is a job like any other, and since they were all getting paid the same, they began to just view living together as part of the job.”

However, it has not always been a rosy picture for NRT conservancies and security concerns. Before Nasuulu was formed, a valuable lesson was learnt in the formation of Ltunkai conservancy in 2007. This is coming to light from a recent paper by Greiner (2012) who narrates the unintended consequences of community conservation, summarized below. This paper illustrates the importance of redefining the concept of community from a resource access perspective.

Summary of Greiner (2012):

In the set-up of conservancies, a major misconception exists concerning indigenous people's land rights. This widely accepted premise is that "indigenous populations should or do have privileged or exclusive rights to territories that are perceived to have been used exclusively by their ancestors" (Kuper 2003). This may have been a guiding attitude of the NRT when they were approached by Samburu elders to set up a conservancy at Ltunkai in 2004. The set-up of the conservancy led to "full scale guerrilla-type warfare" between the Samburu, and the Pokot who shared access to the land (Mathenge 2006). A young Pokot man lamented:

"We are fighting over boundaries and land. The Samburu want a conservancy but the area they want to use for it is our land. This is where our grandfathers were living. The Samburu want a conservancy, but they do not want to give out their land, they take our land."

From a historical and legal perspective, the Samburu had managed to register group ranches there in the late 1970s, which only included Samburu as members, yet the fact that Pokot also settled there remained undisputed until around 2004 when Samburu leaders came up with the idea of establishing a conservancy on two of these group ranches. This situation cannot auger well with investors, knowing the levels of insecurity in the area. In terms of wildlife, Greiner (2012) also mentions that during his 12 month field work, attempts to sabotage the conservancy efforts through poaching of wildlife were common. All this paints the grim picture of the painful lessons learnt when conservancies do not try to redefine the concept of community in their current context.

Having learnt their lesson, NRT developed the new framework which involved exhaustive assessments of the lands to be brought under the umbrella, and numerous stakeholder meetings to ensure all parties with access to these lands were included in further conservancy initiation. The formation of Nasuulu conservancy in 2011 took almost 2 years of talks¹⁷, and

¹⁷ Interview with Nasuulu conservancy manager, 4th July 2012

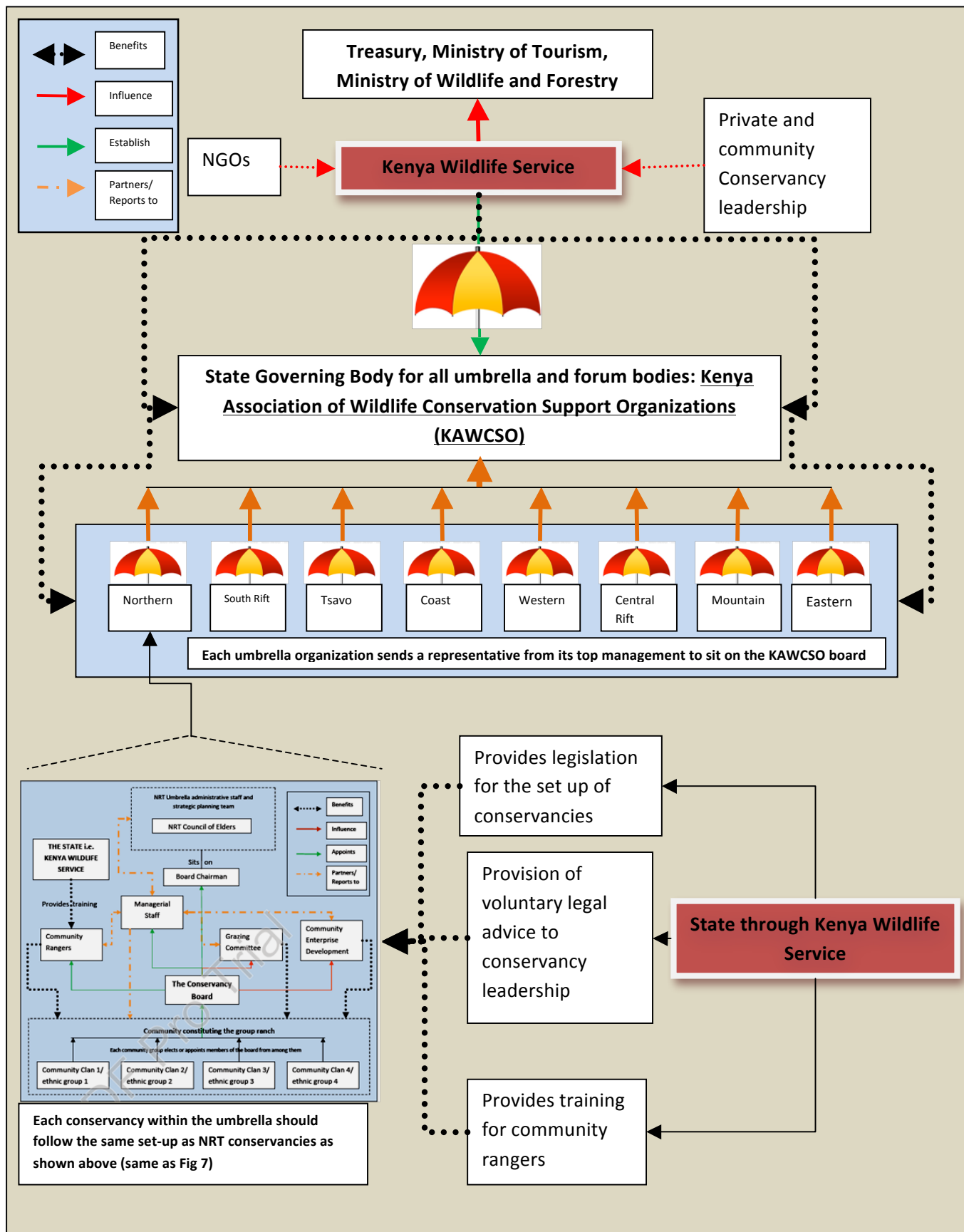
though later assessments will be required -- it is too early to judge, it has so far managed to incorporate all 4 ethnic groups into one community with no flare up in conflict.

b) State Legislation Evolution: The Rise of “Industry Governance”

Kenya has until the recent past, been operating on outdated wildlife legislation. Although Sessional Paper No. 3 (1976) - which governed wildlife conservation under Cap 376 of the Wildlife (Conservation and Management) Act - recognizes community wildlife conservation as one wildlife management strategy, it also places emphasis on wildlife resources competing with any other form of land use as an economic activity (Bashir *et al.* 2011). This is similar to Zimbabwe’s 1989 Wildlife Act (Jones & Murphree 2001). However, Zimbabwe actually put in place measures to ensure that there was ample incentive to keep wildlife on one’s property (Thomas 1991; Murombedzi 1999; Balint & Mashinya 2008). In Kenya, no such incentive has existed, creating a conundrum for the state as wildlife continues to diminish due to changes in land use.

Although the state maintains that it is driving community conservation as well as other conservation strategies outside parks, it has not provided for legislation legalizing or recognizing community conservancies, governance structures to support the growth and running of conservancies or a binding arrangement for the training of community rangers.

All this is about to change, based on wide ranging legal reforms that have accompanied a liberal new national constitution promulgated in 2011. Having examined the new Wildlife bill, Wildlife Conservancy Regulations 2012 and Draft legislation on Wildlife Support Organizations, I present a schematic on the new structures the state is creating in close consultation with these forums, landowners and communities and where they fit in with the new model of community conservation. I then discuss the perceptions of what the state is proposing from the eyes of key informants.



1. New Kenya Wildlife Service (KWS) Functions

Formation of an umbrella body: As the schematic shows, KWS plans to create a new mega umbrella body, the Kenya Association of Wildlife Conservation Support Organizations (KAWCSO), which will govern all regional umbrella bodies and forums overseeing community conservancies. This body will house equal (or equitable) numbers of representatives from each of the 8 regional umbrella bodies within the country. The criteria for the regional split have been borrowed from the KWS regional structure that has been used in the management of Protected Areas.¹⁸ KAWCSO will also house prominent NGOs, wildlife forums and land-owner associations. The new body will “facilitate coordination and articulate constituents’ aspirations” by providing “a strong governance framework and adequate institutional arrangements for effective management and coordination within the non-state constituency.”¹⁹

Notably, before KWS came up with this new proposal, other organizations were formed to unite the regional umbrella bodies such as the Kenya Rangeland Coalition (KRC), and the Kenya Land Conservation Trust (KLCT). Though these organizations are recognized for their efforts in rationalizing the industry, KWS still felt the need for a state recognized body.

“In the absence of a national entity, communities and private landowners lack the leverage and bargaining power to advance their constituents’ issues with the government, private sector and the international community. Invariably, this void has been filled by different organizations with each addressing specific or partisan aspects of the issues and interests – often more opportunistically than strategically.”²⁰

Put another way:

“What is happening is that people are just forming too many entities; people just running around doing whatever! So we want to organize the industry and be able to streamline it so that I can’t just wake up and form my own organization. The wildlife bill proposes that

¹⁸ Interview with Assistant Director, Community Enterprise Development, 26th July 2012.

¹⁹ Excerpts from Draft KAWCSO Concept paper 1, July 2012.

²⁰ Excerpts from Draft KAWCSO Concept paper 1, July 2012.

