

‘The Wildlife will be like our Cattle’:

Devolution and the Maasai community in the Lake Natron Wildlife
Management Area

Alicia Mori
Department of Anthropology
McGill University, Montreal

August 2016

A thesis submitted to McGill University in partial fulfillment of the
requirements of the degree of Master of Arts

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Abstract

In terms of natural resources, Tanzania is one of Africa's most richly endowed nations, and over the past two decades, the country's tourism industry and wildlife sector have become an increasingly important source of economic growth. Subsequently, several debates now revolve around the use, control and management of the country's natural resources as conflicts of interest emerge between the state and citizens whose agricultural and pastoral livelihoods also depend on the use and governance of natural resources. In response to this dilemma, the Tanzanian government drafted the 1998 Wildlife Conservation Policy and proposed the creation of Wildlife Management Areas (WMAs). In principle, these institutions are meant to act as an effective means of devolving natural resource management decisions and benefits away from exclusive state control to more inclusive and participatory engagement of local communities. Contrary to official claims though, many academic scholars and civil society agents in Tanzania have expressed much criticism about the actual status of devolution and democratization in Tanzania's wildlife sector, especially within WMAs. As a result of differences over the political level at which wildlife and other resources should be managed, WMAs have become contentious institutions rife with conflict and social division. Considering these issues, my thesis explores the extent to which devolution of natural resource management is occurring within WMAs. More specifically, it provides an ethnographic account of the establishment of the Lake Natron WMA located in northern Tanzania and investigates the ways in which local Maasai communities are being included (or excluded) in the conservation and management of natural resources they have historically been alienated from. Findings suggest that local actors are being invited to participate in and negotiate the terms of WMA management with state, corporate and NGO actors, revealing an emerging space of participation and avenues of democratic environmental governance at the local level. However, there is also concern that WMAs continue to be shaped by unequal power relationships and decision-making processes, resulting in insufficient transfer of power to local authorities and reconsolidation of power into the central government.

Résumé

La Tanzanie est une des nations africaines les plus riches sur le plan des ressources naturelles. Au courant des deux dernières décennies, l'industrie touristique du pays ainsi que le secteur faunique se sont avérés d'importants moteurs du développement économique. Dès lors, plusieurs débats se penchent sur l'usage, le contrôle et la gestion des ressources naturelles alors que des conflits d'intérêts émergent entre l'État et ses citoyens — qui dépendent de l'usage et de la gestion de ces ressources agricoles et pastorales comme moyens de subsistance. Confronté à cette problématique, le gouvernement de la Tanzanie rédige, en 1998, la Politique tanzanienne sur la faune et propose la création d'aires de gestion de la faune (AGF). En principe, les AGF devaient permettre une décentralisation efficace du processus décisionnel afin de favoriser une plus grande inclusion et un engagement accru des communautés locales dans le but de contrer un contrôle étatique exclusif. Contrairement aux déclarations officielles, plusieurs chercheurs et acteurs au sein de la société civile tanzanienne ont exprimé maintes critiques par rapport au processus actuel de décentralisation et de démocratisation du secteur faunique, particulièrement en ce qui a trait aux aires protégées (AGF). Les divergences d'opinions quant au niveau politique où devrait avoir lieu la prise de décision ont entraîné de nombreuses divisions sociales et sources de conflit. Compte tenu de ces problématiques, mon mémoire se penche sur l'étendue de la décentralisation des ressources naturelles au sein des AGF. Plus précisément, il offre un portrait ethnographique de la fondation de l'AGF du Lac Natron situé au nord de la Tanzanie. De plus, mon mémoire s'intéresse à la façon dont les communautés Maasai sont incluses (ou exclues) dans les efforts de conservation et de gestion des ressources naturelles — dont elles ont été historiquement exclues. Les conclusions suggèrent que les acteurs locaux sont invités à participer et à négocier les termes de la gestion des AGF avec l'État, les acteurs du secteur privé et d'ONG, révélant du même coup l'émergence d'un espace participatif ainsi que d'avenues démocratiques de gestion environnementale locale. Toutefois, des inquiétudes persistent quant aux relations de pouvoir inégales et des processus décisionnels au sein des AGF qui résultent d'un transfert de pouvoir insuffisant vers les autorités locales et d'une reconsolidation du pouvoir dans le giron du gouvernement central.

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Acknowledgments

The experiences and thoughts written throughout these many pages were only made possible with the support of an incredible group of people that cannot be thanked enough. First and foremost, I would like to thank everyone in the Longido District who offered their valuable time, assistance and acceptance during my fieldwork. Thank you for inviting me into your homes and taking the time to share your knowledge and experiences with me. To the Sauti Moja team, thank you for welcoming me into your family, and to Kuya, thank you for your friendship and all your hard work – I would have been lost without your help.

I would like to extend gratitude to my supervisor at McGill University, Dr. John Galaty, for your support and guidance throughout this process. This opportunity to learn and grow as your student has been invaluable. Also, to my committee members, Dr. Ismael Vaccaro and Dr. Jon Unruh, thank you for your help throughout my research and writing process. Furthermore, I would like to thank the Institutional Canopy of Conservation (I-CAN) project and the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC) for financially supporting this research project.

I would like to express a special gratitude to V. Corey Wright, who may or may not realize the extent to which he has set my life on a path I could not be more grateful for. Thank you for including me in your fieldwork and opening up your world and research to me – it has truly inspired me. Keep “keep’n it real”, and hey, you still owe me fifty bucks.

To my family and friends, I want to say a big thank you for your never ending support and encouragement throughout this process. I am blessed to be surrounded by people, both near and far, who never fail to lift me up when I am not able to do so on my own. While names might not be here in writing, I do hope you all know who you are and take to heart how much I appreciate you. I am forever grateful to you. And special thanks to my “anthropofamily” at McGill; our offices became second homes and your family-like support will be missed. Finally, biggest thanks to Him who gave me this beautiful life to live and learn from. Ashe oleng.

List of Acronyms

AA	Authorized Association
AAC	Authorized Association Consortium
AWF	African Wildlife Foundation
CBNRM	Community-Based Natural Resource Management
CBC	Community-Based Conservation
CBO	Community-Based Organization
CSO	Civil Society Organization
GCA	Game Controlled Area
LUP	Land-Use Plan
MNRT	Ministry of Natural Resources and Tourism
MP	Minister of Parliament
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
OBC	Ortello Business Corporation
PA	Protected Area
RMZP	Resource Zone Management Plan
SM-Tz	Sauti Moja Tanzania
WD	Wildlife Division
WMA	Wildlife Management Area

Chapter I: Introduction

On May 27th 2015, a bright air-conditioned conference room in Dar es Salaam's National College of Tourism set the stage for Tanzania's second national Community-based natural resource management (CBNRM)¹ forum. At this meeting, entitled "*Be the change to unlocking CBNRM potentials in Tanzania*", around 40 actors representing various government branches, international and national non-governmental organizations (NGOs), foreign embassies and academic institutions² came together to participate in a "multi-stakeholder exchange of information" in an effort to agree "on a common course for CBNRM success in Tanzania", particularly in relation to forest, wildlife and fish conservation projects (TNRF 2015).

The forum was opened by a representative of the Vice President's office who explained in a slow, monotonic voice that like many other countries in Africa, Tanzania inherited a colonial approach to the management of its natural resources. This approach generally prevented and excluded local communities from benefiting and managing the resources on their lands, so eventually, the negative consequences of this method brought into question the state's ability to manage resources adequately. More recent reforms in policy and legislation now allow local communities to participate in some aspects of natural resource management, and these decentralized approaches (i.e. CBNRM) are proliferating throughout the country. The key question of this forum, however, was to ask if the CBNRM approach was actually working in Tanzania, and if not, then why?

The central assumption behind CBNRM is that when local communities have ownership of natural resources and acquire significant benefits from the use of those resources, then locals will be incentivized to manage the resources more sustainably. In other words, it is thought that transferring control and benefits away from the state to local communities will result in more sustainable and equitable approaches to natural resource management (Nelson & Agrawal 2008: 557-8). However, this did not quite seem to be the experience of those present at the CBNRM

¹This approach combines both rural development and conservation efforts, and is premised on decentralization reforms that shift authority and benefits of natural resources away from the state toward local actors (Nelson & Agrawal 2008: 558).

²Participants represented the following agencies and institutions: TNRF, United States Agency for International Development (USAID), World Wide Fund (WWF), Tanzania National Park (TANAPA), Authorized Association Consortium (AAC), Tanzania Fisheries Research Institute (TAFIRI), the Wildlife Division, Finnish and Belgian embassies and academics from the University of Dar es Salaam.

forum as the day was filled with comments like the following: “full ownership is not always the case when it comes to CBNRM...we fail to integrate what the communities want”; “the central government is still maintaining power”; and “the participation of the community has been slow...and this has made it hard for them to hold those who make the policies [i.e. the government] accountable” (participant observation, 27-05-15). These types of concerns have been central to issues of governance and political accountability in Tanzania, and even as the government continues to promote CBNRM projects, several debates question the state’s continuing role in the use, control and management of the country’s resources that millions of its citizens depend on for their livelihoods (Nelson 2010: 79).

Focusing on wildlife alone, Tanzania’s tourism industry and wildlife sector is worth over \$1 billion in annual revenue and has become one of the country’s most important sources of economic growth over the past 20 years. With 16 national parks and numerous game reserves, Tanzania is a leading destination for trophy hunters and hosts some of the most popular sites worldwide for wildlife-based tourism. While the country’s economy heavily relies on benefits derived from natural ecosystems, the agricultural and pastoral livelihoods of Tanzania’s 38 million citizens who depend on the use and governance of available natural resources must also be considered (Nelson 2010).

In the 1990s, Tanzania moved towards redefining its wildlife conservation agenda by promoting efforts that would more actively incorporate local communities in the benefits and management of wildlife (Goldman 2003: 835). The process resulted in the drafting of the 1998 Wildlife Conservation Policy which proposed the establishment of new areas of land – Wildlife Management Areas – where locals would have “full mandate of managing and benefiting from their conservation efforts” (MNRT 1998: 31). In principle, these institutions are Tanzania’s approach to implementing CBNRM in the wildlife sector, as they are meant to act as an effective means of democratically decentralizing (devolving) natural resource management decisions and benefits away from exclusive state control to more inclusive and participatory engagement of local communities (Western et al. 1994; Goldman 2003; Brockington et al. 2008; Homewood et al. 2009). However, contrary to official claims, many academic scholars and civil society actors in Tanzania have expressed much criticism about the actual status of devolution and democratization in Tanzania’s wildlife sector, especially within WMAs (Goldman 2003; Igoe & Croucher 2007; Nelson 2010; Benjaminsen et al. 2013). Including frustrations at the local level,

WMAs have become contentious institutions rife with conflict and social division and it remains to be known whether or not the establishment of WMAs allows local residents to actively participate in natural resource management.

Despite presenting some cases that have benefited from WMA establishment, concerns for the state's role in WMA management and the impact on local populations were commonly expressed throughout the rest of the CBNRM forum. At one point I heard an exasperated participant say

“the government doesn't even want WMAs. The idea didn't even come from them, it came from donors, so you can see the problem here. They still want to keep some control” (participant observation, 27-05-15).

This sort of critique is not uncommon and doubts of the WMA's ability to devolve natural resource management powers away from the state to its citizens was not only reiterated in a number of my own conversations, but is a shared concern among a growing body of scholars and civil society actors in Tanzania. In particular, several studies suggest that the Tanzanian government is only pushing for the implementation of CBNRM projects because they have been facing greater resource demands in increasingly precarious fiscal and political contexts (Levine 2002; Nelson 2010; Benjaminsen et al. 2013). This has brought about an increasing reliance on and presence of foreign aid agencies and international donors, which are now pressuring the state to adopt conservation policies that promote more decentralized, community-based to natural resource management. Even though there is a growing body of discourse on devolution and emphasis on local participation in Tanzania's wildlife sector, studies reveal that CBNRM projects like WMAs might only be providing new avenues for the state to maintain the upper hand when it comes to controlling the resources they find are too valuable for ordinary people to own (Goldman 2003; Igoe & Croucher 2007; Nelson et al. 2010; Benjaminsen et al. 2013).

These concerns were made apparent at the end of the national CBNRM forum when I joined a working group that was asked to develop a list of 'targeted actions' that could be implemented to improve the management of WMAs. I sat across from a leader of the Authorized

Association Consortium (AAC)³ and a government official from the Wildlife Division, both whom I had become acquainted with earlier in the day. As the rest of the group went about introducing themselves and we set about our task, the two men sitting across from me were in the midst of a heated debate. Back and forth it went: the AAC leader claimed WMA processes were not participatory and the government was making decisions that were not benefiting the communities. The government official responded by pointing at foreign investors and the lack of support offered to the government. The AAC leader complained that the WMA regulations needed to be fixed, and the government official would claim the concerns he had were too general to be addressed. At one point the AAC leader said “it’s all government, we need to devolve to the community”, while the government official responded saying ideas needed to be practical and financeable. Eventually, the argument was interrupted and put to an end by another participant at the table who suggested the two men discuss their issues at another time (participant observation, 27-05-15).

The tension illustrated here reflects an apparent divergence in expectations and assumptions when it came to identifying a “common course for WMA success”. There is concern that this inability to establish common interests could undermine Tanzania’s reform efforts and that the implementation of CBNRM projects, like the WMAs, may only enact of “charade of decentralization” and cannot provide a means for a true transfer of power from the state to local communities (Ribot 2004: 3). While this experience only offers a brief look into the ongoing conflict and debate around natural resource management in Tanzania, it does outline a major concern that establishing WMAs may not involve transferring the decision-making powers or benefits to communities that was promised.

Over the past two decades, 38 WMAs have been implemented throughout Tanzania, implicating the participation of 148 villages and more than 440,000 people (WWF 2014: 6). Two of these are located in northern Tanzania in Longido District of Arusha Region. This area is unique in two ways. In the first case, this area is known for its abundant wildlife populations, and today, is one of the most lucrative areas for wildlife-based tourism ventures. Secondly, this area is predominately inhabited by Maasai, an indigenous group of pastoralists that continues to face social and political marginalization in Tanzania. To the west of Mount Kilimanjaro, nine villages

³ The AAC is a civil-society organization that provides a platform for all Authorized Associations (AAs) (i.e. the village-level bodies that manage WMAs) to present their views and concerns to different WMA stakeholders (AAC website 2016).

comprise the Enduimet WMA, which has been in operation since 2003 and is often spoken of as one of the most successful WMAs in the country. Neighbouring just to the west of this area are 32 other villages which have agreed to join the Lake Natron WMA. For the last five years, all of these villages have completed the necessary steps to become part of the WMA and are currently awaiting government approval of their application for wildlife user rights. These user rights will give a body of elected local representatives the forms a Community-Based Organization (CBO) authorized status to manage wildlife resources on their lands and the ability to receive any resulting financial benefits.

The Lake Natron WMA, which will be one of the largest WMAs in Tanzania, is unique in that the majority of the member villages are populated by the Maasai communities whose pastoral livelihoods rely on access to land and natural resources. Moreover, pastoralists have a long history of dispossession from their lands, as a result of colonial appropriation, the expansion of ranching and agriculture, and the creation of protected areas. These experiences have created tensions between pastoral communities and the state, and while it is claimed that the establishment of a WMA will devolve power and benefits away from the state to these communities there are concerns that the process is not as simple as suggested.

The aim of this thesis is to better understand the impact of decentralized natural resource management on local communities in Tanzania through examining local perceptions and experiences of engagement with WMAs in northern Tanzania. More specifically, this thesis provides an ethnographic account of the implementation of the Lake Natron WMA, which investigates the ways local Maasai communities are being included (or excluded) in the conservation and management of natural resources they have historically been alienated from. This will include detailed accounts of local decision-making processes among several villages that agreed to join the Lake Natron WMA, focusing mainly on the team of Village Council members who were responsible for developing their village land-use plans (LUPs) and the CBO members who have played a key role in the negotiation of their WMA Constitution and resource management zone plans (RMZPs). This in-depth focus will allow me to analyze how processes of establishing WMAs are influencing the way natural resource management powers and benefits will be devolved, and whether or not they are being transferred in a democratic and participatory manner and that will be sufficient for the village-level authorities that will be managing

resources under the WMA regime. It will also allow me to consider the local customary institutions that are in play and how they are being recognized in formal WMA arrangements.

I. Research questions

In general, this thesis aims to address the following research question and sub-questions:

- I. To what extent has the democratic decentralization (devolution) of natural resource management occurred in the Lake Natron WMA?
 - i. What do the establishment processes (i.e. LUP/RMZP development and CBO selection) of the Lake Natron WMA reveal about the pursuit of devolution and democratization in managing natural resources (especially wildlife)?
 - ii. Are these processes creating a space for Maasai communities to effectively engage in natural resource management? In what ways does the WMA constitute a “new democratic space” (Cornwall & Coelho 2007) – are Maasai governance systems able to affect natural resource management decisions historically monopolized by the state?
 - iii. To what degree are local authorities/institutions empowered and held downwardly accountable to the local population?

By engaging with these questions, this thesis will examine the decision-making processes and power dynamics that are animating community engagement in the WMA establishment and management. While much CBNRM literature assumes that the local is better positioned to determine the governance of natural resources (versus central authorities), this thesis reveals the implementation and management of devolved natural resource management within WMAs is much more complex and nuanced than theory suggests.

On the one hand, there is evidence that local actors are being invited to participate in and negotiate the terms of WMA management with state, corporate and NGO actors. In turn, the Lake Natron WMA represents an emerging space of participation, and to some extent it constitutes a “new democratic space”, which is providing the conditions for new political and environmental subjectivities among local actors (Cornwall & Coelho 2007). On the other hand, while WMAs offer new avenues of democratic environmental governance at the local level, they are still shaped by unequal power relationships and decision-making processes that exhibit “democratic dilemmas” (Lupia & McCubbins 1998). Furthermore, there is concern that

decentralization reforms do not transfer sufficient or appropriate powers to local authorities and may actually result in the reconsolidation of power into the central government (Ribot 2004). Several studies argue that this is the case of Tanzania's wildlife sector and suggests that the institutionalization of the Lake Natron WMA may be yet another instance of "recentralizing while decentralizing" (Ribot et al. 2006). In order to address these issues, this thesis combines historical, cultural, political-ecology and development approaches to explore the intersection of devolution and natural resource management in Tanzania. Specific ethnographic focus on the implementation of the Lake Natron WMA helps reveal how local Maasai communities have been shaped and impacted in this process.

II. Chapter outline

This thesis is written in five chapters, with the first providing a general introduction to the focus of the study, its aims, and research questions. Chapter II provides a theoretical overview and conceptual framework of the thesis. Specifically, political ecology is used as an approach to deconstruct and analyze the politics and power relations underlying CBNRM initiatives, and more specifically of Tanzanian WMAs. Chapter III provides the context in which WMAs emerged in Tanzania. Starting in the colonial period, a history of wildlife conservation and management practice follows the shift from fortress-based conservation to the implementation of more community-based approaches, including the creation of WMAs. Literature on the structure and potential benefits of WMAs is considered along with some of the critiques on the WMA's ability to devolve natural resource management powers and benefits away from the state. Following this, a brief background on the Maasai and their experience with conservation will be provided. Finally, this chapter will describe the study area where the fieldwork was conducted and the methodology used for data collection and analysis. Chapter IV presents the findings of the ethnographic research conducted in the Lake Natron WMA. This chapter focuses on the experience of different actors and institutions involved in the implementation processes of the WMA. Chapter V provides concluding remarks and reflections on the findings.

Chapter II: Theoretical Considerations

This chapter provides the theoretical and conceptual framework for the thesis, by overviewing the body of knowledge that informs how I intend to approach and investigate the research questions set out in Chapter I. This study is primarily framed around the emergence of community-based natural resource management (CBNRM) or community-based conservation (CBC) and some of the concerns and challenges that have resulted from its practice on the ground. CBNRM has been promoted as a “win-win” solution for conservation and development goals, claiming that increased local participation in the ownership and management of natural resources will result in more sustainable conservation practices while also providing locals with more opportunities to benefit from the natural resources that their livelihoods rely on. Despite its promises, CBNRM initiatives have proved more complicated in practice, which suggests that processes of devolution need to be called into question.

Drawing on a wide body of literature, this section will develop a deeper understanding of the politics and power relations involved more broadly in CBNRM practice and discourse, which can then be applied more specifically to the wildlife sector in Tanzania and the governance of WMAs. Employing a political ecology framework, uneven power dynamics are placed at the center of these processes which helps reveal how the underlying politics of environmental governance are influencing who is able to control and capture the benefits of natural resource management.

I. Political ecology of conservation

As first defined by Blaikie & Brookfield (1987: 17), political ecology studies the interrelationships between ecology and the broader political economy. Initially, this analytical framework studied human-environment relationships and focused specifically on the underlying political factors that affected environmental change and the degradation of natural resources. Since the 1980s, political ecology has undergone many changes and literature continues to proliferate along several different strands of analysis. Despite its rapid development, the underlying assumption amidst most approaches is that environmental and social conditions are intimately linked. Furthermore, it emphasizes that while material outcomes of nature are political, the ways we ‘see’ and view nature are shaped and applied in ways that are inherently political. These ideas continue to motivate political ecologists today as they explore

environmental change and ecological conditions as the products of political and social processes that define the interaction between global and local phenomena (Bryant 1998; Adger et al. 2001; Robbins 2004; Zimmerer 2006; Adams & Hutton 2007). This section will explain some of the ways political ecology has contributed to the analysis of policies and institutions engaged in the interaction between environment and development issues, which in turn can be applied to the context of Tanzanian WMAs.

More recently a large body of literature has begun to draw on political ecology as a tool to analyze conservation and natural resource management, as issues like access, control, right, ownership and use are rife with matters of power (Brosius et al. 2005; Brockington & Igoe 2006; Zimmerer 2006; Adams & Hutton 2007; Raik et al. 2008). Using a definition provided by Jones (2006: 483), the political ecology of conservation is “centrally concerned with the politics of struggles over the control of, and access to natural resources”. In turn, the aim of this approach is to analyze and deconstruct the unequal power dynamics in “politicized environments”, like protected areas or other types of conservation regimes, and examine how they are linked to natural resource conflicts (Bryant 1998; Robbins 2004). This type of analysis requires a historical perspective as current patterns of resource management have been shaped according to the different ways powerful groups of people have come to view the environment over time and in certain spaces (Bryant 1998; Jones 2007; Springate-Baginski & Blaikie 2007).

Furthermore, in order to analyze conflicting perceptions, discourses and knowledge claims surrounding ecological processes and justified measures of action, political ecologists have been influenced by thinkers like Foucault and have turned to the role of discourse in promoting certain approaches to conservation. As discussed by Benjaminsen & Svarstad (2010: 387), a discourse is “a manner of perceiving and presenting a particular issue that is shared by more than one person”. Thus, the discourses that are held by powerful social actors are often presented as objective truths so end up influencing actions that are carried out (ibid). Analyzing discourse as an approach has been used in work like Fairhead & Leach (1996) who integrated local knowledge in the deconstruction of the deforestation crisis narratives in Guinea. This allowed them to understand how certain narratives were being used to justify state intervention in the control and management of the land and to challenge the power of socially constructed narratives and discourse. More recent works focus on the emergence of “green-grabbing” and the

ways local-level actors are being engaged in neoliberal contexts of natural resource management (Benjaminsen & Bryceson 2012; Fairhead et al. 2012; Gardner 2012; Green & Adams 2014).

Beyond discourse it is also important to analyze the institutions at play in conservation contexts, as it is “through institutions that humans attempt to exercise control of natural resources and environmental regimes” (Bixler et al. 2015: 169). Institutions have been described more broadly as “the rules of the game” which prescribe how humans organize their social, political and economic interactions at all scales (Ostrom 1990: 3), and throughout this thesis institutions will be used as a lens to study the power relations at work in natural resource management. More specifically, a focus on local institutional arrangements will concentrate on their ability to influence public participation and facilitate downward accountability in natural resource governance. Additionally, as will be discussed in following section, decentralization processes are now redistributing power in natural resource management and creating new forms of local government which are frequently “superimposed on customary governance structures, including deeply rooted natural resource management systems” (Benjamin 2008: 2255). Thus, it is critical to investigate both the formal and informal institutions involved in WMA management since the latter are known to be important in African contexts and can offer insight into the processes that underlie the outcomes of CBNRM (Songorwa 1999; Igoe & Croucher 2007). Lastly, this thesis will employ the perspective lens of gender, as women have generally been observed to experience exclusion from access to and control over land and its resources (Rocheleau & Edmunds 1997).

Keeping a political ecology approach in mind, the following sections will overview literature pertaining to the shift towards CBNRM, the role of decentralization in natural resource management processes and new ‘political spaces’ that are being created as a result. These ideas and concepts will then be used in the following chapter where I discuss the context in which WMAs emerged in Tanzania and what some of the challenges have been in relation to some of the processes thus far.

II. A shift in the conservation paradigm: fortress to community

Since the 1980s, conservation discourse and practice has been shifting to a “new conservation” that is challenging the colonial construct of “fortress conservation” that has shaped conservation in Africa throughout most of this century (Hulme & Murphree 1999: 278). One of the reasons for this shift is related to ideas about nature and how conservation itself came to be

viewed. In the past, Western thought commonly conceptualized ‘pristine’ nature as untouched and unpeopled. In turn, human presence was viewed as a threatening and destructive force concerning the protection of nature. This conceptual separation of nature and culture has been argued to have profound political significance as it has influenced a heavily centralized experience of conservation through the creation of protected areas that exclude surrounding communities from using the natural resources within them under the assumption that they would ‘degrade’ them (Songorwa et al. 2000; Agrawal & Gibson 2001; Adams & Hutton 2007). Projecting the idea that having lands free from human presence made a statement regarding the preservation of wilderness, the most influential model for fortress conservation was the generic US national park, exemplified by Yosemite. However, the proliferation of protected areas of this sort generally resulted in the displacement of local residents or resource users, which resulted in international concern for their local rights (Adams & Hutton 2007: 154). Beyond evictions and land loss of local inhabitants, the fortress conservation approach has also been known to exclude locals and local institutions from managerial powers (Brockington 2002), and has resulted in cases of local resistance and accusations of environmental injustice (Robbins 2004; Adams & Hutton 2007).

As a reaction, the conservation paradigm started to shift away from exclusionary, fortress-style discourses and practices to more socially inclusive ones. Community-based approaches were advocated according to the following premises: 1) local populations have more interest in the sustainable use of resources than state or distant corporate actors; 2) local communities are more knowledgeable of intricate local ecological processes and practices; and 3) communities manage resources more effectively through local or traditional forms of access (Brosius et al. 2005: 1).

No longer viewed as a destructive force to nature, communities became “the locus of conservationist thinking”, while the state’s role was put into question (Agrawal & Gibson 2001: 4). Furthermore, environmental preservation and the development needs of local people were progressively seen as “opposite sides of the same coin” and the effective, sustainable solution for both issues was to devolve natural resource management away from the exclusive state control to local communities (Hulme & Murphree 1999; Agrawal & Gibson 2001; Goldman 2003; Brockington et al. 2008). In effect, community-based approaches to conservation and natural resource management became the “catch-all solution for effective conservation *and*

development”, assuming they would offset the failures of top-down development and the ecological limits of fortress conservation (Goldman 2003: 834).

One concern with community-based approaches, however, is that in many instances ‘communities’ are presented as small and homogeneous units, when they are actually complex entities that contain individuals differentiated by status, political and economic power, religion, and so on. Thus, when it comes to contexts of conservation, one must consider the divergent interests of the multiple actors implicated and the various institutions that influence the outcomes of political processes within communities (Agrawal & Gibson 2001: 1). Also, community-based conservation (CBC) or community-based natural resource management (CBNRM) approaches tend to promote ‘win-win’ outcomes, claiming they will increase both biodiversity preservation and sustainable local development. However, studies are revealing that this shift in conservation is much more complex in practice. For example, Goldman (2003: 834) argues that while communities are being included in the politic and processes of conservation in Africa, they still remain peripheral to the way nature is managed and are generally only acknowledged as a “tool for conservation” rather than as active knowing agents. Neumann (1998) suggests that it is difficult for community-based projects to separate themselves from their colonial heritages of natural resource dispossession. Furthermore, with the spread of free markets and private enterprise, conservation-business partnerships are becoming increasingly common in the management of protected areas, while ecotourism is being promoted as a means to achieve economic growth, local development and biodiversity conservation. By dismantling restrictive state structures and practices, this spread of “neoliberal conservation” promises to increase democracy and participation, along with guarantees of local property rights and green business practices. However, along with all the other approaches to conservation, implementing these promises is a lot more complicated than suggested (Igoe & Brockington 2007: 433-4). In any case, placing ‘communities’ at the forefront of conservation and development strategies may not be the comprehensive solution it was previously thought to be.