KWS is split up so that we can establish a regulatory body, just like media, energy, or finance ministries.”²¹

This restructuring is modeled after Namibia’s umbrella body, the National Association of CBNRM Support Organizations (NACSO).

New legislation recognizing conservancies: The clamour for the legislation comes from the fact that most conservancies are registered either as community-based organizations, conservation trusts or limited companies. All these have a minimal interphase with the wildlife management regulations and policies; they limit communities in terms of expansion and seeking monetary and technical support from the government which can only operate on a legislative mandate. The recognition of conservancies now provides a legal recognition for conservancies, and also provides an avenue for government to fund some of their activities.²²

KWS also plans to streamline the set-up and management of community conservancies as well as umbrella bodies. Key KWS informants intimated that they felt that some umbrella bodies were “not well organized.” Preferring the NRT model coupled with the idea of high end eco-tourism, they said,

“We would like to build the capacity of the ones that are there, put structures in place and make sure they are governed properly and that they have systems that actually work.”

2. Critique of the proposed model

KWS has come up with a comprehensive model which seeks to institutionalize and legalize existing structures, create cohesion and channel funds appropriately, all this in an effort to promote what they are calling “industry governance.”²³ The formation of KAWCSO has been pragmatically crafted to include representation from all regions and forums involved. The platform created will help stakeholders to better lobby government, and like Namibia, receive state funding for operation of the conservancies. The insistence on training at all levels is also

²¹ Interview with KWS official, anonymous, 26th July 2012

²² The responsibility of the communities in the law include an application to the KWS Director, providing a statement setting out the geographic area of the relevant land and provision of copies of minutes of the community meeting resolving to set aside the land. Within 3 months of registration, the community is to provide a detailed benefits distribution plan to KWS (2012).

²³ Interview with Director, KWS, 22nd July 2012

a strength, as it further eliminates operational and reporting difficulties at all levels- something Shompole Conservancy could have benefitted from.

However, one thing stand outs that may bring a divergence between the state and the institutions it is restructuring. Roe (1991) using narratives and counter-narratives, comparing conservation to any sort of development planning, which has to take place in the face of socio-economic and environmental uncertainty. Policy makers thus make simple assumptions to avoid uncertainty and provide a secure platform for policy (Roe 1991). More often than not unfortunately, the policies created standardize approaches for widespread application leading to the “blueprint syndrome” which often gives rise to case specific problems. Is it possible that this may be the case for industry governance, streamlining the conservancies and umbrella bodies?

While the government has expressed its intention to revise the existing, there are potential pitfalls. Take for example the regional structure. Some of the new umbrella bodies, such as the Amboseli Ecosystem Trust may be straddling two different regions, yet there has been no mention of their fate once the operation begins. NRT has been heralded as the best model, and therefore institutional reforms will probably follow the NRT trajectory. Although this is positive from an institutional standpoint, many umbrella bodies may not have the same capacity and funding NRT has to put in place similar structures. More importantly, these organic (possibly more contextually sound) models that regions are building may be curtailed in favour of a single prototype.

The thrust for legislation recognizing conservancies and their governing bodies has been praised as a long-awaited step for conservation in Kenya. There is ambivalence about the streamlining of the industry, especially since some of the landowners are coming together to draft over-riding legislation as concerns the new Wildlife Bill. Some of the comments regarding the government’s interventions are tabulated below:

Practitioners' comment	Inference (level of State support)
<p>"We have got the support of donors and now we have got the support of the government as well and I see us very much as an implementing arm of Kenya Wildlife Service for their community program so we are influencing parties from both sides."²⁴</p>	<p>Zealous and in complete partnership</p>
<p>"Through this there is an awakening although the [state] direction is not yet clear and we are still struggling with that. What is clear is that we need a framework that will provide the standards of operation in terms of conservation outside the parks, although it should not be very stringent as this might kill the voluntary aspect of conservation which is very important in this country."²⁵</p>	<p>Cautious</p>
<p>"There's a conflict between the [state] legislation and what we are drawing up, which is the Environmental Management and Coordination Act (EMCA), which is the superior Act because all other aspects of the environment fall under it. The others are sectoral bills. It says very clearly under the new constitution that "you shall devolve to the lowest and most efficient level"- and this is the principle of subsidiarity- below County Council level..so I'm trying to get us to recognize the Land Owner Associations as the legitimate owners of the land and the logical entities by which you can take on the burden of</p>	<p>Operating on a different hierarchy</p>

²⁴ Interview with Executive Director, Northern Rangelands Trust/Founder, Lewa Wildlife Conservancy, on 25th June 2012.

²⁵ Interview with the South Rift Alliance of Land Owners (SORALO) Chairman, 21st June 2012.

managing resources. EMCA will also recognize voluntary environmental management.” ²⁶	
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KWS have been spurred into action after a long silence on the future of over 60% of the country’s wildlife which live outside of parks (Western *et al.* 2009b), but they may need to ameliorate the model before it is rolled out to avoid the rejection of another blueprint that does not fully recognize or encourage the voluntary aspect of wildlife management.

²⁶ Interview with Africa Conservation Centre (ACC) Chairman, and former KWS Director on 24th July 2012.

CHAPTER 2: POWER RELATIONS AND SUSTAINABILITY**1. POWER RELATIONS****a) The Role of Private Land Owners**

As I was reminded several times during key informant interviews “private land is private land.” And further: “It is the property of an individual who has total autonomy to make decisions on his own and that is private enterprise. It is enshrined within the country’s laws.”²⁷ But in Northern Kenya where white settlers and other entities sometimes own upwards of 100,000ha, and with the dynamic of an ever increasing population of pastoralists who have historically traversed the area, not to mention wildlife and ecosystems being no respecter of political boundaries, that statement cannot be interpreted superficially. Interrogating questions of legitimacy and accountability (Jepson 2005), notably governmentality’s Analytics of Power (Foucault 1978) I interrogate the place and future of private land ownership in community conservation.

Foucault (1978) posits that power exists “in a set of specific relationships and actors are positioned within this network of power relations” (Foucault 1978). This is an important point when understanding the position of private land owners as they were not always in this “network of power relations.” Former regimes deliberately neglected Northern Kenya (Bashir *et al.* 2011) which ran its affairs in what Rydin (2010) would describe as a hierarchical top-down mode of governance. One key informant laments:

“I think these people [communities] were deliberately left uneducated. When election time came and Moi [former president] needed votes, he would just come and hand out famine relief and they would be told how to vote.”²⁸

Foucault further argues that power comes from below, working through different webs of power relations (Foucault 1980). This is true in this case as the long periods of neglect by the government plunged the North into a governance void. With inundations of insecurity and claims of lost land from different ethnic groups, pressure to slow the tide of entropy fell on those with resources, in this case the private land owners. In Agrawal and Lemos’ (2007)

²⁷ Interview with Executive Director and Founder of the Lewa Conservancy, on 25th June 2012.

²⁸ Interview with Borana Ranch owner, 9th July 2012.

governance terms, hybrid forms of government were created during this unintended roll-back of the state (Agrawal & Lemos 2007). It started with assisting with land issues.

“When we started Lekuruki [Community Conservancy], almost all of the registered ‘owners’ of Lekuruki lived up in the forest, while down at the bottom of the valley, seasonally but for most of the year, *Borans* and *Somals* [collectively *Waria*- fine-haired or Cushitic Africans] would set up there. I don’t think it was very secure. There was a lot of fighting between the Samburus, the Turkanas and the *Waria*; mostly the Samburus and the *Waria*. When we built the road down there we couldn’t build an airstrip at the bottom there because there was a big Somali *boma*[homestead] there. So basically we helped the community repossess some of the land that they have rights to.”²⁹

Following on from Foucault’s (1980) premise that the mark of power is in its productiveness and it’s ability it create new “realities of truth” so too did conservation become one of the primary land uses in Northern Kenya. From private conservation enterprises in Lewa and Borana, the first prominent Kenyan community conservancies: Il Ngwesi, Namunyak and Lekuruki were born, often with funding sourced by the private land owners themselves:

Then we were approached by Lekuruki/Tassia for a similar project, and I personally raised money for them alone; raising the grant funding and putting up a lodge there for them.³⁰

Private land owners have taken up the position held globally by environmental NGOs described by Jepson & Ladle (2010) in influencing governance through 4 different channels. The first is by relationship building, developing networks with conservation-minded companies, bureaucrats and community leadership.

In this way, these land-owners developed a sort of pragmatic legitimacy, with legitimacy here defined as “the perception that the actions of [an organization] are desirable, proper and right within some socially constructed system of values, norms and beliefs” (Suchman 1995)- with those systems of norms and beliefs having been self constructed and accepted.

²⁹ Interview with Borana Ranch owner, 9th July 2012.

Legitimacy leads to persistence because audiences are most likely to supply resources to organizations that appear desirable, proper, or appropriate (Parsons 1960). “It is about remaining relevant,” says one land owner. On the other end of the spectrum, there are those who chose to remain isolated and stick to the original premise that “private land is private land.” Their legitimacy has waned greatly, and some warn will not remain so for long.

“The land pressures in Laikipia in my perspective are not being dealt with responsibly by land owners. The population growth, the pressure on resources, the issues surrounding the pressure on resources and the collateral effect over the next 10 or 15 years; it is going to overflow into the easiest face and this is the private land within Laikipia. With the new constitution the county government is going to re-allocate land in a much more hungry way in terms of taxes, in terms of employment, in terms of their contribution to the county so to be a private land owner in Laikipia under the new government you will have to be a team player and a contributor.”³¹

In other words, these land owners will have to legitimize ownership of their propriety.

The second channel is seeking or imbibing expert advice. TNC for example, have stepped in- or have been called in- and have bolstered the position of these land owners. A third channel is the devising of specific standards, a form of associational gate-keeping, which these land owners have made their *modus operandi*.. These include employment, infrastructural and environmental standards.

“We are taking responsibility. We are saying that we work here, we live here, this is going to be our employment policy, and these are going to be our wage levels so we are going to do what we consider appropriate reinvestment into the ecosystem, into the infrastructure that supports that ecosystem and back into the community itself... Right now, we are going to ask [...] to do an assessment on the relationship between the tribes and the large scale land owners here. We commissioned it ourselves. ... we needed to know that we were doing it right, and if we were doing it wrong what the solutions might be.”³²

It is clear that some have gone ahead to audit and institutionalize these standards. However, if viewed in terms of non-state market-based instruments, these standards rely only on a the

³¹ Interview with Executive Director, NRT and Director of Lew Wildlife Conservancy, June 25th 2012.

voluntary code of conduct, with a form of second party certification relying on (influence) normative legitimacy (Cashore 2002).

The last channel concerns the framing of issues. As discussed earlier, the historical persistence of Kenya's decidedly hierarchical and authoritarian conservation model has lent practical legitimacy to individual private landowners who continue to pursue a protectionist agenda that is at odds with more inclusive community conservation initiatives. In this context wildlife comes first; the community is only a means to an end. One land owner hints strongly at this:

[In the 1980s], we started to protect rhino; that was sort of a flagship. There was no economic basis on why to protect rhino. My route into community conservation was about mobilizing the community behind the cause to protect the black rhino.

Critically, the framing of the direction for the future is also being set by private land owners. Specifically, this refers to the remnant white settler community whose place at the centre of colonial privilege allowed them, in the historically state-neglected Northern rangelands, to frame the conservation agenda to the present day even in the face of anticipated sweeping legal reforms. However, political trends at the national level, strongly associated with anticipated threats to security complicate the protectionist agenda. Land owners, for instance, do not envision a stable future for community conservancies based on tourism alone. Placing the land's hopes in the hands of "shakey" political leadership has "already gotten us burned once" with Post Election Violence in 2008 when tourism dropped to all time lows. Landowners are now looking to different methods to maintain communities for the long term. One landowner sees translocations of endangered or sought-after species as a mitigating solution.

"We threw rhino a little bit but it opened the door from an economic perspective to get international recognition, international funding, support from government and it had a lot of other collateral benefits that came in with rhino."

"...You are coming into it one time and know by throwing \$200,000 worth of new wildlife into an area you can multiply the value of the tourism over night. So why don't you do it? Just do it. ... you need to maintain innovation; or you lose bilateral donors but you retain the state funding agencies.

Indeed, Sera community conservancy is just receiving its first black rhinos in a bid to breed a viable population, attract tourists and international attention for endangered species.

But just like many ENGOs and CONGOs, a question must be raised of private land owners involved in conservation: who keeps them accountable, and what are the barriers to accountability?

By this token, a major short-coming of the system as spearheaded by private land owners is donor dependence. The heavier the reliance on donors with strict requirements, the more community conservancies are tied to fit into the agenda of a conservation ethic which may not encompass all their aspirations. One of the big new players in to the North, buying Lewa Wildlife Conservancy in the process is The Nature Conservancy (TNC). On their website, a statement, partly in bold reads:

Today, the Conservancy is lending its real estate expertise to Lewa to consolidate the Craigs' and other landholdings — an area that totals 62,000 acres — into a single non-profit ownership for the long term. And **it is supporting acquisition of neighbouring ranches** to secure connectivity across an expansive landscape that includes historic wildlife movement. Land acquisition for conservation is relatively new to East Africa, and the Conservancy's nearly 60 years of conservation real estate experience is helping partners manoeuvre over legal and policy hurdles. (Geatz 2011).

Though TNC has taken a noble step for connectivity for wildlife, conservancy managers intimated that one of the biggest impediments to beginning their conservancies was the misconception held by community members that their land was being “sold to foreigners.”³³ And judging from the section on evolution, community land tenure security is still extremely sensitive. The statement above may simply be about buying up other private ranches. However, if this is not the case, it rings true that there may be conflicting conservation ethics at play.

If this is so, then the question of accountability is not simply confined to monetary matters but encompasses a myriad of other key issues.

³³Remarks from Interviews with community conservancy managers held on various days between June 29th and July 9th, 2012.

From previous power relational studies, it has been found that that independent agencies – such as the state or NGO groups- are unlikely to mete out differences in power and create accountability across stakeholder groups- in this case, the land owners and communities who may not have much say by way of agenda setting. Instead time is better spent enhancing mechanisms that disperse power (Reed 1997). The governance structures encapsulated in NRT will therefore play a crucial role in narrowing the gap between the interests of private land owners and of communities.

b) Managing community conservancies

A crucial clarification that was made during this dissertation was about the distinction between management and governance. Expressed in non-academic terms, management has the responsibility to implement the systems of governance, while governance represents overseeing the will of the interest groups who manage the organization (Prabhat 2011). Conservancy managers are salaried employees of the NRT; this puts them firmly in the former category; in this way, it limited my questions about the report-back systems they had with NRT top management, which would have been relevant if the conservancy was autonomous. I thus focused on their explanations on the running of the conservancy, how they came to be managers and what they thought of other managers.

Invariably as managers whose main aim is to enhance the overall performance of the conservancy, all the managers I spoke to elaborated about the successes of their conservancy. Many mentioned the benefits received from their eco-lodge, overcoming challenges to do with zoning the conservancy, the success of the grazing program and so on. This revealed nothing in terms of power relations. However, as the conversations continued, it was noticeable that some managers had specific agenda items they were determined to fulfil within the conservancy. “Key individuals have influenced policy directions and paces of community conservation, and often their role is overlooked”(Barrow & Murphree 2001). These managers represent the needs and interests of their charge, but at the same time, have the opportunity to inject their own intrinsic interests into the conservancy. One such individual is the manager of Nakuprat-Gotu Conservancy. He says:

When I joined this conservancy last year I went there and found just a nursery class under the tree[. ...] Once you facilitate education within the community then you empower that community.... I have decided to come here [teacher training conference] to hear their views because in a school like Daaba now, yes they now have good structures but they have no teachers. They have just only four teachers in a whole primary school.³⁴

Not only was the manager passionate about education but he also has gone out of his way to find external funding for schools, scholarships and training outside the regular NRT channels. In this way, he influenced governance strategies for the conservancy which will have a long term impact on conservancy sustainability.

A second point in the power relation dynamics emerged out of how some managers were employed. In informal conversation with a second-in-command officer, he confessed that he had not long ago been in outspoken opposition to the development of the conservancy. At that very moment, he was taking me to one of the grazing buffer zones to boast about the grazing revolution that had occurred in the conservancy. When asked what swayed him, he pointed to this new rangeland management strategy which he had been trained on and put in charge of³⁵. As Orwellian as that may sound conceptually, by training and putting him in charge, NRT had strategically adjusted the dynamics of power and trust, which are influenced by residents' perceived benefits versus cost. They thus linked the officer's overall control over the conservancy's future to his support for the conservancy (Nunkoo & Ramkissoo 2012).

Lastly, triangulation was employed to assess managers' perceptions of conservancy politics and both upward and downward power relations. From informal conversations, it came into view that though the board is democratically chosen, some suffer incredible amounts of pressure from external forces, particularly politicians with vested interests. In reference to a neighbouring conservancy, one manager linked this political interference to the appointment of the manager, which in his opinion resulted in the community's loss of trust in conservancy management and the community conservation agenda as a whole. He pointed to continued clashes and poaching in the area as a manifestation of this.

³⁴ Interview with Nakuprat-Gotu Manager, 6th July 2012.

³⁵ Interview with a Sierra 2 Officer, WestGate Conservancy, 10th July 2012.

c) Positioned for empowerment? The Communities place in power relations

To understand the true position of communities in NRT conservancies, I refer to the schematic provided in Fig 7 below.