III. Decentralization and environmental governance

Another important motivator for the shift in natural resource management lies in a loss of faith in the state’s ability to effectively manage resources that has arisen just as discourse has increased that emphasizes the capacity of communities in managing them in a more sustainable manner (Lemos & Agrawal 2006). For example, in sub-Saharan Africa, state authorities have

historically been known to mismanage or take advantage of natural resources for their own private gain and patronage, whilst rural communities suffer from reduced access to resources that are directly related to their livelihood strategies (Ribot et al. 2010). With increasing periods of economic crisis and political change in the 1980s, decentralization was promoted as an alternative means of fostering development and improving state-society relations, so gradually decentralization reforms become the “fashion of our time” (Manor 1999: 1). Today, many developing and transitional countries claim to be engaging in some form of decentralized natural resource management.

In general, decentralization is “the transfer of power from the central government to actors and institutions at lower levels in a political-administrative and territorial hierarchy” (Ribot & Larson 2005: 3). Over time the concept of decentralization has evolved from a focus on deconcentrating hierarchical government structures to a broader conceptualization that includes issues like political power sharing, democratization and market liberalization (Cheema & Rondinelli 2007: 2). For the purposes of this study, I focus primarily on processes of democratic decentralization, or political devolution, which involves the transfer of resources and power to democratically elected local representatives (Manor 1999). In this regard, decentralization theory assumes that local institutions will reflect better knowledge of local needs and

“*IF* institutional arrangements include local authorities who represent and are accountable to the local population and who hold discretionary powers over public resources, *THEN* the decisions they make will lead to more efficient and equitable outcomes than if central authorities made those decisions” (Ribot 2004: 1).

In turn, decentralization reforms tend to spotlight citizen engagement in governance as an efficacious mechanism that offsets differentials or asymmetries among actors and stakeholders, and results in “better citizens, better decisions and better government” – a supposition that has become a central element to current development and democratization agendas (Cornwall & Coelho 2007: 4).

In terms of natural resource management, increasing economic pressures on states and emerging shifts towards democratic political processes have facilitated a dramatic move away from centralized forms of governance to alternative forms that rely on wider public participation in decision-making and power sharing. Since the mid-1980s, decentralization of natural resource

management has become a characteristic feature of current governance systems as non-state actors like corporations, NGOs and communities begin to share in the responsibility for conservation actions and outcomes. These new “hybrid environmental governance” strategies have effected several changes in the political relationships through which social actors relate to natural resources (Lemos & Agrawal 2006).

In Tanzania, decentralization reforms in the wildlife sector haven taken form in the implementation of Wildlife Management Areas (WMAs), which are new areas of land that include local communities in the management of and benefits from conserving natural resources (Nelson 2010). This conservation-development initiative has emphasized a shift towards the local level of environmental governance, implicating communities, villages, and households as the primary sites of policy intervention. It must be recognized, however, that governance at this level invokes social inequalities that already exist within the local settings and which tend to become embedded in the process of making a conservation area and in the emergence of new ones (Zimmerer 2006: 67). The outcomes of decentralized natural resource management are also related to broader political contexts and the ability of local bodies to advocate for their own resource use interests and oppose imposed institutions they deem inappropriate (Nelson 2010: 22).

There is an abundance of literature that studies the depth of changes that have occurred as a result of this shift towards decentralized environmental governance. For example, Ribot & Larson (2005) analyze the structure and outcomes of decentralization in a specific context by examining the natural resource powers transferred among various *actors*, the domains in which the *powers* are exercised, and to whom and how they are held *accountable* (4). Studies that have revealed successful instances of decentralized natural resource governance generally focus on three sets of changes in the political relationships through which social actors relate to natural resources. The first set of changes looks at the ongoing shifts between lower-level and higher-level decision makers. The second set considers how local decision makers relate to their constituents, while the third focuses on the changes in the subjective relationships of people with each other and with the environment. While this last aspect is important in understanding outcomes of changing relationships of power and governance, it has received much less attention than to two preceding aspects (Lemos & Agrawal 2006: 304).

Research has also revealed that in many cases decentralization policies have been motivated by powerful state actors that serve to maintain their own interests and power (Lemos & Agrawal 2006; Ribot et al. 2006). As a result, insufficient and/or inappropriate powers are often transferred to local levels, and in some cases, central authorities only enact a “charade” of decentralization while choices regarding policies and strategies of implementation constrict local governance options (Ribot 2004: 2-3). In turn, further research on the continuing changes in natural resource governance will provide insight into the ways decentralization reforms are impacting local decision-makers.

IV. Political spaces & territory

As decentralization reforms are shifting authority from the state to more hybrid governance arrangements, there has been a proliferation of new participatory arenas or spaces where citizens are being engaged in order to enhance accountability and state responsiveness. Cornwall & Coelho call these hybrid sites “new democratic spaces”, describing them to be situated at the interface between society and the state, where citizens have the potential to affect governance processes (2004: 1). In terms of natural resource management, decentralization processes are reconfiguring the actors and institutions that make decisions that affect the environment (Lemos & Agrawal 2006) and in turn are affecting different groups’ ability to access, use, control and conserve resources (Nelson 2010: 311). As such, new ‘political spaces’ are taking form where local/customary management systems must be continually reconciled with the administrative and political structures of the government (Benjamin 2008: 2274).

Throughout this thesis, the WMA will be considered as both a ‘political space’ and a place or territory that is emerging through decentralization policy reform and processes of local territorialization (Vandergeest & Peluso 1995). In one sense, the term ‘space’ will be used as a lens to look at the practices of participation in CBNRM. More broadly, a focus on the “opportunities, moments and channels where citizens can act to potentially affect policies, discourses, decisions and relationships that affect their lives and interests” (Gaventa 2006: 26) and the ways they are facilitating the creation of new (empowered) political actors will be considered in a WMA context. In this perspective it is acknowledged that political spaces are often imbued with uneven power relations between social actors and “much depends on *who enters* these spaces, on *whose* terms and with *what* epistemic authority” (Cornwall & Coelho 2007: 12).

WMAs will also be understood as territorially bound spaces, which are created when physical characteristics in a space are made social through communication of boundaries, patterns of usage and histories of settlement (Strang 1997). In other words, as certain individuals or groups delimit and assert control over a geographic area they begin to ascribe certain meanings to the physical space, turning it into a specific place or territory. In turn, territoriality is not only about use or control of the physical landscape, but “about meaning, claiming, consolidating, legitimacy, organization, institutions, productive practices and demography” (Dawson et al. 2014: 3). What I am interested in then is how the WMA is fashioned into a bounded space, who controls these processes and how different actors are impacted as the area is defined and demarcated.

Considering these definitions, two contemporary processes used to determine how people can use resources within a certain bounded space/territory – land use zoning and mapping – will be discussed. Scott (1998) argues that states seek to organize citizens, material, land and resources in ‘legible’ and simplified ways in order to establish control of society. Through methods like mapping, land is made legible, which serves in the ongoing creation, consolidation and expansion of the state. Peluso (1995: 385) explains that mapping land and resources is an intrinsically political act as maps are “drawings of a nation’s strategic space” and are an “authoritative resource” that states mobilize to consolidate their own power. However, territorialized spaces are also being produced locally through “counter-mapping”, or the local appropriation of mapping technology, which may help to counterbalance the state’s monopoly on power over land and natural resources.

In the following chapter a brief history of Tanzania’s colonial and post-colonial approaches to conservation will contextualize recent shifts in wildlife management. This discussion will present the justifications used to support the implementation of Wildlife Management Areas (WMAs) and the concerns associated with this form of devolved natural resource management. This overview of the historical context will provide the background necessary to analyze processes of devolved wildlife management in the Lake Natron WMA, while exploring the extent to which local (pastoral) communities are being effectively engaged in conservation processes in this area.

Chapter III: Tanzanian Context

I. History of Tanzanian wildlife management

Tanzania having some of the richest biodiversity and most abundant wildlife populations in sub-Saharan Africa, wildlife has played important social and economic roles throughout its history. During the colonial period, which was a time of rampant poaching and disease among large populations of ungulates in the region, German government authorities implemented regulations on wildlife use in order to maintain the resource's economic value as hunting and commercial products (Nelson et al. 2007). Furthermore, assuming the socially constructed view that 'pristine nature' required protection from destructive human activity, early conservation policy enforced the creation of protected areas in order to prohibit human habitation and restrict local land use activities (Neumann 1998). Following World War I, Britain took over administrative control from Germany, while maintaining the centralized 'fortress' approach to conservation regardless of the damaging effects on local livelihoods and the stability of the ecosystem itself (Nelson et al. 2007).

Tanzania's post-colonial government maintained these European notions of nature through further extension of top-down conservation policies and proliferation of protected areas. While these conservation strategies intensified the displacement of rural populations, they were reinforced as a sign of statehood and as a strategy for attracting tourism and encouraging economic growth (Levine 2002; Haller et al. 2008). In 1961, Tanzania's first president Julius Nyerere famously summarized his country's interest in wildlife conservation in the following statement:

"I personally am not interested in animals. I do not want to spend my holidays watching crocodiles. Nevertheless, I am entirely in favour of their survival. I believe that after diamonds and sisal, wild animals will provide Tanganyika with its greatest source of income. Thousands of Americans and Europeans have the strange urge to see these animals" (quoted in Levine 2002: 1047).

While he was not necessarily a concerned conservationist, Nyerere did recognize the appreciation foreigners had for his country's wildlife and the potential their curious fascination had in providing Tanzania a new source of foreign income. Viewed in much the same way as any

other ‘export’ industry, the post-colonial government encouraged the development of wildlife-based tourism as a strategy to boost economic growth (ibid). In turn, both the preservation and commodification of wildlife became a national priority, and by the 1980s, 28% of Tanzanian territory was under a protectionist regime in the form of national parks and game reserves (Neumann 1998).

However, an economic crisis in the late 1970s and early 1980s pressured the Tanzanian state to take on a structural adjustment program, which gradually shifted the country’s socialist oriented economic policies towards more liberal and capitalist-oriented ones. These macroeconomic reforms made it difficult for the state to financially maintain its protected areas and national parks, and eventually forced the government to seek aid from foreign agencies. Meanwhile, a dramatic reduction in state law enforcement capacity resulted in a boom of illegal poaching and human-wildlife conflict, to the point that species like the black rhino and elephant were widely over-exploited. Exclusionary approaches to conservation, like creating protected areas, were blamed for alienating and antagonizing local communities and gradually the dominant discourse of fortress conservation began to lose its legitimacy. Furthermore, increasingly donor-government partnerships sought to increase investment in the wildlife sector and address the short-falls of previous conservation approaches. Aiming to combine conservation and rural development goals, projects like the Selous Conservation Programme were developed to promote community involvement in wildlife management, while other local projects aimed to improve local benefit-sharing (Levine 2002; Nelson et al. 2007; Nelson 2010).

In terms of wildlife management, it is assumed that under state ownership locals have little incentive to value wildlife or invest in conservation. Instead, they must bear the costs of living with wildlife, while the financial benefits are captured by the state or private sectors. Following a community-based narrative it is suggested that when locals are given the authority to capture the economic benefits of wildlife they will be instilled with a sense of community stewardship over the resource and will be more motivated to participate in conservation efforts (Goldman 2003; Igoe & Croucher 2007; Nelson & Agrawal 2008; Clark et al. 2015). In Tanzania, the response to this narrative was the formulation of a new wildlife policy that called for the devolution of wildlife management powers and benefits to the local level. The mechanism of this decentralization reform was the implementation of Wildlife Management Areas (WMAs),

which has been promoted as the most sustainable approach to wildlife conservation for the last two decades (Nelson & Agrawal 2008: 561).

II. Wildlife Management Areas (WMAs): de- or re- centralization?

With increasing wildlife conflicts, the shift towards community-based conservation and pushes for decentralization reforms, the Tanzanian state issued the 1998 Wildlife Policy in an effort to engage local communities more directly in wildlife management (Hulme & Murphree 2001; Nelson 2010). This policy maintained core protected areas (i.e. national parks and game reserves) as the foundation of wildlife conservation, but proposed the establishment of new areas of land – Wildlife Management Areas (WMAs) – which would be agreed upon and set aside by villages voluntarily for conservation purposes and related business ventures (Igoe & Croucher 2007). The institutionalization of these areas on village land would give local communities the “full mandate of managing and benefiting from their conservation efforts” (MNRT 1998: 31), which would help “improve the quality of the life of the people in Tanzania”, while also “promot[ing] conservation of biological diversity” (ibid: v).

In terms of conservation, WMAs represent an emphasis on large-scale conservation, but through devolution and more participatory endeavours to natural resource management they also promote community empowerment (Goldman 2003; Igoe & Croucher 2007; Noe & Kangalawe 2015). Since 2002, the implementation of WMAs has been promoted as the most viable approach towards sustainable conservation with 38 WMAs currently being implemented throughout the country. According to a 2012 status report, 17 of these WMAs have been gazetted and have attained Authorized Association (AA) status, while the rest are at different stages of development (WWF 2014: 6).

The WMA application procedure involves a number of complex and bureaucratic procedures, presented in Figure 3.1, which will be briefly explained here. First of all, villages are approached by respective government authorities and NGOs (e.g. the AWF) charged with WMA promotion. These actors are meant to inform residents about the potential value of joining the proposed WMA (e.g. increased biodiversity, access to economic benefits, etc.). The main concern with this phase is whether or not villages are making informed choices based on full information of the potential values *and* challenges of becoming a WMA member, or if they are being convinced and/or coerced into making such a decision. Assuming they have been educated on all necessary aspects of the WMA, locals then gather in a village assembly where they vote on

whether or not they will proceed with the membership process. If they agree to do so, a complex process of land-use planning and resource-zoning ensues (Nelson 2007). Of the initial 15 designated pilot areas, only the villages in Loliondo were able to reject and resist the implementation of the WMA, arguing for the right to negotiate directly with investors rather than through the WMA (Gardner 2012: 390).

Figure 3.1

Twelve basic steps of WMA implementation	
1.	Village Assembly agrees to form WMA based on Village Council recommendations
2.	Villages form a CBO and register it at Ministry of Home Affairs
3.	The CBO prepares a Strategic Plan
4.	Villages prepare Land Use Plans, which must be surveyed and registered
5.	Land use plans are subjected to Environmental Impact Assessment
6.	Villages prepare by-laws to support the land use plans
7.	CBO prepares a Resource Management Zone Plan
8.	CBO applies to Director of Wildlife for AA status
9.	CBO/AA applies for user rights
10.	CBO/AA applies for the Director for a hunting block*
11.	CBO/AA enters into investment agreements
12.	Investments in WMAs are subjected to EIA
*This step only applies if the CBO/AA wants to carry out tourist hunting in the WMA	

(Adapted from Nelson 2007: 7)

Any community wanting to establish a WMA must fulfill a range of prerequisite requirements including the development of land use plans (LUPs), resource management zone plans (RMZPs), and the institution of by-laws as a legal mechanism with which to enforce their land use and management plans (USAID 2013: 4). The member villages must also reorganize and formally register themselves into a community-based organization (CBO) of elected community representatives that, when registered, will become a legally recognized Authorized Association (AA) tasked with the management of the WMA⁴. After approval is given by the Wildlife Director of the Wildlife Division in the Ministry of Natural Resources and Tourism (MNRT), the WMA is then gazetted and legal rights over wildlife are obtained, allowing AA

⁴ Although, each Village Council maintains statutory authority over respective village land that constitutes the WMA (Nelson et al. 2009).

representatives to work with investors in efforts to create community-based commercial ventures (i.e. photographic tourism or tourist hunting). After a WMA has acquired official status, the economic returns from tourism operations on WMA conservation land are then split in a 65-35 percent division among the WMA and the state, respectively. Hunting ventures also have a benefit-sharing mechanism between the two bodies, but is divided in a more complex manner (Nelson 2007).

In principle, WMAs are meant to act as an effective means of devolving natural resource management decisions and benefits away from exclusive state control to more inclusive and participatory engagement of local communities – a democratic decentralization of environmental governance (Western et al. 1994; Goldman 2003; Brockington et al. 2008; Homewood et al. 2009). However, despite the potential benefits of WMAs in terms of both increasing biodiversity preservation and economic development, many academic scholars and civil society agents in Tanzania have expressed much criticism about the actual status of democratic decentralization in country's wildlife sector, especially within WMAs (Goldman 2003; Igoe & Croucher 2007; Nelson et al. 2010; Benjaminsen et al. 2013; Green & Adams 2014).

Many studies now reveal that in practice processes of decentralization via WMAs have been complicated and fraught with challenges. Igoe & Croucher (2007) argue that the creation of WMAs has been driven not by the community, but instead by only a few transnational conservation organizations, like the USAID-funded African Wildlife Foundation (AWF), that have access to necessary resources, expertise and technology. They also suggest the government may be involved in intentional efforts to deceive local agents, which Nelson (2010) argues could be a result of competing state and private commercial interests in resources government officials find too valuable for ordinary people to own. Benjaminsen (2013) further elaborates on this perspective, adding that WMAs are now providing new avenues of rent-seeking for political officials, meaning the establishment of WMAs is presenting a new opportunity for political actors to obtain economic gains without reciprocating any benefits to the local level. Green & Adams (2014) argue the central government is using the establishment of WMAs for green-grabbing, or the accumulation of land to the detriment of local people by using conservation as a justification. Whatever the actual case, these studies indicate that community-based conservation and WMA implementation are far from reaching the principles of devolution and democratization.

This thesis draws on a critique presented by Ribot et al. (2006) who examine several case studies of decentralization reforms to reveal a divergence between the rhetorical claims for decentralization and the changes that actually take place. While most of the cases presented show some transfer of authority to local bodies, they also reveal that central governments often transfer insufficient and inappropriate powers which in turn serves to maintain their own interests and powers. Thus, concerns that decentralization reforms may be ineffective, and may result in “recentralizing while decentralizing” (ibid), are very relevant in the analysis of systems of devolved natural resource management. For instance, while it is argued that WMAs are argued to devolve power to local bodies, there is concern that a number of processes remain under central control. For example, it is pointed out that state authorities have no incentive to devolve authority over wildlife, as the resource is incredibly valuable in terms of commercial hunting revenues that are accrued by the central Wildlife Division (Nelson 2006: 6). Even with WMA implementation, hunting block allocation remains under exclusive authority of the Wildlife Division, in which regulations are so ambiguous that they do not clearly define how revenues should be shared among member villages. On top of that, all investments in WMAs require Ministerial sanction, whereas prior to the WMA, tourism contracts could be based only on agreements made between a village and a private investor. Regarding these issues it may well be that “rather than decentralization or devolving authority, Tanzania is undergoing a process of expanding central control for wildlife management” (Nelson et al. 2007: 247).

III. Maasai pastoralism and wildlife conservation

Historically, access to land has been of great importance to the local communities of Maasai whose transhumant pastoral livelihoods rely on a close relationship to natural resources (Galaty 1982). Despite a long history of pastoralism in Tanzania, pastoralists and their livestock have often been blamed for the destruction of the savannah ecosystem and continue to face alienation from their traditional grazing lands (Homewood 2008). During the colonial era, Tanzania’s northern highland ranges and savannahs landscapes, which were predominately managed by pastoralists, were appropriated by European settlers or set aside for state-protected areas for wildlife (Nelson et al. 2010: 269). For example, under both German and British rule, Maasai were relegated to ‘reserve’ areas and in the process of demarcating reserve boundaries much of their most fertile lands were alienated from the Maasai for European settlement or for resettling other landless peoples (Hodgson 2001: 52).

Since the 1970s, many rural Tanzanians, including the Maasai population, were resettled into *ujamaa* (meaning unity, cooperation and “family-hood” in Swahili) villages for administrative purposes. *Ujamaa* policies were formulated as a means of advancing President Nyerere’s push to attain African socialist development and part of this policy’s aim was to decentralize decision-making, control and funding for economic development to villages (Hodgson 2001: 151-4). Today, loose clusters of Maasai *bomas* (homesteads) (see Figure 2.2) are now bound within the imposed village structure, although the traditional social systems of section, clan, age-set and boma still govern the ways Maasai manage and access resources (Homewood & Rodgers 1991: 56).

Beyond material struggles for land and resource access, the Maasai have also struggled in terms of the way their land practices were perceived. For instance, in the 1950s, a general perception of pastoralism was that it inevitably led to overgrazing and resulted in environmental degradation and damage to wildlife habitats. This was related to the concept of “carrying capacity” which holds that an area of land can only sustain a certain number of livestock (or wildlife) given limits on the amount of forage a particular unit of land can produce. If pastoralists continue to increase their animal numbers, because of the cultural value placed on owning large herds, then, assuming common lands are not regulated by local resource users, then the “tragedy of the commons” (Hardin 1968), in which the land will be overgrazed which will lead to environmental destruction, or in the end desertification. This view of pastoralism has been a significant factor informing policy debates over natural resource management in Tanzania, as can be seen in the rationale used to justify the establishment of national parks and game reserves on customarily owned lands (Homewood et al. 2009; Nelson 2012).

More recent studies (see Homewood & Rodgers 1991; Scoones 1995) have challenged the perception that pastoralist practices inevitably lead to environmental degradation, and instead, suggest that pastoralist resource management strategies (e.g. seasonal migration or transhumance) are ecologically viable methods that allow pastoralists to co-exist with diverse populations of wildlife and to deal with the unpredictable arid environments they reside in (Nelson 2012: 6). In relation to other neighbouring tribes, Maasai communities have historically been more tolerant of wildlife as their predominantly pastoral way of life tends to overlap on the land and resources that wildlife also rely on. Furthermore, in Maasai belief, wildlife is seen as a creation of *Enk-ai* (God in Maa) with equal rights to grazing lands as Maasai cattle; also, Maasai

have a cultural distaste for eating wild game meat (Goldman 2003: 851-2). Homewood & Rodgers argue that the Maasai's respect for wildlife and "the strong aesthetic as well as practical sense of their environment are such a natural basis for local conservation support that it is counterproductive as well as hypocritical and unethical to exclude them" (1991: 248). In this way, pastoralist practices not only have the ability to co-exist with wildlife, but are argued to also play a key role in wildlife conservation, and inadvertently support the country's tourism industry (Nelson 2012: 16).

However, as state and private interests in wildlife and tourism increase pressure on these landscapes, pastoralists are facing increasing competition in their ability to use and access their lands and resources (Nelson et al. 2010: 269). On top of this, Maasai transhumant systems depend on access to key resources like pasture, water and minerals at any given season and on rights of being able to travel between and through different sites. Most of these systems have been based on common property resource management systems and according to customary institutions that allow for more flexible social and spatial boundaries compared to Westernized legal tenure systems. As such, Maasai land tenure systems are in constant conflict with imposed alien legal systems of property rights, and as conservation policy continues to shift, pastoralists continue to face problems of securing rights of access to their traditional lands (Homewood 2008: 85; 152).

Now with the implementation of WMAs in Tanzania, village members are being invited to take part in the management and benefits associated with wildlife resources. For the Maasai, this could provide avenues for village communities to actively engage in the management of natural resources they have generally only experienced alienation from. However, as the next chapter will reveal, this process is much more complicated in practice than on paper. Before jumping into the complexities of the case study the following section will provide an overview of the methodology used in this study and the area where research took place.

IV. Research methods and study area

My empirical research adopted ethnographic and qualitative methods in order to obtain an in-depth understanding of the ways Maasai communities have participated in and experienced the implementation processes of the Lake Natron WMA. While there are many ways to approach ethnography, in general its practice places the researcher in the midst of whatever is being studied so he or she can investigate the ways participants perceive various phenomena and then represent these observations as accounts (Berg 2009: 191). As explained by Hume & Mulcock, “the ethnographer must be able to see with the eyes of an outsider as well as the eyes of an insider, although both views are, of course, only ever partial” (2005: xi). Thus, making an effort to be reflexive, or constantly aware of the knowledge I had and how it came to be, was an important part of my methodology and my role as a researcher (Berg 2009: 198). The concept of flexibility was also an important aspect of my research, as I remained open to any changes in my objectives, research questions and methods throughout the extent of my research (Bryman 2008: 389).

This thesis is based on undergraduate fieldwork conducted from July 2013 until December 2013, and graduate fieldwork from May 2015 until July 2015. In both research periods I lived in Longido Town, where I was hosted by a local organization called Sauti Moja Tanzania (SM-Tz), which focuses on providing health and education opportunities to vulnerable Maasai, people living with HIV/AIDS or young mothers. Through this organization I had access to a network of resources and informants, although it came at some costs of which I will discuss later.

Although English is an official language used in Tanzania, I had to conduct most of my research in (Ki)Swahili or in (Ki)Maasai/Maa, depending on the level of education and comfort level of my informants. In some cases, interviews and focus group discussions would be spoken in a blend of both Swahili and Maa. While I am able to speak and understand some Swahili, it was not enough to facilitate interviews on my own, and my Maa skills only encompassed basic greetings. Through SM-Tz I was brought into contact with a local Maasai man who ended up working with me as a full-time research assistant and translator in both of my research trips. Having grown up in a neighbouring village within the Lake Natron WMA, my research assistant was familiar with the area and his education in Wildlife Tourism and Management provided him with some background to some of the topics I was addressing in my research. Despite having

access to a full-time research assistant, I still found it important to continue my own language training throughout my time in the field. My abilities to communicate in Swahili greatly improved over time, but this was more difficult for Maa as language resources are minimal. Beyond translating, my research assistant was also key in arranging my interviews and focus groups. If there was a particular person that I was looking to interview, he would call and arrange a meeting time and place that was convenient for the participant.

On my first trip to the field, strategic sampling of villages was based on preliminary discussions with various stakeholders (e.g. Civil Society Organization (CSO) representatives, community members, leaders and other researchers) who would relay issues of contention or interest in a certain village, or specific individuals I could contact to gather more information. In total, I visited 10 Villages (Oltepesi, Oroboma, Ranch, Mairowa, Ketumbeine, Olkejuloongishu, Engikaret, Matale A and Matale B) and the Towns of Longido and Namanga. As infrastructure and public transport is poor beyond Longido Town, I was limited to villages that had accessible infrastructure. Furthermore, I also relied on the availability of the SM-Tz vehicle, which generally limited my travel time to villages that were only one or two hours away from Longido Town. On my second trip to the field I had access to a vehicle from the I-CAN project and this gave me the freedom to drive to more isolated villages. These villages were selected when my research assistant or I would hear about certain events from informants that we decided required further investigation.

i. Methodology overview

During my fieldwork I used four primary methods of data collection: participant observation, key informant interviews, focus group discussions and analysis of secondary literature. To each of these methods I applied different methods of sampling, data collection and analysis. I mainly employed participant observation to help situate data otherwise resulting from interviews and focus groups, but I also used it as my main method when attending meetings like the CBNRM national forum in Dar es Salaam or as a way to gain insight into the daily activities of Maasai pastoralists.

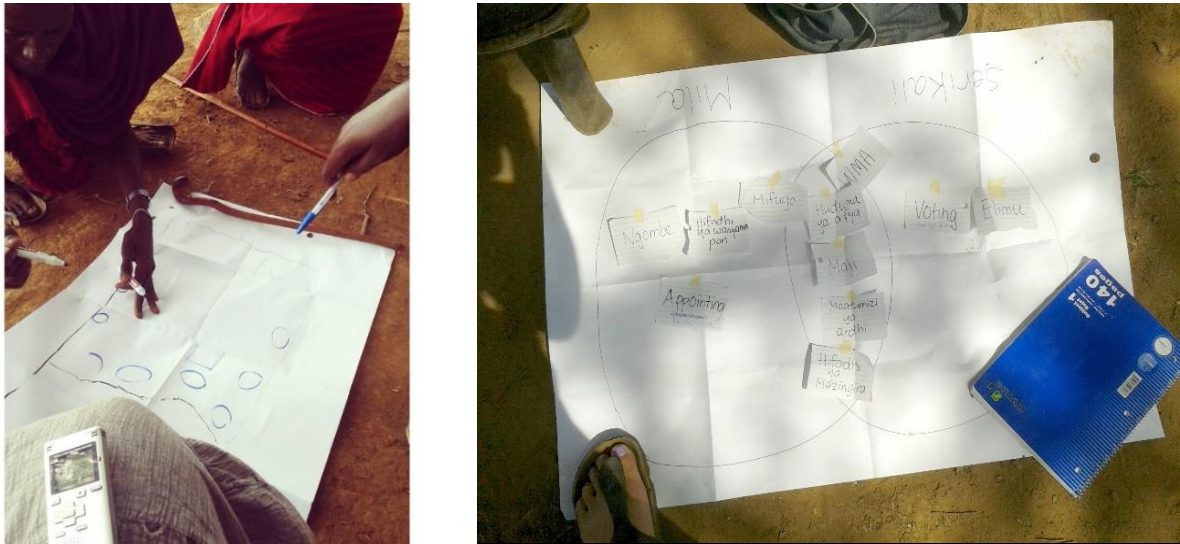
Including both of my trips to Tanzania I conducted a total of 47 semi-structured interviews (24 in 2013 and 23 in 2015) and three informal interviews, which were more impromptu conversations with previously interviewed respondents. Interviews were conducted primarily with Village leaders, NGO representatives who participated in Lake Natron WMA

activities, and CBO members and Village Council members who took part in creating land use plans (LUPs). Each interview was conducted with an interview protocol that listed questions specific pertaining to the role of each informant. These interview protocols or guides were followed loosely as I generally attempted to gain more understanding of my informants' responsibilities in the WMA, the expectations they had of the WMA and explanations of the activities in which they participated. All of the interviews were recorded and afterwards I would transcribe the interview with my research assistant. Later, I would code and organize these interviews according to the dominant topics that emerged.