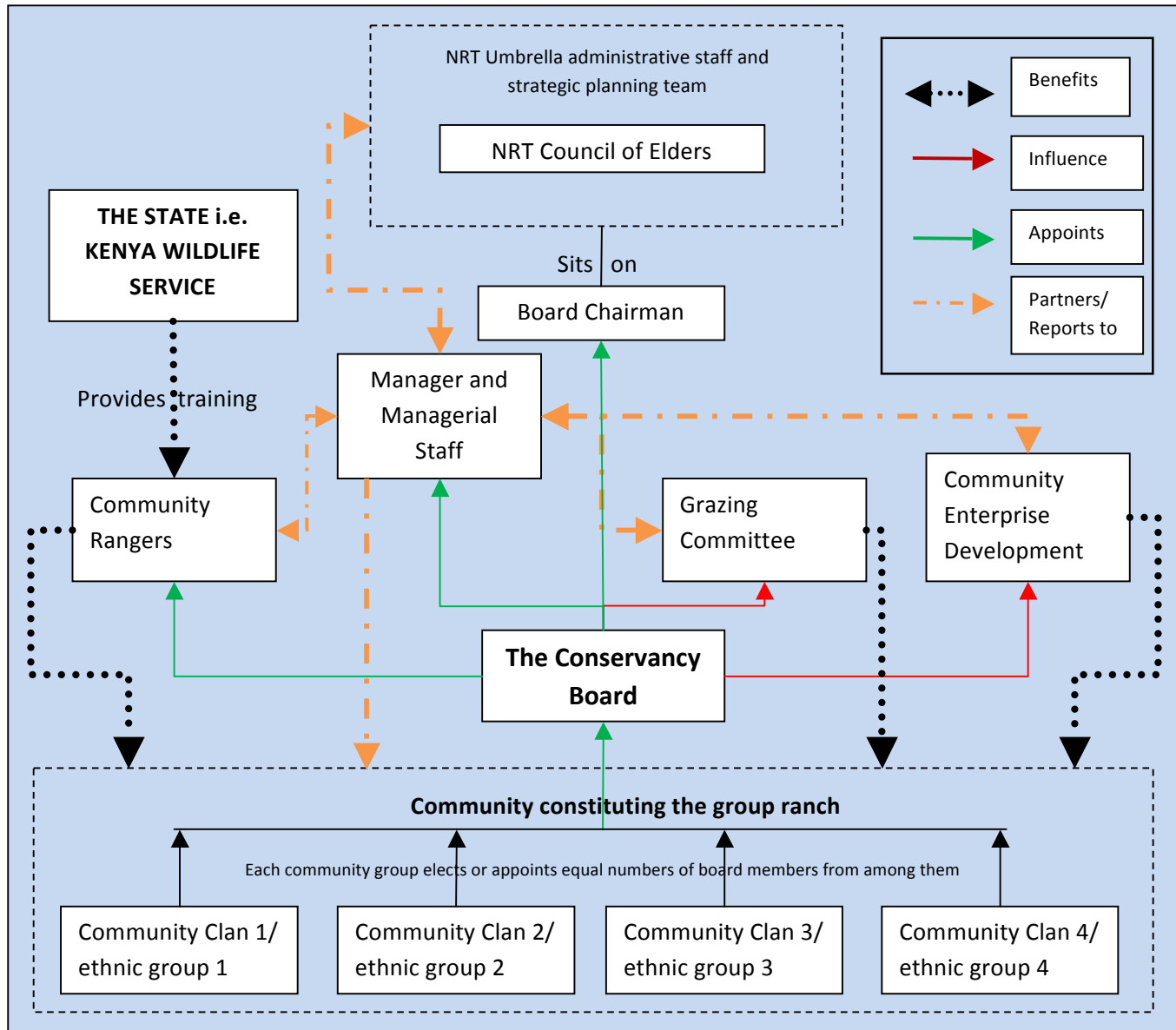


Figure 7: Schematic showing flow of power and benefits in NRT conservancies. (Source: own)

From a power relations perspective, I believe this model is strong because it involves the community in management and planning at the highest levels. Although NRT has been successful in the incorporation of local institutions, it is the community which configures the

board as seen in the model. The board chairman sits with other conservancy chairmen on the NRT Council of elders. This council is involved in strategic planning which affects the entire Trust, and the direction of each conservancy. The conservancy board chosen by the community also appoints and influences all other staff.

The pillar of equal representation on the board from all ethnicities or clans represented is also crucial in power dispersal, and avoiding the creation of conservation “heroes” and “villains” within the conservancy (Moore 2010).

If empowerment of communities is about the creation of legitimate leadership and membership, be able to plan the use of resources (i.e. set one’s agenda) and plan the uses and distribution of benefits (Murphree 2009), then this model has captured its essence.

This is all in theory. In practice, this may come to naught if community members are not supportive of, and active participants in the model. The community questionnaire hence focused on investigating how much regular community members understood of the conservancy, whether they participated in elections and crucially, what *they* felt was the most important reason for the conservancy establishment. A summary table below presents the sample sizes, below which the main findings are discussed. Due to the small sample sizes, the results of the questionnaires can be considered an indicator of community perceptions, rather than a robust representation.

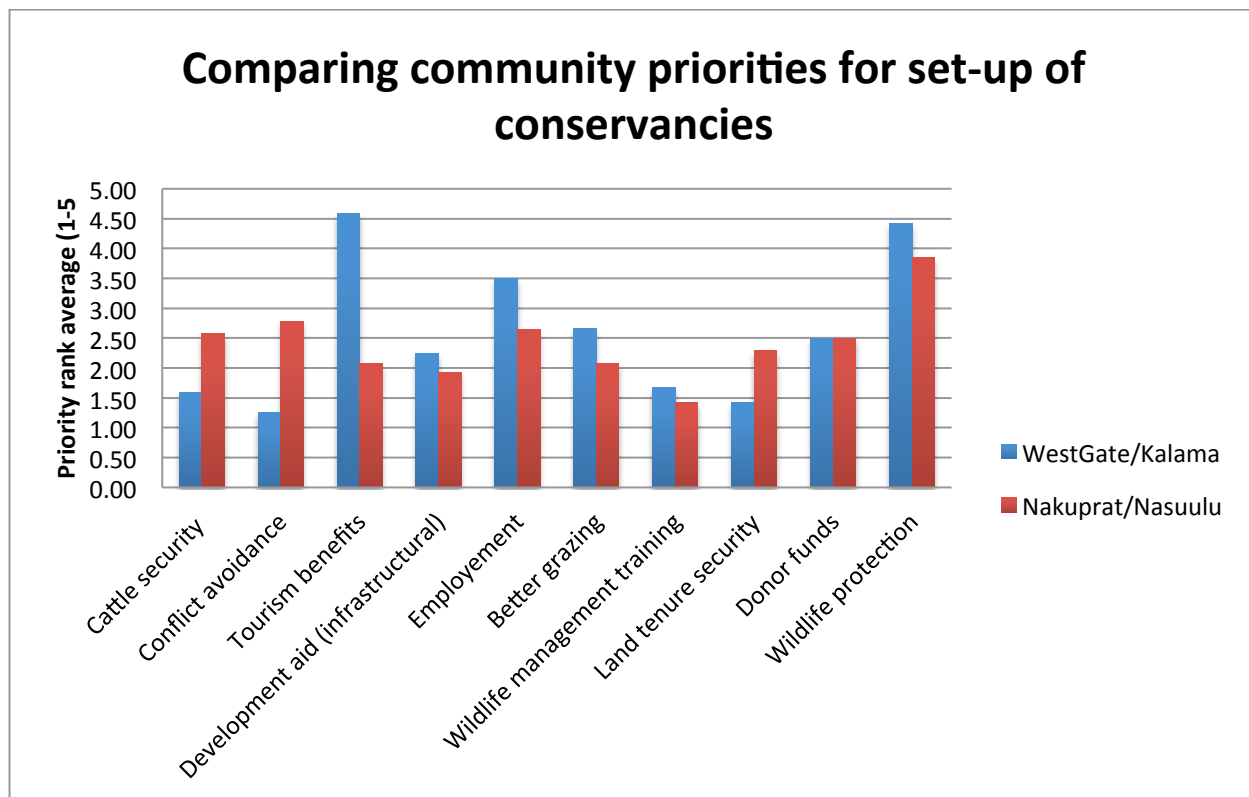
	Westgate	
Gender:	Male	female
	3	4
	Kalama	
Gender:	Male	female
	3	2
	Nakuprat-Gotu	
Gender:	Male	female
	3	3
	Nasuulu	
Gender:	Male	female
	4	4

Assessing basic conservancy knowledge: To find this out, I asked members the name of their conservancy manager. Overwhelmingly, 100% of Kalama, Westgate and Nakuprat, even those living on the conservancy periphery, knew the name of their manager. In Nasuulu, 88% were able to respond correctly.

Conservancy ownership: A major question related to power relations was whether residents felt they owned the conservancy. Cumulative scores obtained show positive integers for choices related to “owned by the whole community”, with all negative integers for those related to “owned by only one tribe,” or “owned by NRT management” in all conservancies, reflecting a sense of ownership of the conservancy.