Village officials would generally be interviewed first and through this connection I used the snowball approach to identify and carry out further interviews with other individuals or groups. Ideally, interviews were conducted in a controlled setting, like in a neutral building or in the truck, but most times interviews took place in homesteads. In these cases there would generally be many distractions like animals, children or the wind, which would make recording or focusing on the interview difficult.

I also conducted seven focus group discussions: one with a group of Maasai elders, and two separate discussions with two groups of men and two groups of women in the village of Ranch. Generally, my research assistant and I would identify the head of the household, and through him recruit three or four other participants. Focus group discussions followed a semi-structured format using a list of topics related to land use, conservation and Maasai culture. Participatory activities were also carried out in some of the focus groups in order to provide another avenue through which people could share their knowledge, which would sometimes generate insights into topics I did not fully understand. These activities included knowledge mapping of village land-use areas, ranking exercises of important leadership qualities and mental mapping with Venn diagrams in which different resources were discussed and placed either under governmental or traditional control (see Figure 3.2). Semi-structured approaches to both interviews and focus groups were helpful as they allowed for flexibility in case a new theme or topic emerged that I realized was significant to my research. Finally, I reviewed and analyzed relevant secondary data, including existing legislature, government policies, land-use plans and resource management zone plans.

Figure 3.2 Participatory methods: knowledge mapping and mental mapping



There were several ethical issues that I had to address throughout my research. First of all, it was important to inform my informants about how I would use the information they gave me and assure them that their identities would remain anonymous in the written records of my research, unless otherwise stated. Oral informed consent was obtained before each of my interviews or focus group discussions. After each interview I would ask the informant if he/she had any questions about the interview or for myself, providing them with another opportunity to feel comfortable with the purpose and intent of my research.

Another issue that I encountered had to do with the financial compensation of my research participants. As I was being hosted by SM-Tz and represented them to some degree, I felt it necessary to follow the organization's ethical research standards which included providing compensation for interview and focus group participants, as there is an expectation of this for participating in research activities in Tanzania. Initially, I started by providing monetary compensation as suggested by SM-Tz, but later I realized many of my participants were viewing my research as related to the work of SM-Tz and not as my own independent project. While it became even more important to be clear about the purpose and intent of my research, I also chose to differentiate my form of compensation by offering participants phone credit. If the participant did not have a phone (which was rarely the case), I would compensate with bags of sugar and tea.

In addition to the limitations faced generally in qualitative research, some additional challenges should be mentioned. As explained earlier, due to my limited ability to speak Swahili and Maa, I relied on a full-time research assistant throughout the extent of my research. Although I have full confidence in my assistant's translating abilities, I am aware that subtle meanings and cultural references could have been lost in translation. Also, due to time limitations I was not able to visit all 32 member villages of the WMA, meaning this study is not reflective of all the communities involved. Lastly, while participatory methods are helpful in creating discussion among focus group participants, I recognize these methods were mainly conducted in one village among a small sample of my informants, which limits the extent to which I can generalize findings.

ii. Research area

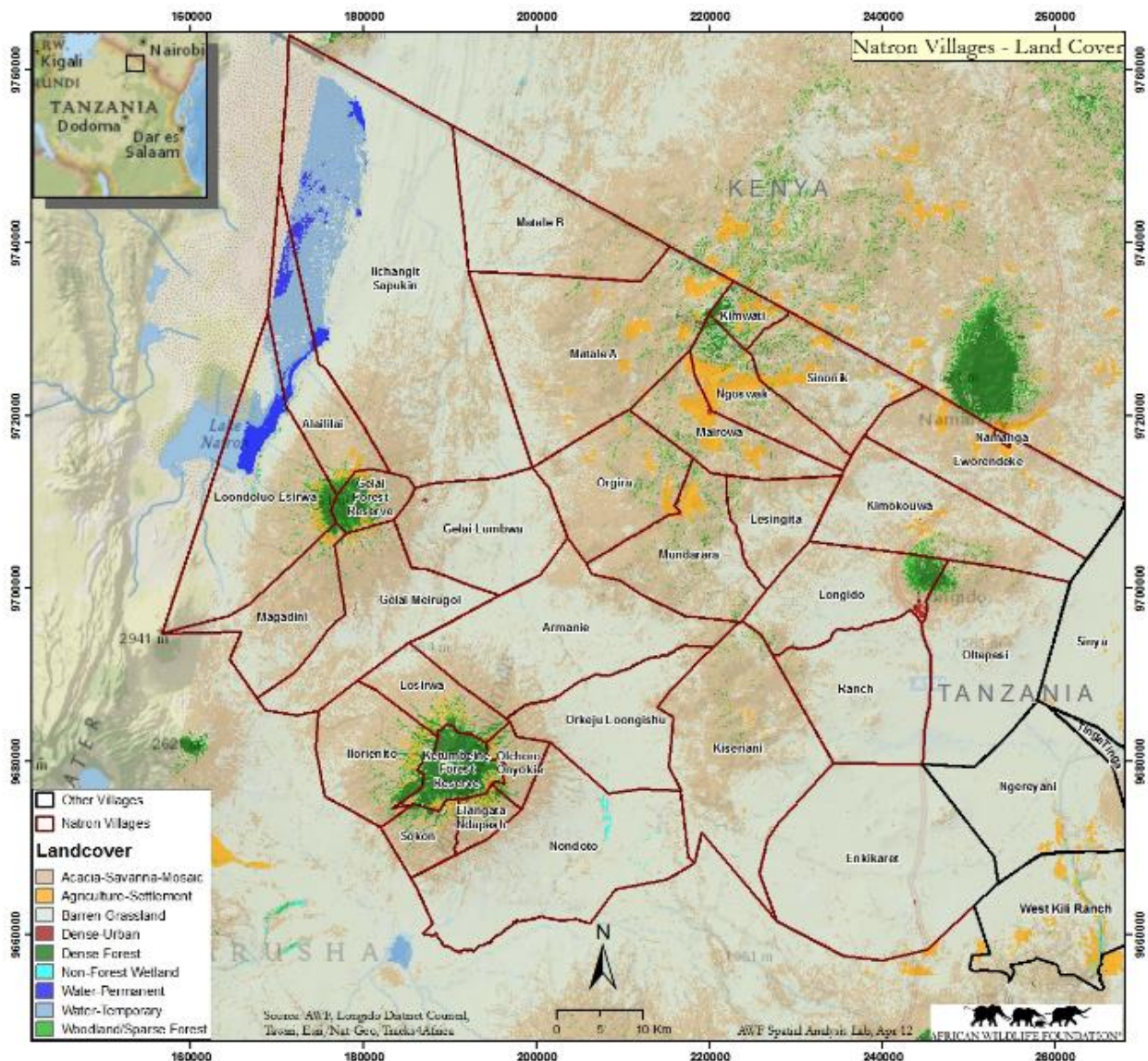
The Lake Natron WMA is situated in Longido District in the Arusha Region of northern Tanzania. While this area is mostly comprised of arid rangelands, with low levels of rainfall (300-600 mm), and is relatively undeveloped in terms of roads, infrastructure, markets and education (Homewood et al. 2009: 217), it hosts much of Africa's richest biodiversity and well-known flora and fauna (Lake Natron CBO 2014). Longido District is bounded by some of the best-known conservation areas of East Africa, which includes Ngorongoro Crater to the west, Kilimanjaro and Arusha National Parks to the east and south respectively, and the Amboseli National Reserve just across the Kenyan border to the north. It is also bordered by Lake Natron to the west, which is an extremely important breeding ground for the endangered population of Lesser Flamingos. Identified as one of the most significant conservation areas in Tanzania, the area of the Lake Natron WMA has maintained a long history of consumptive and non-consumptive tourism and currently hosts five international tourist hunting companies⁵ (Trench et al. 2009; Lake Natron CBO 2014).

Currently, the Lake Natron WMA comprises 32 villages of Longido District, making it one of the largest WMAs in Tanzania (see Figure 3.3). This WMA is currently under the governance of a Community Based Organization (CBO) – a body of elected Village members – and is in its final phase of obtaining wildlife user rights (Lake Natron CBO 2014). According to

⁵ Wengert Windrose Safaris Tanzania Ltd., Michel Mantheakis Safaris Ltd., Green Mile Safari, Muhesi Safaris Ltd. and Kilombero North Safaris Ltd.

the 1999 Village Land Act, land use is controlled by the Village government, but as the District is also classified as a game-controlled area (GCA) all hunting of wildlife in the area is banned unless the central Wildlife Division issues a hunting license. Furthermore, until the Lake Natron CBO receives WMA user rights, the government continues to receive most wildlife-based tourism revenue (Homewood et al. 2009: 219).

Figure 3.3 The Lake Natron WMA Villages



(Lake Natron Resource Management Zone Plan (RMZP) 2014)

The Lake Natron WMA also sits in 'Maasailand', a 150,000 km² expanse of rangeland which straddles the Kenya/Tanzania border. In the pre-colonial period, Maasai-dominated lands were largely managed as common property, with access governed primarily through social networks of section, location, clan, kin and peer group friendships. However, during the colonial period large areas of these lands were alienated for settlers and for protected areas, radically impacting pastoral livelihoods and land use. In many cases, the Maasai continue to find themselves being excluded from resources that are central to their livelihoods and losing rights to the lands they live on (Homewood et al. 2009: 1-6). In Longido District, the majority of the population are Maasai, and more specifically the Ilkisongo Maasai, who represent the largest geographical section in Maasailand. In a contemporary context, Maasai are becoming more sedentary as they diversify their livelihoods to also include non-livestock related means of income, but in general, most Maasai in this area still practice pastoralism and rely on herd mobility in order to cope with unpredictable rainfall, periodic drought and disease. Social organization among the Maasai is based on marriage and family relationships, territory, and the age-set organization (ibid: 217).

Longido Town, the most developed settlement area in the region, sits alongside the main highway road that extends from Arusha to Namanga on the Tanzanian/Kenyan border. Other villages along the main road are easily accessible, while the rest of the villages have fair to poor infrastructure depending on seasonal factors. Except for Longido Town, villages in Longido District have very basic facilities (e.g. an elementary school, a dispensary and a Village Office) and no electricity. Village land is demarcated and managed by the Village Council on behalf, and subject to the approval, of the Village Assembly, which is made up of all village residents appearing over the age of 18.

Chapter IV: Implementing Devolution in the Lake Natron WMA

“Rather than be given orders and the Ministry use or have all power or all authority, now the community is being given authority to conserve, utilize and manage natural resources in an area” (CBO member, 10-09-13).

Sitting on a small wooden stool inside a dark cool hut, I swatted flies away from the hot *chai* in my tin mug as my research assistant chatted with three young Maasai men we discovered were related either as brothers or as patrilineal cousins. These men were residents of Ranch⁶, a small village that consisted of a small elementary school building, a church left behind by missionaries, and no more than a dozen *boma* homesteads scattered amongst savannah rangelands. Still swatting flies away, I asked the men if they ever had problems with wildlife in their village and a man garbed in red traditional *shukas* and a red baseball cap explained that just the day before hyenas had killed some of their cows, and he had also received calls from neighbouring households that wild dogs had been disturbing and eating the goats. I asked what they do when this happens and he explained that generally there is not much that can be done, because the animals run away after they kill and eat their livestock, making it difficult to find them. He continued on, explaining that Maasai have lived with wild animals for a long time and it is normal to them that wild dogs or lions kill their livestock or that elephants destroy their bore holes. But they don't necessarily see the wildlife as a big problem, because they are used to the animals doing these things. When asked whose responsibility it was to protect the wildlife, he said the following,

“We conserve the trees and the forest around us. But on the part of wildlife it is not our concern, because it is not in our hands, it is the responsibility of the government's. But if it were in our hands then we could protect the wildlife too”
(translated from Maa, 11-06-15).

⁶ The village of Ranch was chosen as a study site as it was discovered that there was an ongoing conflict between the Ranch and Orobomba Village Assemblies regarding the placement of their village borders. According to a resident of Orobomba, in 2009, several households chose not to accept the village boundaries as it would place them under the jurisdiction of Village Chairman they did not agree with. This ended up creating a hostile environment among villagers and delayed Orobomba's ability to proceed with creating their Village LUP for the WMA (interview in English, 30-09-13). Today, conflict appears to be resolved between the two villages and both have completed their Village LUPs (personal communication with a CBO member, 29-05-15).

This diverging view between forest and wildlife resources is said to be reflective of the ways exclusionary conservation approaches have been transforming the ways Maasai culturally frame their relationship with nature (Goldman 2003: 851). In the past, and even today, the Maasai have been perceived as “custodians of wildlife”, because “the people who conserve the environment, who conserve the wildlife, are the pastoral community, especially the Maasai. That’s why now you can find wildlife in their areas” (AWF employee, interview in English 21-05-15). However, with the increasing proliferation of wildlife conservation areas throughout Maasailand, traditional land-use systems of the Maasai are being disrupted, and in some cases, Maasai communities are even facing eviction and alienation from their traditional lands. As a result of these experiences, the Maasai have begun to perceive wildlife as being the “animals of the government” and view their conservation to be in conflict with their pastoral interests (ibid: 852).

A month later I had a very different conversation about wildlife with a Maasai man who had been elected as one of his village’s three elected community-based organization (CBO) members. As an elected CBO member, his current role at the time was to be “an eye of the community” and to share any information he learned about the Lake Natron WMA with his fellow village members. Once the WMA is official and operating, he will be responsible for managing the WMA on behalf of his village. I proceeded to ask him if he could explain what the WMA actually was and after careful consideration he said,

“The WMA is about wildlife. Before the wildlife were under somebody else, but now they will be under the WMA. With the WMA, now people in villages will be benefiting from the wildlife and from the forests. They will be benefiting because they will get money to pay for school fees and for community development issues. We were told that if we get this WMA, the wildlife will be like our cattle (*ore igwezi neeku snnje ngishu*); we will stay with them peacefully and taking care of them will be for our benefit because we will get money for school fees” (CBO member, translated from Maa, 07-07-15).

This comment surprised me a little, because instead of viewing wildlife as an issue of the government like the previous man, my informant was framing wildlife as a resource that would directly benefit his own community. Furthermore, he viewed the management of wildlife as

being on par with livestock keeping, which is not only the predominant economic activity of the Maasai, but is essentially “what the Maasai live for” (Maasai resident from Olkejuoongishu, 30-10-13). The contrasting views on wildlife between the two men I spoke with may have very well come down to different levels of engagement with the WMA. Unlike the second man who had been involved in WMA related activities, the first man had very little connection to the WMA and may have even been excluded from different meetings or activities that took place. Furthermore, the second man was more aware of the potential benefits that could be derived from the WMA, and conversely, more reassured that his livelihood would not be harmed by it.