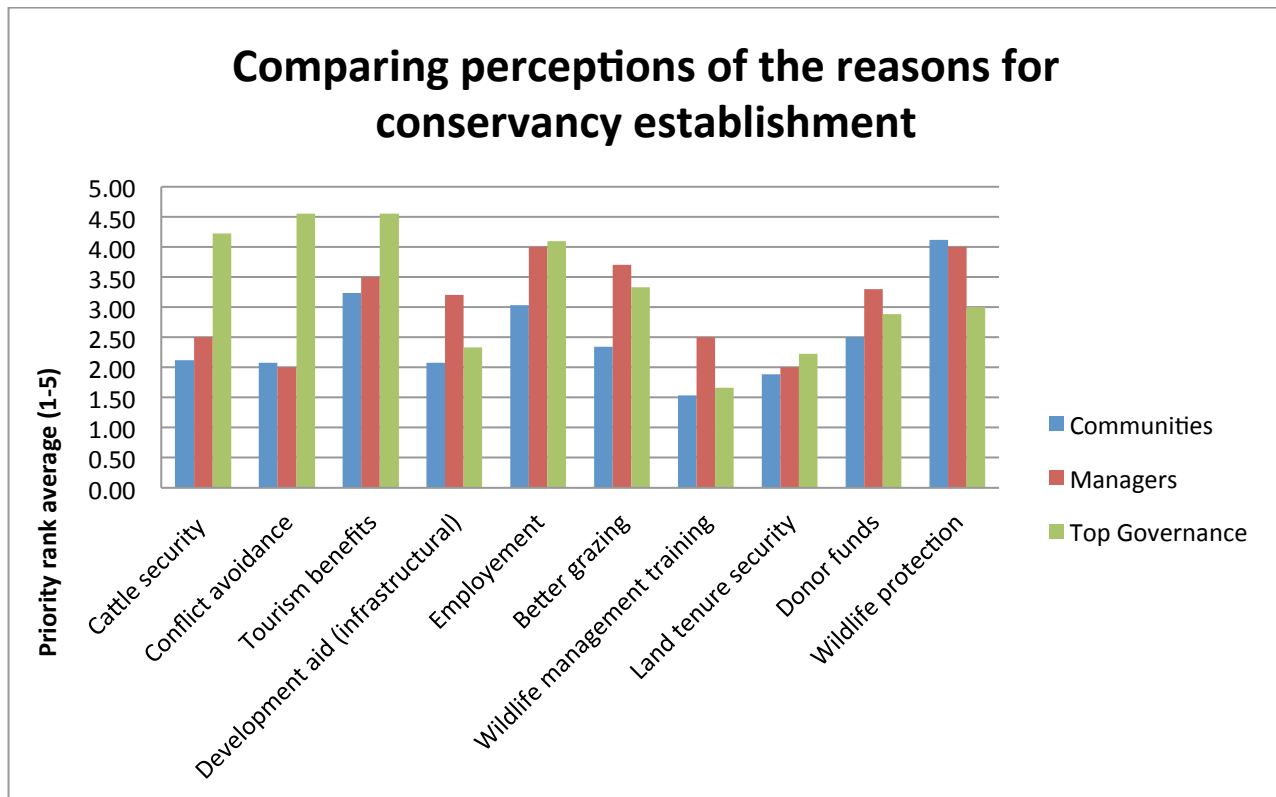
Participation in decision-making: As a way to verify the system of governance created, community members were also asked if they, or anyone they knew attended the meetings to elect their board. Overall only 38% responded positively. Though simple, this is a crucial question as it not only queried the interviewee but the circles they interacted in, widening the theoretical sample size. 38% meeting attendance could merely point to a laxity in personal interest in the conservancy. It could conversely represent a lack of knowledge of the gravity of the election process.

Community Perception of Conservancy Establishment: Members were asked why they felt conservancies were set up, and what swayed them to consent to their establishment. This can be related to the priorities of the managers, and of those in higher office. A simple rank analysis was done comparing results of new and old conservancies, and giving the overall grouped graph.



From the graph above, it stands out that people living in the newer, inter-ethnic conservancies craved security for themselves and their cattle, while those who have now enjoyed the benefits of tourism use it as hindsight, stating this as the main reason why their conservancies were established. Overall, wildlife protection stands out as the main reason why community members agreed to the establishment of conservancies.

To match up the power relations, results by managers and communities were grouped, while coded themes from interviews with top key informants were used to create a grouped graph of the reason for conservancy establishment.



It is notable that wildlife protection ranked highest for communities and managers. In terms of power relations, this is telling: communities felt that these conservancies were for animals and not necessarily for them. One possible explanation is that residents felt that the protection of wildlife would lead to tourism benefits and all the other benefits would follow. One community member explained: “it is because we have been told [during conservation awareness campaigns] that wildlife is the key to all the benefits and them [NRT] continuing to provide security for us.” One old man said, deeply impassioned- and I transliterate, “These animals [wildlife] feed my children and take them to school. It is a must to protect them.”

On the part of Top managers- which included private land owners and conservationists- reduction of conflict, livestock loss and tourism benefits were key priorities in conservancy establishment.

After much mulling over, I have come to a simple conclusion embedded in mutually reinforcing sequencing: For the Western sponsor or top manager of community conservation, development is the means and conservation is the end. For the community member, development is the end and conservation is the means.

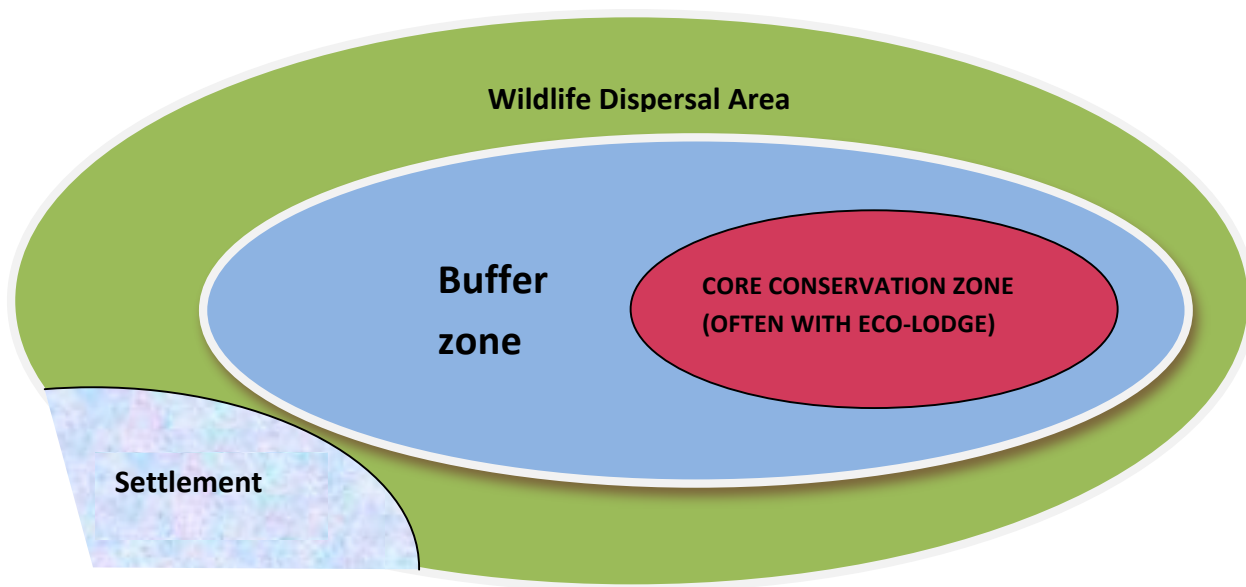
2. SUSTAINABILITY

a) Socio-Economic sustainability:

i. Eco-tourism

The socio economic success of conservancies so far has been based on eco-tourism, and the promotion of the primary livelihood of communities – pastoralism – through improvement of rangeland management.

Eco-tourism has been successful in conveying monetary benefits to conservancies through the payment of conservation fees, bed-night fees, land-lease fees and creating of employment. In NRT, eco-tourism relies on zoned land, following the basic model below:



Where strong governance checks exist – as is the case with NRT conservancies – many key informants advocate for this structure, where an eco-lodge is built and run by professional entities that specialize in high-end eco-tourism.

In the same breath, he warns that this model may cause retrogression into benefit-sharing without responsibility. He therefore advocates for community members getting hands-on experience in management of the lodge, after which the community should take ownership of it. In this line, NRT is rolling out an idea that limits lodge leases to a particular time period, creating a community sustained operation:

“Saruni is owned by Kalama conservancy members, but managed by outsiders. NRT is negotiating with the operator so that after 30 years he will have to turn the lodge over to the community. If on the other hand, the community can buy the lodge after only 10 years they’ll do so but continue paying lodge operators for services. All lodges will ultimately come under this kind of agreement.”³⁶

To critique this model from a value-based perspective, it must be mentioned that eco-tourism, however sustainable, continues to promote Western imaginations of uninhabited wilderness, and, the cost of this tourism is highly prohibitive to local tourists. It remains my hope that more inclusive models are also tested in future. Ironically, eco-tourism is often not the most environmentally-friendly undertaking, with boreholes dug to sustain luxurious swimming pools, all this occurring against vistas of water scarcity (Personal observation).

ii. Solidifying the Livestock Market

While 70% of NRT managers sampled say that conservation is a “second cow” to communities, livestock rearing is still their main livelihood. Although this is obvious, little has been done in the past to promote its sustainability. In line with the World Bank’s report (2001), a major hurdle in the creation of sustainability is building in resilience to ecological and economic shocks. NRT livestock market aims to achieve this:

NRT purchases of livestock from conservancies, owners get KES30,000/- and the conservancy get 5% of this. The conservancy will pool 7% of what it receives- this is source of income. County Council charges Kes100 per purchase. Then the revenue will be split on a 50% basis between the County Council and conservancy. With all this, in 5 years, the conservancy will be self- sustaining.³⁷

With all this potential, it still remains that livestock and eco-tourism are only stable in stable political and ecological environments. With political uncertainty and recurring droughts, conservancies are looking to new avenues to generate more secure revenues.

³⁶ Interview with NRT Regional Coordinator Ewaso, 11th July 2012

³⁷ Interview with NRT Regional Coordinator Ewaso, 11th July 2012

iii. Carbon Offsetting

Though it has never been explored on a large scale, some believe carbon offsetting may be the key to sustainability as it is inherently stable and not dependant on the wider political temperature.

“I think the next big shift has got to be exploring options such as carbon off sets for communities, getting in some proper revenue. Right now threatened land has so much more value. Look at Rukinga. They’re getting an excess of USD \$400,000. If the rest of the world needs us to sequesterate because they’ve been polluting our atmosphere for a long time, let’s get that money. That would be a great future for cohesion.”³⁸

My critique of this is the quiet shift away from wildlife-community relations to an over-instrumental model which might shelve wildlife protection in its own favour, and in so doing, compromise community security.

iv. Large Mammal Translocation

“Northern Kenya may be famous for scenic views, but wildlife is far more abundant in the South of Kenya than in the North.”³⁹ As increased wildlife sightings improve visitor satisfaction, translocation is one of the newest income earners in community conservancies; this is a tried and tested concept spearheaded by private land owners in the region. Translocation of reticulated giraffes, rhinos and other mammals especially endangered species is becoming more common. The latter comes with the added advantage of international recognition for endangered species protection.

b) Sustainability from a biological perspective

i. Grazing strategies

To avoid ecological shocks, conservancies in Kenya use various rangeland management strategies, usually based on rotational grazing. Although the effectiveness of rotational grazing continues to be contentious (Briske *et al.* 2008), it is notable that although *livestock* grazing is rotational, low levels of wild herbivore grazing are continuous in most rangelands.

³⁸ Interview with Borana Ranch owner, 9th July 2012.

³⁹ Interview with Africa Conservation Centre (ACC) Chairman and former KWS Director, 24th July 2012.

NRT conservancy grazing committees have gone a step further by planting grass and creating a mulch covering by cutting down and laying *Acacia reficiens*, a shrub-like tree which is acidic to the soil while growing – reducing palatable grassy species – but as mulch, it forms a formidable barrier to the deleterious effects of soil erosion. In WestGate Conservancy, this program started in 2010. The grazing committee was trained and formed the coordinating force; 70 casual labourers from the community were employed. Together, they planted 60 bags of grass of a species native to Western Rift Valley Province under the mulch. The buffer zone was opened to rotational grazing by 512 cows among other livestock equitably chosen from the community. During the NRT livestock market day where livestock is bought on competitive pricing, no cow fetched less than 30,000/- (USD\$375).⁴⁰ While dropping a community member at the transport bay, he celebrated (transliteration):

“To say the truth I never thought I would have cows like those – so strong – and that they would fetch such a high price! I am now waiting for next time to take more animals to the buffer zone”

According to a key informant, community members have harvested some of the grass and are planting it elsewhere within the group ranch using the same method.

ii. Wildlife Monitoring

Monitoring ecological trends is vital in the assessment of goal attainment within conservancies. As poaching for bushmeat and ivory continue in Northern Kenya, conservancies need to be measured in terms of their ability to act as a safe haven for wildlife.

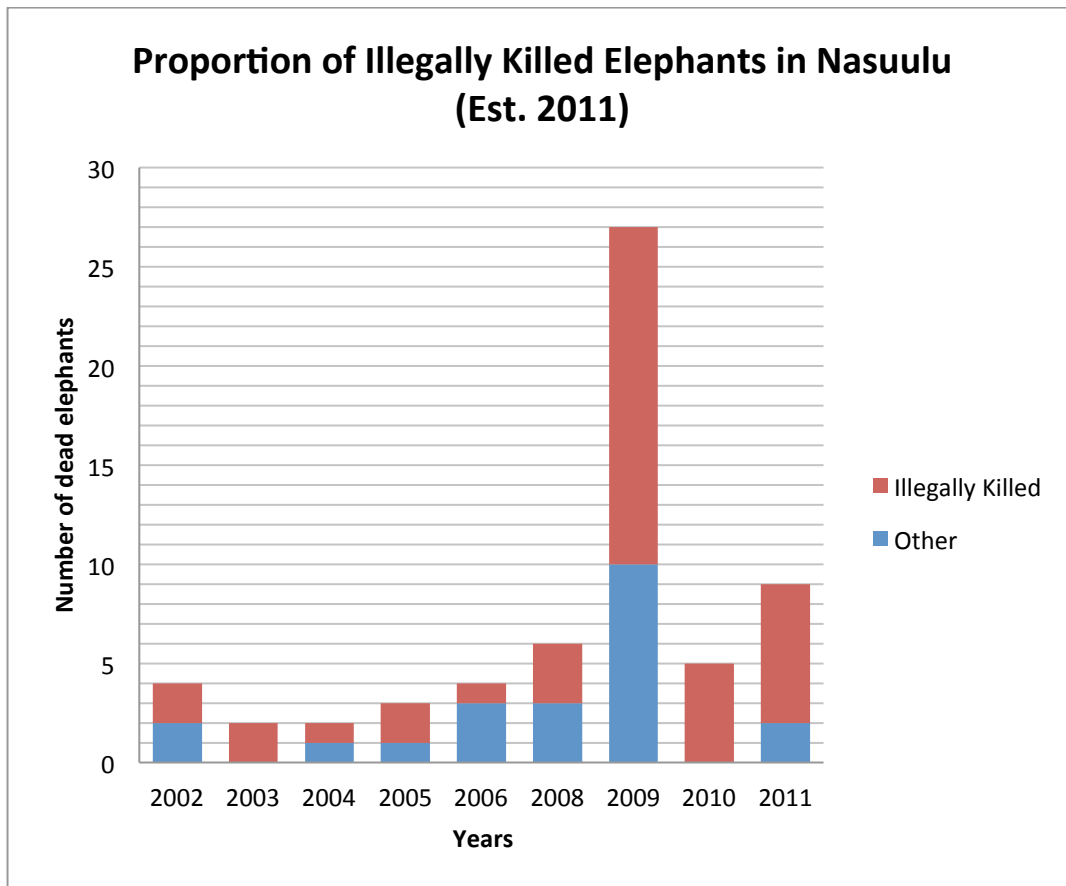
Security of the elephant as a species has thus been chosen as a proxy for security of wildlife. The African elephant, *Loxodonta africana* was selected because it is considered a focal and a keystone species in the region, used in complement with other focal species to help set spatial conservation priorities for the entire landscape (Didier *et al.* 2011). As land mammals with very wide ranges, complimented by the fact that they act as ecosystem engineers keeping woody species at low levels, elephants are vital for the maintenance of savannah ecosystems. Due to ivory poaching, elephants are also the most at-risk species in the region (Kahindi *et al.* 2010), making them the best indicators of wildlife security within a conservancy. Monitoring dead

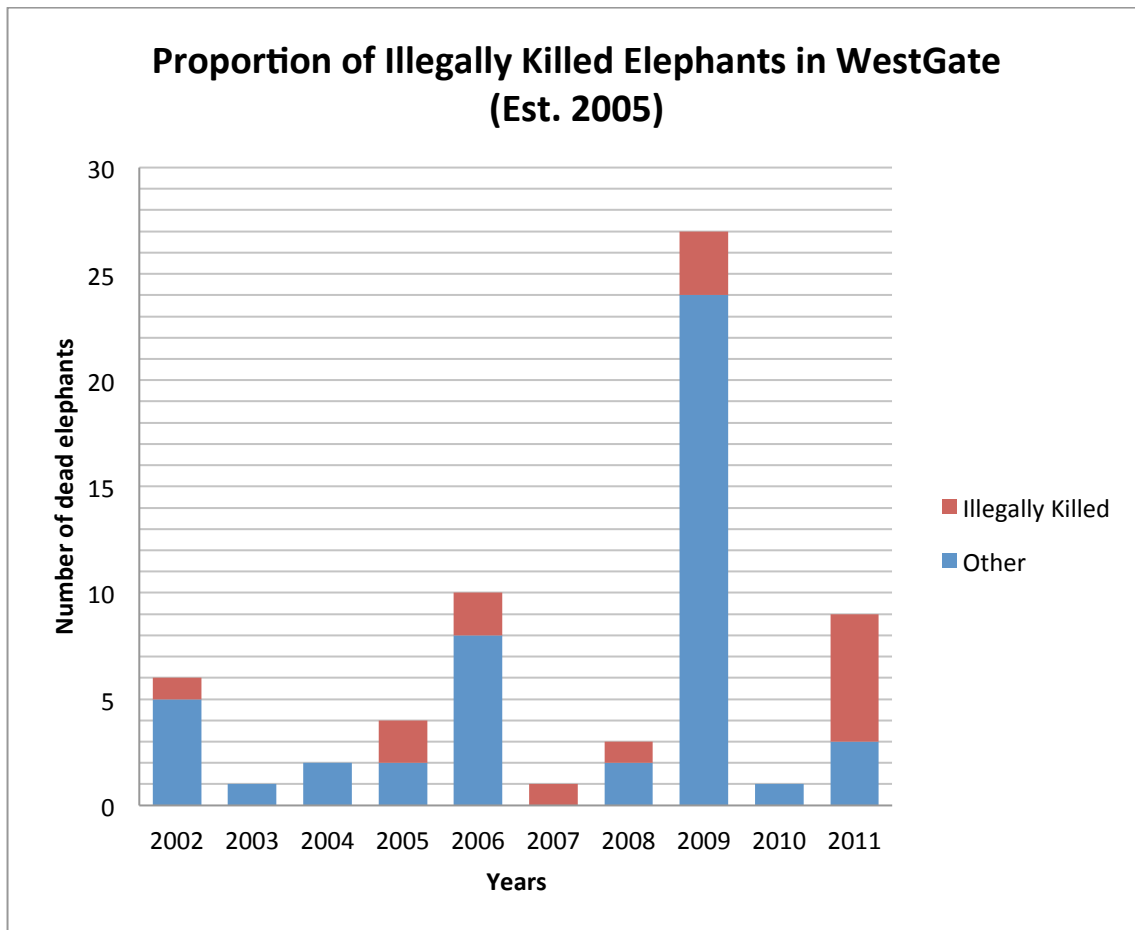
⁴⁰ All information provided by NRT Regional Coordinator and Westgate Sierra 2.

elephants is relatively easier to undertake both by community participation and aerial survey than other species as well as they are large and more noticeable.