As explained to me by a Division Officer, “before the WMA existed, people only saw wildlife as something the government dealt with and had no benefit to them. However, now they have been given authority as a community to manage the wildlife for their benefit and they are now able to trust that the wildlife will be managed and supervised for their benefit” (interview in English, 10-12-13). While this comment might be expected from a government authority and may not reflect the reality to which people actually believe that wildlife are being managed for their benefit, it does shed light on the two men’s disparate views on wildlife as potentially being a result of different levels of engagement in the implementation of the Lake Natron WMA. In turn, the following chapter seeks to investigate the ways Maasai communities have been included in making decisions regarding WMA establishment and what these processes reveal about the pursuit of devolution in wildlife management.

I. Understanding differences in meaning

As explained in the previous chapter, the establishment of a WMA involves several complex procedures. In the case of the proposed Lake Natron WMA, these processes began in 2011 with promotional meetings to encourage villages to join the WMA. During this phase, the Village Chairman was primarily responsible for notifying villagers of the upcoming Village Assembly meeting. In some villages, announcements were posted in writing on a board outside the Village office, but generally news traveled by word of mouth from household to household. If the village had access to a mobile network and electricity or solar power, some individuals and households were reached by calling or text messaging. Attendance at these promotional meetings would vary depending on its timing in relation to household responsibilities (e.g. women have to fetch water) and to the current season, as during the dry season most young men would be gone with their herds.

In order for a decision to be approved at a Village Assembly meeting there is a required quorum, or a minimum number of adult village members, that must be present for the proceedings. When interviewed Village Chairmen and Council members were asked what percentage was needed for WMA approval, responses varied between attendance of at least 50% of the adult village population to 70% and 80%. This is most likely because the Local Government (District Authorities) Act (1982: 34) requires that at least 50% of village members attend “ordinary meetings” (which are held every three months) to meet quorum, while at least two-thirds of the members are required for “special meetings”. Thus, a lack of understanding as to whether meetings regarding WMA issues might be “ordinary” or “special” may have led to the mixed responses. Beyond this confusion, there was also the issue that several villages like Ngoswak had never conducted a census, meaning the village population and necessary quorum was only ever estimated. However, the most concerning issue with decision-making at the village level was expressed by one Village Chairman who explained that “nowadays we don’t even look at the quorum, because you can call for a meeting and the exact number doesn’t come. So you call the first day, the second day, the third day, and don’t reach the quorum that is needed, so we have to do the meeting even if we don’t reach the quorum” (translated from Maa, 26-09-13). These findings reveal concern in regards to the extent that the wider village population was actually included in and educated on issues related to WMA implementation, calling into question the ability of the WMA governance structure in devolving decision-making powers to the local level.

For those who were able to attend the village meeting, they were educated on the structure of the WMA, the importance of its establishment and the cost-benefits of conserving wildlife resources by facilitators from the African Wildlife Foundation (AWF)⁷ and government representatives (i.e. the Wildlife Division and District level officials). If the majority of meeting attendees expressed agreement to proceed, the AWF would then provide further training and financial support as the member villages proceeded in developing land-use and zoning plans, and as they reorganized themselves into a community-based organization (CBO) of elected

⁷ The AWF’s main role is to help the government by facilitating the whole WMA establishment process and “to make sure [the process] is more participatory” (AWF employee, 21-05-15). This role, however, is more complicated in practice as the AWF’s priorities have been primarily directed to the conservation of wildlife, while a number of complaints suggest that the AWF treats rural communities in unfair and unethical ways (Igoe & Croucher 2007).

community representatives that are authorized to manage the WMA when it is officially registered (Nelson 2007).

In my interviews with various Village Chairmen in Longido District it became apparent that despite the positive promotion of WMA establishment and related benefits, WMA acceptance was not immediate nor was it an uncontested issue. It seems that after the AWF and government representatives promoted WMA membership in a village, rumours would follow that agreeing to join the WMA would put access to their grazing lands at risk. To this, several villagers outright refused to join the WMA. One Village Chairman explained that people “didn’t want their land to be like in Ngorongoro”, because they had heard that Maasai villages there were being displaced and losing access to their grazing lands. The people in his village were “worried that they were being lied to about the concept [of the WMA] and that [the government/investors] would just take their land for their own benefit and leave them without anything” (interview, 11-09-13).

To explain briefly, over the past two decades Maasai residents in the Ngorongoro Conservation Area, and more specifically in the Loliondo Game Controlled Area (GCA)⁸, have faced tense and hostile relations with a United Arab Emirates luxury hunting company called the Ortello Business Corporation (OBC) known to have a close relationship with government elites that is seen as controversial. In 2007, the government encouraged the OBC to renew its hunting contract with the villages in Loliondo, as the company has been an important source of revenue for the central government⁹. The contract was revised to include stipulations which prohibited the Maasai from bringing their livestock into the GCA while the OBC was conducting its hunting activities. Although Loliondo leaders objected to these changes and expressed fear that the OBC would interfere with their grazing practices, all villages except for one agreed to sign the contract, assuming the revised restrictions would not be strictly enforced (Gardner 2012: 391).

Although having legal jurisdiction over the land according to the 1999 Land Act, the central government burned down around 200 Maasai huts and evicted more than 3,000 Maasai and tens of thousands more cattle from eight villages that bordered the Serengeti national park in July 2009. Government officials blamed the Maasai for overgrazing the land and justified their

⁸ Loliondo borders the Serengeti National Park and the Ngorongoro Conservation Area, and is considered one of the most important sites for tourism development in Tanzania (Gardner 2012: 378).

⁹ The OBC pays the central government US\$560,000 annually (Gardner 2012: 391).

removal as a means of protecting the area for conservation purposes and for the legal hunting purposes of the OBC. This conflict resulted in international media attention, which pressured the Tanzanian government to pull back and re-evaluate its approach. However, conflicts in this area persist and cases of further evictions are still being reported (Gardner 2012: 393). Despite the significant role played by the investors, these evictions were regarded by the Maasai as an effort by the government to dominate them by controlling their land. Loliondo residents framed their struggle for land rights in terms of local versus national rights, and today they still regard any state institution involved in regulating conservation, tourism or hunting as a hostile agent towards pastoralism and pastoralist culture (ibid: 382).

Beyond this case, other Maasai communities have also faced marginalization as, due to their pastoral practices, they have been excluded from National Parks, the Manyara Ranch and other community-based conservation projects, including the Mbomipa WMA (Goldman 2003; Homewood et al. 2009; Nelson et al. 2009; Humphries 2012). Comments like the following revealed deep concern about the potential of the Lake Natron WMA being yet another state-led project that would diminish or exclude pastoral land use:

“Some are saying that there is a hidden agenda trying to deprive the land from the indigenous people, as a way of inviting the investors to come and own the land...but we hope our government won’t allow such a threat to the people: that the land will be deprived by being owned by foreign people...I’m sure you understand the history of Africa, because even the missionaries, even the explorers, used cunning ways to colonize our African countries by signing treaties, eh, cunning treaties. Eventually our land was taken by the colonial people, but we don’t expect this kind of thing to be repeating, as in to try to deprive our land to be taken by the foreign people” (Village Chairman, interview in English, 25-10-13).

Throughout my conversations and interviews with other locals, it was evident that people were aware of this history of dispossession and in part it reflects why some people may have viewed joining the WMA as yet another potential “cunning way” for the state or foreign actors to take away their land. Despite these concerns, all 32 villages that were approached eventually agreed to join the WMA and to proceed with all implementation requirements. Again, take into mind

that quorum rules may have been disregarded and final decisions agreeing to proceed with WMA implementation may have only been made by small groups of elite village members (i.e. Village government authorities), thus the level of democratic decision-making in WMA implementation should be put into question. Before addressing this issue, however, it is important to ask what may have convinced local actors to join the WMA and whether or not they had any option of refusing to do so.

In my discussions with Village Chairmen, Village Council members and CBO members, the same two reasons for joining the WMA were reiterated again and again: power and money. First of all, participants claimed that the WMA would give their village *mamlaka* (authority in Swahili) over the wildlife on their land. In turn, this authority would allow their village to accrue revenue from wildlife through future tourism ventures (e.g. hunting or photography tourism), instead of the government. It was understood by most that this revenue would be utilized by the village to fund community development projects, like building clinics or providing school sponsorships for children. As explained by a CBO member,

“According to what I have been taught, the WMA is the way we can conserve wildlife. Even though we were conserving before, but now we have been given the power to protect the wildlife ourselves. This way we can accrue some benefits from the wildlife. Instead of the national level only benefiting, the WMAs will allow the villagers to benefit from the revenue that is accrued from the WMA” (translated from Maa, 12-05-15).

While very few of my informants understood that their village land at the time was classified as a Game Controlled Area (GCA), most discussed that joining the WMA would provide a means or a “way” of shifting authority and benefits of wildlife away from the government to their villages. In general, it appears that the perceived benefits of increased authority over natural resources and the financial revenue associated with them satisfied the groups of villagers who participated in the decision to join the WMA. However, for some it required a little more convincing.

In a discussion with three Maasai elders of the *Ilkmakaa* age-set from the village of Ranch it was made more clear to me that most of the resistance to the WMA resulted from an assumption that joining the WMA would result in the creation of a ‘conservation area’ that would only be used for the protection of wildlife, with livestock prohibited from grazing within it. Initially, these three elders had not wanted to join the WMA because of this concern, but they

had been reassured by government officials that this is not the way it would be, but that their livestock would be allowed to graze anywhere. Knowing this they felt more comfortable with the WMA and eventually agreed to join it (focus group discussion, 12-05-15). In other cases, informants from the villages of Oltepesi and Kiserian made a point of traveling with their livestock to the neighbouring Enduimet WMA in order to see for themselves how the WMA was impacting the villages. In the case of one Village Chairman, he explained that while he and his brother were grazing their livestock in the Enduimet WMA “we realized we were not being refused to graze our cattle and nobody was disturbing us...after realizing that we were not limited and our livestock can graze everywhere in Enduimet WMA, then we also accepted the WMA” (translated from Maa, 16-07-15).

The constant concern of grazing restrictions in ‘conservation areas’ led me to realize that as observed in other studies, my Maasai informants initially perceived ‘conservation’ as the protection of wildlife only. Furthermore, as a by-product of their experiences with fortress-style conservation, they also viewed wildlife conservation as being synonymous with the loss of grazing land (Goldman 2003; Gardner 2012). While these initial perceptions of conservation and wildlife were eventually mitigated among my informants, it is important to consider the extent to which these notions were influencing their perceptions of the WMA.

It was not until my second research trip in 2015 that my Swahili and Maa language abilities had developed enough for me to pick up on an issue that revealed much about my informants’ views on the WMA. For instance, when I would ask my informants if there was a specific ‘conservation area’ set aside on their village land for the WMA, the resounding majority would immediately respond by saying no such area existed. At the time I had been reading Lake Natron WMA documents which referred to different conservation area zones, so I found it difficult to comprehend why my informants who had been participating in WMA activities had never heard of them. Not understanding how this was being communicated, I discussed the issue with my research assistant and discovered that when he translated “conservation area” he would refer to *hifadhi ya wanyama pori* (wildlife conservation) in Swahili or to *eoiyi nitengaki te nkaraki ng’wesi* (an area set aside for wildlife) or *eowi ongwezi* (wildlife area)¹⁰ in Maa. So I finally realized that when I was asking if any areas had been set aside for ‘conservation’, my

¹⁰ Generally, more educated informants would speak in Swahili, while less educated informants would speak in Maa.

question was effectively being translated to ask if any areas had been set aside for wildlife only and why my informants were responding

“No, in Lake Natron WMA the whole area which is for WMA is also the area for domestic animals. Therefore, there is no any place of land that is maybe taken [just] for wild animals and the other one for domestic animals. The whole area is for both animals” (CBO member, interview in English, 11-05-15).

This was a response that I encountered over and over again with my informants. What I did not realize was that they were saying ‘conservation areas’ did not exist because such an area would entail restrictions or prohibitions of grazing. It is also why a Maasai resident of Longido Town suggested that

“Instead of saying WMA, because WMA means Wildlife Management Area, we have to say maybe, I don’t know, wild and domestic area, I don’t know, but we have to change because it is not exactly WMA, because we mix both domestic and wild animals in Longido, although there is no any law that allows that according to the natural resources. But we allow it” (interview in English, 09-06-15).

As can be seen, pre-existing notions of conservation and experiences of how conservation has actually been done, has led Maasai to associate ‘wildlife conservation’ as being synonymous with state power and the loss of grazing lands. In turn, these notions have influenced particular understandings of the purpose and structure of the WMA. Analyzing the discourse of my informants, it appears that local actors have interpreted the concept of the WMA as being detached from previous notions of strict wildlife protection, while promoting it as a new conservation strategy that recognizes Maasai grazing rights. In turn, the WMA is assumed to function alongside traditional management systems already in place, while also offering new avenues for locals to increase their control over wildlife and the financial benefits related to this resource. Considering this, the following sections will examine other ways local agents have participated in WMA decision-making processes and how these activities have reinforced the idea that local decision-making practices will be recognized and legitimized within the WMA.

II. Maasai participation in WMA land-use planning

After formally agreeing to proceed with the implementation of the Lake Natron WMA, all member villages are required to fulfill a range of prerequisite requirements including the development of participatory land use plans (LUPs), resource management zone plans (RMZPs), and the institution of by-laws, as a legal mechanism for enforcing land use and management plans. The development of LUPs for WMAs is meant to follow Tanzania's National Guidelines for participatory land-use management, which insist that "villagers participate fully in agenda setting, resource allocation and controlling the planning process" according to the local institutions and knowledge of communities implicated (NLUPC 1998: 4). District level actors involved in the process are only meant to guide and facilitate the idea of participatory land-use planning, so that when the Village LUP is implemented it reflects the community's needs and are better adapted to local conditions (ibid). As this section will reveal, although collaborative land-use planning is promoted as a mechanism that effectively devolves land use decision-making to local authorities, there are concerns that the mapping processes involved may re-establish state control over valuable resource zones.

In 2010, WMA implementation processes in Longido District began with the development of LUPs for each member village. In order to begin LUP activities, a committee of around 7-11 people would be elected or appointed from among the Village's 25 Council members. Most of these committees were gender-balanced to some degree¹¹. Once a committee was selected, seminars were facilitated by AWF and District LUP representatives and trained Village Land-Use Planning Committee (VLUPC) members on three main issues: the policies and rules that govern the land at the time, how land should be balanced according to its use, and how to place land use boundaries (personal communication with a Longido CSO employee, 05-09-13). After training, subsequent meetings were spent identifying village boundaries and zoning land according to particular uses (e.g. farming, settlement, grazing, and conservation).

Although LUPs were developed in relation to a pre-existing *ujamaa* village structure, it is important to realize that the zoning processes were being informed by customary Maasai natural

¹¹ Gender divisions according to my VLUPC informants were the following: *Mairowa*: 6 men and 5 women; *Ngoswak*: 4 men and 4 women; *Oltepesi*: 7 men and 3 women, *Matale A*: 4 men and 4 women, *Ranch*: 6 men and 1 woman.

resource management systems, thus resulting in hybrid land use zones. As explained by a Village Chairman who participated in the creation of his village's LUP,

“Before the AWF came with the concept of the LUP we were already dividing land. We set aside land for *engaroni* and *olopololi*, but these divisions are not documented. But when AWF came then they began their concept of documenting all the divisions of the land” (translated from Maa, 26-09-13).

To briefly explain, *engaron*, the noun form of *engaroni* (which was translated to me as “the day that animals will not take water”), are dry season grazing areas that are governed *de facto* at the village-level, usually by a group of customarily respected *wazee* or male elders. Refuge areas for newborn livestock (*olopololi*) and special feasting camps (*orpul*) are decided at a smaller scale, usually amongst elders from only a few boma households. These areas are managed according to informal rules understood in Maasai culture¹². For example, as explained to me by my research assistant, people will not go into grazing areas in the wrong season because they know that area was set aside by elders and their rules must be respected or else they might face misfortune or get cursed (personal communication, 16-05-15). While the boundaries of these different areas were never formally documented, it was common knowledge for all of my informants who were able to quickly point out or refer to specific areas of use through discussion.

Taking into consideration all of the available resources, LUP participants would zone village land into key areas like settlement, farming and grazing areas. Conservation areas that are to function as sites for photography or hunting tourism were also allocated for the WMA, but this will be discussed later on. Again, most of these divisions were already common knowledge among residents, but with the AWF and District resources and guidance, these zones were documented on maps and with GPS coordinates. Once the Village LUP was complete, the general village population would be called to a Village Assembly meeting where the VLUPC would explain how they went about making the LUP, which areas had been set aside and the coinciding by-laws within those areas. The village members would then discuss and vote if they approved the recommended LUP. VLUPC members were generally positive about their village's

¹² This resource management model is explained in more detail in *Conservation and Globalization: A study of the national parks and indigenous communities from East Africa to South Dakota* (Igoe 2004: 36-68).

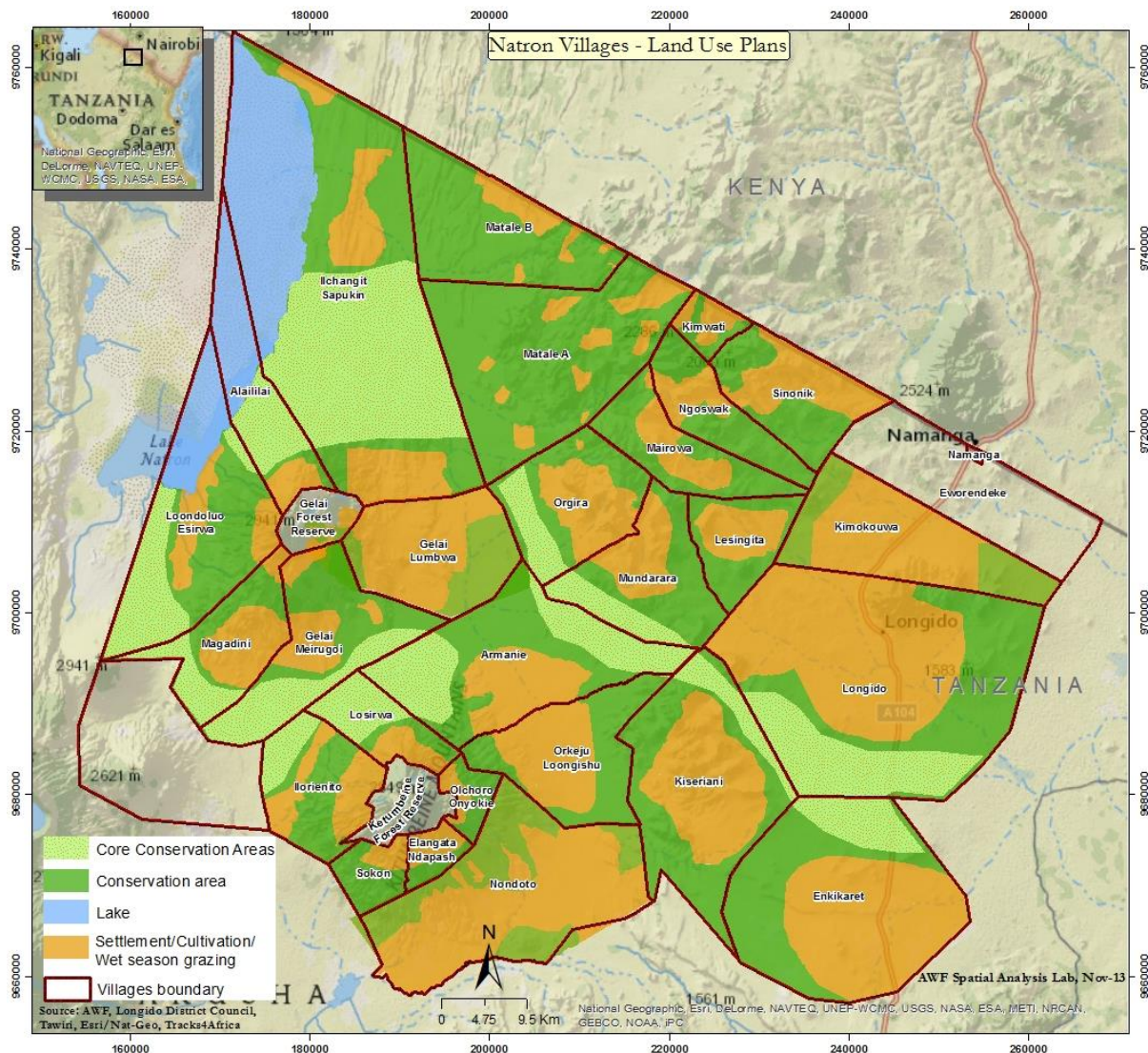
land-use planning process, expressing that they had not experienced any challenges and felt that their final LUP divisions reflected appropriate zones and uses of their land.

Now despite the seemingly participatory nature of the WMA LUP process, there are few issues that need to be considered. First of all, in some cases, VLUPC members who were interviewed had not known at the time of developing their LUP that they were participating in one of the steps required to join the WMA. According to one Village Chairman who participated in developing his village's LUP, "people thought [making a LUP] was a good idea because the process of demarcating village boundaries had been going on for a long time...they thought it was just for their benefit...without knowing it was one step working towards the creation of the WMA" (interview in English, 25-10-13). This was also the case for one woman, who explained that not only did she not realize creating a LUP was a required step in joining the WMA, but neither did most of her village members until after they had already approved the LUP (translated from Maa, 19-09-13). A VLUPC member from another village had a similar experience, mentioning he had "just heard of the WMA, but didn't know that the LUP was a way to get into it" and pointed out that "if we could have been involved in knowing that the LUP was a step towards the establishment of the WMA, then we could have chosen to agree or not to accept it" (translated from Maa, 18-09-13). These findings suggest an insufficient circulation of information and a lack of social connectedness between actors across various scales, including immediate social groups, village, and district levels. This had created incongruities in knowledge, meaning and values, and in part, indicates the age-old "democratic dilemma" in which "the people who are called upon to make reasoned choices may not be capable of doing so" due to a lack of full information (Lupia & McCubbins 1998: 1).

Secondly, while VLUPC members identified land by using their own customary territorial names, there is concern that the final LUP maps that were developed by the AWF do not reflect these customary measures. According to my informants, customary land use areas like *engaron*, *olopololi* and *orpul* were discussed and identified as key zones for their village's LUP. For example, in Ngoswak, the VLUPC identified customary borders and names of these areas directly on a standardized village map provided by the AWF, while in Ranch, the VLUPC drew their own village land-use map on a piece of plain paper, which was then given to the AWF and District facilitators. Peluso (2005: 8) argues that using customary names of areas is a method of "counter-mapping", and is essentially a political act that recalls traditional practices and claims

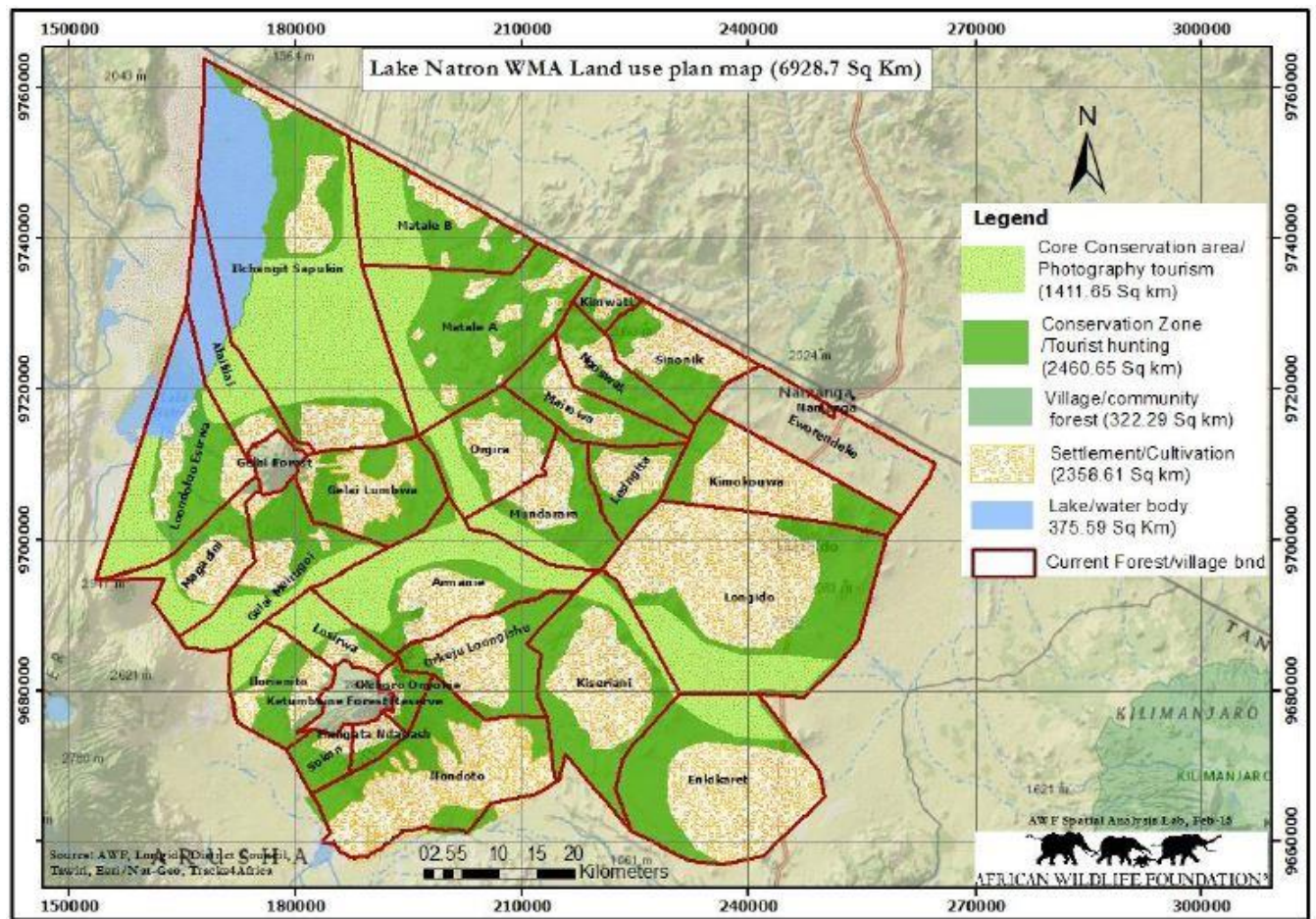
to the land in an attempt to counterbalance the state's control over resource management. Keeping this in mind I wanted to see to what extent these land-uses would be reflected in the final maps created for the WMA. Although I never got my hands on a completed Village LUP, I did get access to the 2013 and 2014 drafts of the Lake Natron WMA Resource Management Zone Plan (RMZP), each of which contains a draft LUP map of all WMA member villages. The 2013 version can be seen in Figure 4.1 and the 2014 version in Figure 4.2.

Figure 4.1: The Lake Natron WMA Land Use Plan Map (2013 draft)



(Lake Natron CBO 2013: 23)

Figure 4.2 The Lake Natron WMA LUP Map (2014 draft)



(Lake Natron CBO 2014: 8)

Looking at the 2014 version, villages are sectioned into four key zones: core conservation area/photography tourism; conservation zone/tourist hunting; village forest; and settlement/cultivation. Not only is there is no mention of customary land-use areas (e.g. *engaron*) in the map itself, but there is also no mention of them within the RMZP documents where each zone is briefly described. Recalling the previous section where I reported popular concerns that grazing prohibitions would be entailed by the creation of a ‘wildlife conservation area’, we saw VLUPC members using their own discursive strategy to make the WMA concept work for them. For example, while discussing if a conservation area had been designated in the LUP process, VLUPC participants would respond along the lines of “there is no specific area planned, but the area for conservation is the *engaron*, so cattle can graze there in the time of dry season”

(translated from Maa, 30-10-13). Or, “the conservation area is for the WMA and also for grazing purposes. There will be no separation between grazing and conservation areas. Everything will be intermingling – cattle and wildlife” (translated from Maa, 12-09-13). Repeatedly, conservation areas would not be identified without first acknowledging the existence of the *engaron* and the fact that the area was primarily meant for grazing purposes, while the conservation of wildlife or wildlife tourism were a side note. By speaking of the *engaron* throughout the LUP process, VLUPC members were proposing an alternative definition to ‘conservation areas’ construed as havens for wildlife alone, rather as being where “wildlife will be protected and livestock will graze together with them” (interview, translated from Maa, 30-10-13).

However, as we see in the map diagrams there is no acknowledgment of conservation areas coinciding with traditional grazing areas. While this does not seem promising, I did discover that in the villages of Mairowa and Kiserian¹³, signs were installed in order to demarcate different WMA land-use areas, including grazing areas (see Figure 4.1). The problem, however, is that these signs seem to have caused more confusion than clarification for village members. For example, in Kiserian, villagers ended up moving or blocking the signs because they could not read them and/or were not aware that they had anything to do with WMA land division. Furthermore, villagers found it difficult to know if the signs identified the center or the edges of different land-use areas, causing confusion, and ultimately disregard for the signs (personal communication with Village Chairman, 16-07-15). While these signs were placed as a result of counter-mapping and reflect land uses of the Maasai, there is an obvious disconnect between the ways a WMA map or sign reflects land boundaries versus actual village use.