Together, the conservancies of NRT, the state and NGOs such as Save the Elephants and TNC are collaborating to monitor the Proportion of Illegally Killed Elephants (PIKE) in conservancies as a measure of their ecological sustainability. Now with conservancies being founded every few years, monitoring the PIKE value could be a crucial measure of conservancy health: as a proxy measure of people's perceptions of wildlife; of effectiveness and speed of radio communications within and between conservancies; and general crime levels within the NRT network. It also gives a clear distinction between elephants killed in conflict (self-defence) and those poached – pinpointing trouble spots will help with future planning for corridors and settlement locations⁴¹. A graphical plot over time would be helpful in depicting the before-and-after effects of conservancy set-up from a biological perspective as shown below.

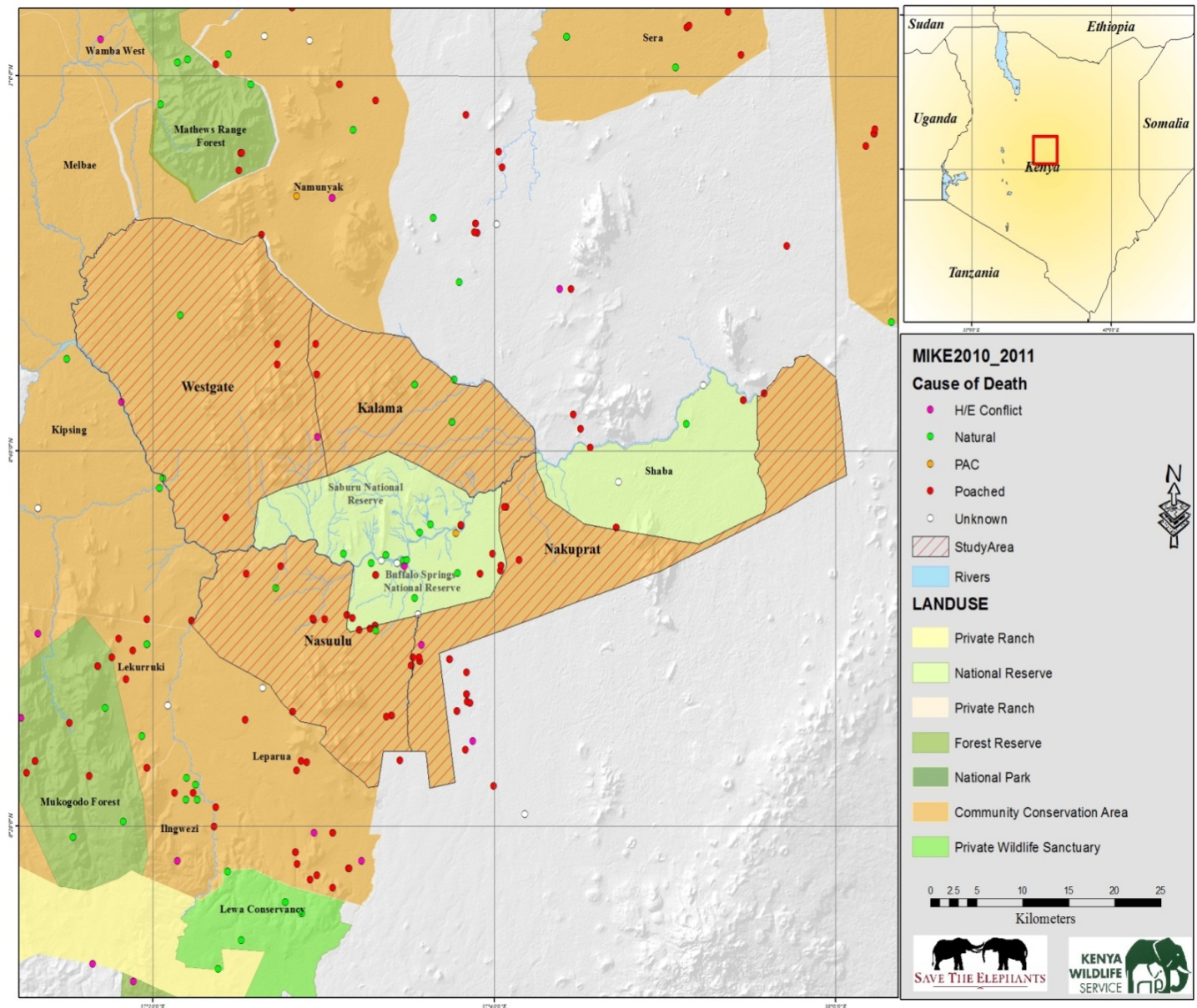
⁴¹ Information obtained from Save the Elephants (STE) reports and TNC board meetings. Raw data for graph generation also provided by STE





The trend is simple to follow. As Westgate appears never to have been a trouble area (for cultural reasons as Samburu tribe reveres elephants), it is only time that will offer comparative data to show whether Nasuulu as a conservancy is ecologically effective. A trouble year like 2009 stands out for both Westgate, and Nasuulu area which was not a conservancy at the time. Although it was a drought year (judged by those that died mostly of natural causes in blue), clearly external factors - specifically the building of a major highway through the area - affected the PIKE value (Douglas-Hamilton 2012, pers. comm.)

Below a map is provided showing various categories of dead elephants and exact GPS points through the entire study area and beyond for 2011.



As shown, in my study area, Nasuulu is a poaching hotspot with 7 elephants killed firmly within its bounds, and others straddling it and the park border within the last year. With effective controls in place, this number should ideally decrease to around the levels of Kalama or lower, where only 2 elephants were illegally killed in 2011.

CONCLUSION

Though the promise of Community Conservation has been great both conceptually and practically, it is no panacea and continues to evolve lessons in implementation. After the examination of the various themes in the lead-up to the brand of conservation existing in Kenya today spearheaded by land owner associations or umbrella bodies, it is apparent that good governance is key in eliminating the remnants of colonial subjugation and corruption, whose manifestations have previously resulted in disenfranchisement of marginalized communities and land use change – a net loss for people, ecosystems and wildlife. The incorporation of local institutions by umbrella bodies has also been fundamental in creating the kind of conservation that resonates with communities, rather than alienating or transforming them in a bid to promote conservation. Crucially, Kenya has been distinguished from other countries involved in Community Conservation by the committed intention to deal with community concerns first – in Northern Kenya’s case – revolutionizing the issue of security which has acted as a double edged sword in mobilizing community support and protecting wildlife. The idea of the redefinition of ‘community’ to incorporate multiple ethnicities and interests has been a by-product of this objective.

It has also been revealed that country-wide Community Conservation cannot grow past certain limits without state support; however, the state has to conscientiously design its intervention to avoid stifling growth of conservation initiatives and risk adding to the complexity of power relations in Community Conservation.

In Northern Kenya, it is manifest that power has lingered around private land owners who have been the derivation of conservation in the region and have extended their influence into communal lands. However, as no accountability mechanism aside from voluntary checks exist to balance power in the relationship between land owners and communities, umbrella bodies like NRT are vital in providing an auditable vehicle for power dispersal, allowing communities to actually be heard and empowered. Though governance structures are in place, communities evidently need to be sensitized on the magnitude of the election and reporting processes to ensure that downward accountability is enforced.

Lastly, sustainability needs to be tackled both on traditional fronts, such as eco-tourism which is well known to communities and through enhancing markets for livestock, as well as innovative fronts such as creating of carbon off-setting markets or trans-locating species which generates international recognition. The idea behind each mechanism has aptly been the reduction of shocks and the creation of resilience. Without wildlife however, none of these socio-economic advances would have occurred. It is therefore an essential undertaking by NRT conservancies to see that robust scientific monitoring occurs.

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APPENDICES**APPENDIX 1: LIST OF KEY INFORMANTS****Tier 1**

1. Ian Craig- Executive Director the Northern Rangelands Trust, NRT and Former owner of Lewa Wildlife Conservancy.
 2. Dr. Mordecai Ogada- Executive Director, Laikipia Wildlife Forum
 3. John ole Kamanga- Chairman of South Rift Alliance of landowners, SORALO
 4. Dr. David Western- Former KWS Director and Executive Director of Africa Conservation Centre (ACC)
 5. Johnston ole Kaunga- Executive Director of the Indigenous Movement for Peace Advancement and Conflict Transformation (IMPACT)
 6. Michael Dyer- Owner of Borana Ranch
 7. Julius Kipng'etich- Director of Kenya Wildlife Service (KWS)
 8. Munira Bashir- Assistant Director, KWS Community Development Enterprises
 9. A Director of Shompole Conservation Trust (Name anonymised)
 10. Titus Letapo- NRT Regional Coordinator, Ewaso Region
- (3 Anonymous)

Tier 2

1. Joseph- Sierra 2, Westgate Conservancy
2. Ben- Nakuprat Conservancy
3. David- Nasuulu Conservancy

Tier 3: 26 Community members, anonymous.

APPENDIX 2: COMMUNITY QUESTIONNAIRE**Community member questionnaire**

1. How old are you?

☐ 18-25yrs

☐ 25-40yrs

☐ 40-60years

☐ 60 and above

2. Sex:

☐ Female

☐ Male

3. Tribe:

☐ Borana

☐ Samburu

☐ Turkana

☐ Somali

☐ Other

4. What work do you do to feed your family?

5. Do you have cows and goats that graze in this area? [how many, if they will answer]

6. Are there very rich people in this conservancy? Explain (what do they do to get their wealth etc)

Yes ☐

No ☐

7. Are there very poor people in this conservancy? Explain

Yes ☐

No ☐

8. Is it better to live near or far from the conservancy?

a. Near why:

b. Far why:

c. Neither

9. Do you feel there are benefits to living where you live in relation to the conservancy? Explain

Yes ☐

No ☐

10. Have you and/or your family members benefitted in any way from living near the conservancy? Explain

Yes ☐

No ☐

11. Do you know of anyone who has received some benefits e.g. employment, microcredit, school bursary, since the conservancy started?

Yes ☐

No ☐

12. Do you know of anyone who has received many **more** benefits e.g. employment, microcredit, school bursary **than anyone else** since the conservancy started? (Explain)

Yes ☐

No ☐

13. I feel that the conservancy belongs to the **whole community**

Strongly Disagree ☐ Disagree ☐ Neutral ☐ Agree ☐ Strongly Agree ☐

14. I feel that the conservancy belongs to the **management committee**

Strongly Disagree ☐ Disagree ☐ Neutral ☐ Agree ☐ Strongly Agree ☐

15. I feel that the conservancy belongs to **only some people**

Strongly Disagree ☐ Disagree ☐ Neutral ☐ Agree ☐ Strongly Agree ☐ (who?)

16. The management committee represent the interests of the **only** some members of the community

Strongly Disagree ☐ Disagree ☐ Neutral ☐ Agree ☐ Strongly Agree ☐ (who?)

17. The management committee represents the interests of **one tribe**

Strongly Disagree ☐ Disagree ☐ Neutral ☐ Agree ☐ Strongly Agree ☐ (which?)

18. The management committee **only** represent **their own interests**

Strongly Disagree ☐ Disagree ☐ Neutral ☐ Agree ☐ Strongly Agree ☐

19. The management committee represent the interests of **the whole community**

Strongly Disagree ☐ Disagree ☐ Neutral ☐ Agree ☐ Strongly Agree ☐

20. Did you attend the meeting to elect the board members?

Yes ☐

No ☐

21. Who is your board member?

22. Who is the conservancy manager?

23. Do you know anyone who attended the meeting to elect the board members? Who?

Yes ☐

No ☐

24. I am satisfied with the work my board member is doing. (Explain)

Strongly Disagree ☐ Disagree ☐ Neutral ☐ Agree ☐ Strongly Agree ☐

25. I have seen a **positive** difference since the conservancy began.

Strongly Disagree ☐ Disagree ☐ Neutral ☐ Agree ☐ Strongly Agree ☐

26. I have seen a **positive** difference in security since the conservancy began.

Strongly Disagree ☐ Disagree ☐ Neutral ☐ Agree ☐ Strongly Agree ☐

27. I have seen **no change** in security since the conservancy began.

Strongly Disagree ☐ Disagree ☐ Neutral ☐ Agree ☐ Strongly Agree ☐

28. I have seen a **decline** in security since the conservancy began.

Strongly Disagree ☐ Disagree ☐ Neutral ☐ Agree ☐ Strongly Agree ☐

29. I have seen a **positive** difference in grazing for livestock since the conservancy began.

Strongly Disagree ☐ Disagree ☐ Neutral ☐ Agree ☐ Strongly Agree ☐

30. I have seen **no change** in grazing for livestock since the conservancy began.

Strongly Disagree ☐ Disagree ☐ Neutral ☐ Agree ☐ Strongly Agree ☐

31. I have seen a **decline** in grazing for livestock since the conservancy began.

Strongly Disagree ☐ Disagree ☐ Neutral ☐ Agree ☐ Strongly Agree ☐

32. What **do you feel were** the reasons for setting up this conservancy in **your opinion?** (Please rank **5 = most** important, **1 = least** important, N/A = Not applicable) [When explaining: why did you agree for this conservancy to be set up?]

Rank \ Benefit	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
Cattle Security (protection from rustlers etc)						
Avoidance of tribal clashes						
Tourism benefits						
Access to development aid (for schools etc)						
Employment						
Provision of better grazing						
Training in wildlife management						
Securing Land Tenure						
Inflow of funds from donors						
Protection of wildlife						

33. What would you like the conservancy to focus on now?

APPENDIX 3: CONSERVANCY MANAGER QUESTIONNAIRE**Manager/Experienced Key informant Questionnaire**

1. Which conservancy do you manage/work with?

2. What year was this conservancy established?

3. Give the history of how this conservancy was established. Who were the people involved and what issues were important for the formation of the conservancy?
4. How often do you report back to NRT concerning specific agenda items[e.g cattle numbers, poaching incidents]?
 - a. Bi-monthly
 - b. Monthly
 - c. Quarterly
 - d. Yearly
5. How often do you report back to NRT on conservation progress?
 - a. Bi-monthly
 - b. Monthly
 - c. Quarterly
 - d. Yearly
6. How often do you meet community members to discuss their new concerns and needs?
 - a. Bi-monthly
 - b. Monthly
 - c. Quarterly
 - d. Yearly
7. How do these meetings take place? Give details.
8. What are the emerging issues that **the community** would like addressed in this conservancy?
9. Did the conservancy receive any start-up capital to begin operations as a conservancy under NRT? Explain.
10. What do you think this area would be like without NRT?
11. NRT has an overall management plan. How is the agenda for this plan set?
12. Are there circumstances where a conservancy could be down-graded in the umbrella of NRT?

13. What, in your opinion, were the main reasons for the group ranches to form **your** conservancy under NRT? Please tick in order of importance (1 = weakest reason, 5 = strongest reason and N/A = Not Applicable)

Rank \ Benefit	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
Cattle Security (protection from rustlers etc)						
Avoidance of conflict						
Tourism benefits						
Access to development aid (for schools etc)						
Employment						
Training in wildlife management						
Securing Land Tenure						
Inflow of funds from donors						
Protection of wildlife						

Other (Please specify):

APPENDIX 4: SHORT ANSWER QUESTIONNAIRE FOR MANAGERS AT NRT MEETING, BOMEN HOTEL, 26TH JUNE 2012

Manager/Experienced Key informant Questionnaire

1. Which conservancy do you manage/work with?

2. What year was this conservancy established?

3. How many group ranches came together to form this conservancy? (Provide names if possible)

4. What is the approximate number of people in the ranches? _____
5. How would you describe the people's relationship with wildlife **before** the advent of conservation initiatives? (Circle the answer(s) you feel are correct)
 - a. Wildlife was a nuisance to them
 - b. They kept out of each other's way
 - c. They had traditional respect for certain species (please state which) _____
 - d. They hunted some species
 - e. They had traditional respect for all species
 - f. Wildlife was their "second cow", hunted only in extreme hardship
 - g. Other: _____
6. How would you describe the people's relationship with wildlife with the advent of conservation initiatives (**i.e now**)? (Circle the answer(s) you feel are correct)
 - a. Wildlife is a nuisance to them
 - b. They keep out of each other's way
 - c. They have traditional respect for certain species (please state which) _____
 - d. They hunt some species
 - e. They have traditional respect for all species
 - f. Wildlife is their "second cow", hunted only in extreme hardship
 - g. Wildlife is their "second cow", providing a secondary source of income through conservation
 - h. Wildlife is their only source of income through conservation
 - i. Wildlife is only seen as beneficial if it brings in income through conservation/tourism
 - j. Other: _____
7. What are the emerging issues that **the community** would like addressed in this conservancy? (Please list)

8. How often do you report back to NRT concerning specific agenda items[e.g cattle numbers, poaching incidents]?
9. How often do you report back to NRT on conservation progress?
10. Are there circumstances where a conservancy could be down-graded in the umbrella of NRT?
11. What, in your opinion, were the main reasons for the group ranches to form **your** conservancy under NRT? Please tick in order of importance (1 = weakest reason, 5 = strongest reason and N/A = Not Applicable)

Rank Benefit	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
Cattle Security (protection from rustlers etc)						
Avoidance of conflict						
Tourism benefits						
Access to development aid (for schools etc)						
Employment						
Training in wildlife management						
Securing Land Tenure						
Inflow of funds from donors						
Protection of wildlife						

Other (Please specify):