¹³ According to most of my informants, the AWF has promised to give sign/beacons to demarcate land-use areas in other Lake Natron WMA villages, but as of August 2015 none of the villages have received them.

Figure 4.1 “Rainy season grazing area”



As explained by Hodgson & Schroeder, while counter-mapping may provide an avenue for locals to create alternative representations of land use practices, there can be a disconnect between mapping scales and the scales at which community property relations and tenure are actually managed. Furthermore, generated maps are usually imbued with complex underlying political issues between government and local resources actors, which complicates effective counter-mapping (2002: 81). To illustrate, as explained in many of my interviews, I discovered that when the recommended LUPs were being approved at Village Assembly meetings, most villages were never presented a physical map for approval. Instead, the VLUPC would just describe to village members where borders of different areas would end and because people were already familiar with these customary areas there was no need for a map to discuss the land divisions. While I realize it takes time to produce finalized LUP maps, it seems that even years after LUP maps had been prepared they were never returned back to the villages for approval. This could simply be a result of the mapping process being a complex and arduous task, but it is more likely due to a combination of unaware and uninformed Maasai village communities and

the AWF and District government officials who are more interested in creating conservation areas than fulfilling their role to report back to the villages. As can be seen, there is concern that ‘community’ mapping efforts may not counter the political authority of the central government, and perhaps begs the question as to whether or not it only serves as yet another method for central authorities to appropriate and recentralize power and resources away from rural/pastoral communities.

A final major concern with the WMA LUP maps is that the light green “core conservation areas” are zoned primarily for photography tourism purposes and in initial RMZP drafts these areas prohibit cattle grazing (Lake Natron RMZP 2013: 3; Lake Natron RMZP 2014: 9). So even though individual villages informally set aside areas for pastoral uses and assume that this is acknowledged in their village LUP maps, legitimate concerns have been raised among various NGO representatives and local actors already familiar with WMAs that grazing could potentially be prohibited where core conservation areas have been designated.

By asking several of my VLUPC informants to draw their village’s land divisions on a piece of paper or in the dirt with a stick, it was confirmed that most *engaron* overlapped with these light green core conservation areas. So even though collaborative mapping offered an avenue through which local Maasai actors were able to discursively define territory according to their pastoral land practices and claims, in the end the final maps appear to reflect the tools and language typically used by states to create simplified and legible forms of natural resource management. However, as these maps are still in draft form it is yet to be determined whether Maasai resource management systems will prove to be compatible with land uses defined by legal statutes used in WMA mapping. In the end, the concerns that these maps might be a means of restricting access to traditional grazing lands may actually be correct.

III. Negotiating the Lake Natron WMA

After agreeing to join the proposed WMA, member villages must reorganize and formally register themselves into a community-based organization (CBO) represented by elected community delegates, when registered, the CBO will become a legally recognized Authorized Association (AA) tasked with the management of the WMA. According to the 2013 WMA reference manual, the CBO is responsible for submitting an application for the establishment of the WMA to the Director of Wildlife, which must include the following:

- a) A certified copy of the minutes of the Village Assembly Meeting approving the formation of a WMA;
- b) A duly completed Information Data Sheet in the format set out in the Second Schedule;
- c) A certified copy of the certificate of incorporation of a Community Based Organization;
- d) A Land Use Plan of the village approved by the appropriate authorities;
- e) A draft General Management Plan and a Resource Management Zone Plan (MNRT 2013: 12)

Once this application is completed and approved, the CBO can then apply for authorization to manage the WMA as an AA. This application requires similar documents as to the previous, but must also include a copy of the CBO's Constitution, a sketch map of the proposed WMA, and a boundary description of the proposed WMA, its name and size. When the application is submitted, the Director of Wildlife is responsible for recommending authorized status of that CBO to the Minister. If accepted, the Minister issues a Certificate of Authorization to the CBO and gazettes the WMA. Once authorized, the AA can then apply for wildlife user rights which are granted by the Director, and in turn give the AA authority to enter into investment agreements with investors for the purpose of utilizing wildlife resources in the WMA (ibid: 23-24). As the Lake Natron WMA is currently pending approval for its authorized status and wildlife user rights at the time of writing, the rest of this section will refer to the CBO members and not the AA.

Just as democratic institutions require the election of delegates or government representatives, WMAs require each member village to elect local representatives who will hold a CBO position for a period of five years. Each village generally elects or appoints three members, of whom at least one must be a woman, and all should have at least a Standard 7 education level¹⁴. The selection of CBO members for the Lake Natron WMA took place in 2012. Generally, the Village Council would be informed of the need to select CBO members and would respond by advertising the positions at a Village Assembly meeting or by word of mouth. Some village members actively voiced their interest in the CBO position, while others were simply recommended by respected elders as having good enough standing in the community and

¹⁴ In Tanzania, the general education structure is two years of pre-primary education, seven years of primary education (i.e. Standard I-VII) and four to six years of secondary education (i.e. Form 1-6).

adequate education to take the position. Usually a vote would be held at a Village Assembly meeting to determine the final CBO members, accomplished by village members lowering their heads and raising their hands when the candidate they preferred was mentioned.

In my interviews I spoke to several CBO members that had been appointed for the position, even though they had not expressed any interest in it. As explained by a female CBO member, even if you did not ask for a position but are appointed to it, “you can’t refuse a position, because if you are chosen that means you are trusted and you must then take the responsibility of the position that was given to you” (interview, translated from Maa, 15-05-15). In Maasai culture, the appointment of leaders through debate, dialogue and consensus-building is a common practice, while voting is a more recently adopted decision-making process. As a result, the selection methods of CBO members varied across WMA member villages. In Ranch, appointing was the primary method used to select CBO members, because voting was believed to result in conflict among decision-makers and no one opposed those who were appointed. In Oltepesi, there were disagreements as to whom should be selected because the male elders said they had no time to vote and wanted to quickly pass their recommended final decisions, however, many village members disagreed with this method and in the end a vote was conducted. Whereas in Matale B, voting was assumed to be the method of selection so after a number of candidates had been recommended by the Village Assembly the final CBO members were chosen by vote. A leader from this village argued that voting was better because then people “have the right to choose someone they like, rather than just appointing someone people don’t like” (translated from Maa, 09-07-15).

It is hard to say which of these methods is more ‘democratic’, as instances of clientelism are known to take place in campaigns and elections at the village level (personal communication with CBO member, 20-06-15). While further inquiry is needed before it can be said to what extent these processes reveal representative and democratic selection of CBO members, suffice it to say that decision-making practices in the Lake Natron WMA space are manifesting in hybrid forms. In other words, the establishment of WMAs has provided new opportunities for citizens to be consulted and included in discussions and decisions that have historically been dominated by the state. While hybrid forms of environmental governance are assumed to be better at achieving conservation goals than more conventional government-centered ones (Armitage et al. 2012:

247), the challenges resulting throughout WMA implementation reveal that shifting power from the state to local level is much more complicated in practice.

In terms of gender, each village was required to select at least one female CBO member. In the past, Maasai women were involved in political issues to varying degrees, but, throughout colonization and missionization periods, power has generally been consolidated away from them to men (Hodgson 2001; Hodgson 2005). As mentioned by a Village Chairman, “normally in Maasailand there is no gender equality, men still regard women as children. They don’t involve them in making decisions. But this [WMA process] was a bit different, so women were fully involved” (interview in English, 25-10-13). Theoretically, the design of WMAs involves policies and laws that include aspects of gender mainstreaming, and in my observation CBO representatives of both genders generally spoke of how women have been involved in WMA related decision-making processes. One woman explained to me that “in the past we were not involved, but nowadays we have actually been participating” (translated from Maa, 19-09-13), while another female CBO member suggested that women are given a voice, but some women will not use that voice because “they still have that behaviour of acting in the past when men treated them as children and they did not have that kind of power” (translated from Maa, 15-05-15).

A main area of difference between male and female CBO members was their respective level of interest in protecting the forest and tree resources. In part, this has to do with Maasai gender roles and responsibilities in the homestead, as women are required to fetch firewood and water and to build boma huts out of branches and a dung concoction. Also, in order to benefit from the cash economy, Maasai women have increasingly started to cut down trees to make charcoal and firewood that can be sold as another means of income. Thus, when speaking to female CBO members, they were more aware of these issues and to them the WMA was not only a means of conserving and benefiting from wildlife, but also required their participation in protecting trees. While the degree to which women have actively participated or will participate in the management of the WMA is uncertain, it is clear that they have at least been invited into the political space of the WMA where potentially they can benefit from opportunities to affect its governance.

Amongst the CBO members I interviewed most candidates had the required education level of Standard 7, although abilities to read and write in Swahili were usually low. There were

a number of members who had no educational background and could not read or write, and even found it difficult communicating in Swahili. This is a limiting factor as most WMA documents are only available in English or Swahili, and usually documents would not be translated or read in full at meetings. Another observation of concern is related to elite capture, as CBO positions were usually given to village members who had some affiliation to village level government actors. For example, several female CBO members were either married or related to a Village Council member.

In 2012, all 96 elected CBO members were responsible for drafting a Constitution, which describes the qualifications for membership, lays out the roles and responsibilities of different CBO organs, and provides a description of the proposed WMA, along with a number of other details¹⁵. According to one CBO member, the initial Lake Natron WMA Constitution “was exactly the same as the Enduiment [WMA] Constitution; it was just copy and paste” (translated from Swahili/Maa, 19-09-13). In effect, the Lake Natron CBO members were given responsibilities on one of seven different committees which include Planning and Finance, Security and Peace, Education, Environment and Tourism, Conflict Resolution, Respect, and a General committee on which the CBO Chairperson, Secretary and Treasurer sit. While most CBO members were just appointed to different committees, the board members held campaigns and had to be elected in an official vote amongst all CBO members.

While most sections of the Constitution were left as they were in the draft, there were two issues that were immediately addressed by CBO members. First of all, according to the draft, CBO members could not be employed during their membership, which was unfeasible for several members at the time. Secondly, there was a section in the Constitution that mentioned that livestock would not be allowed to graze in WMA conservation areas. This raised a lot of complaints and disconcertment among the CBO members until a Member of Parliament (MP) suggested that they should write in the Constitution that all grazing lands should be a WMA area, and in effect there would be no separation of wildlife and livestock (personal communication with CBO member, 30-10-13). The AWF and District actors reassured CBO members that both of these sections would be corrected and revised, and as explained by one CBO member, “this WMA may look different because the community said that they cannot separate wild animal and

¹⁵ Other details include a statement of CBO objectives, the names of participating Villages/Districts, details of office bearers, accountability/relationships of the CBO to the village, financial management, methods of solving conflicts, code of conduct, and registration requirements (MNRT 2013: 18).

domestic animal. They believe that all of the animals being together is for their benefit, so all the pasture land for cattle is also the land for the WMA, and they put this in the Constitution” (interview in English, 10-09-13).

Following the drafting of the Constitution, CBO members were responsible for developing the Lake Natron WMA resource management zone plan (RMZP), which is “prepared in a participatory process” involving multiple stakeholders from Village, District and National levels, along with NGO actors and tourism investors (Lake Natron CBO 2014: ii). The preparation of the RMZP was guided by several policies, including the revised 2007 Wildlife Policy, WMA regulations and the 2009 Wildlife Conservation Act, and accordingly its purpose was to set out the management objectives and targets of the WMA for the next five years. Three key stakeholder meetings were facilitated in 2013 to develop the Lake Natron WMA RMZP, and, while I was not able to attend these meetings myself, I learned much about them through ongoing personal communication with my research assistant who was invited to participate in the meetings, along with Corey Wright, a colleague of mine.

According to my colleagues, an initial meeting with CBO members was held in Longido Town on September 7th 2013, where a preliminary draft of the RMZP was compiled. Again, the issue of grazing was brought up and again CBO members were reassured by government officials that there would be no separation of livestock and wildlife; in other words, grazing would not be prohibited in the WMA. At the end of the month on September 30th, all key stakeholders met to discuss the first draft of the RMZP. While no actual copies of the document were distributed to participants, which brings up concerns related to the opacity of the state, a PowerPoint was used to show sections of it. According to personal communication with Wright, during this meeting community representatives confronted hunting operators for exploiting their communities and colluding with the government, revealing their wariness about entering into future contract agreements when the WMA becomes operational. These conflicts again arose at the following stakeholder meeting that was held on December 3rd, 2013, where yet another RMZP draft revealed the same concept of a “core conservation area” (see Figures 4.1 and 4.2) which continued to threaten cattle grazing prohibitions. (It is important to note that the RMZP document to date has never been disseminated to the public and has only ever been made available in English). Again, negotiations with government officials led to a consensus that the core conservation idea would be removed from the RMZP. Two years later in May, 2015, I

returned to the Longido District and discovered that the CBO had just submitted all necessary documents, including the RMZP, to the Wildlife Division and were awaiting approval for wildlife user rights. However, by June the application had been rejected and a new RMZP had to be drafted. Although it is clear that a main interest of the CBO and the wider village community is to protect Maasai grazing rights, it still cannot be said whether the final submitted RMZP will represent the consensus struck at the December 2013 meeting or will reflect other stakeholder's interests.

Despite not knowing the final outcomes of these meetings, it is clear that certain patterns have emerged. First of all, even though local Maasai authorities (i.e. Village Council and CBO members) have been invited to negotiate the terms of the WMA Constitution, Village LUPs and the RMZP, there is obvious discrepancy between the official WMA documents and discourse being produced and used by government/AWF actors and what locals are planning themselves in terms of actual land-use practice. Secondly, when concerned community members manage to point out these discrepancies they are repeatedly assured that no restrictions on herding will be enforced and that they stand to benefit (financially and authoritatively) more than anything. As a result, local participation in WMA implementation continues to reinforce the popular discourse that WMAs are providing opportunities for citizens to make decisions that affect their ability to access, use and control natural resources that were previously monopolized by the state.

In practice, however, one could still question to what extent this form of wildlife management is actually more 'democratic' than in the past. Although a number of local Maasai actors are being invited to participate in and negotiate the terms of the WMA, the wider village populations appear to be much less engaged in WMA decision-making processes. Considering that democracy is "about accountability to the population as a whole, not just the inclusion of 'stakeholders' with interests" (Ribot 2004: 14), low levels of citizen engagement may make it difficult for both state and non-state WMA actors (e.g. the AWF, CBO/AA members) to be held accountable and responsive to the desires of wider Maasai society.

Furthermore, it has yet to be seen whether or not Maasai natural resource management systems will be able to co-exist with the prescribed structures of the WMA. As explained earlier, the central government (i.e. Wildlife Division) still has the final say as to whether or not the CBO/AA will receive wildlife user rights, and according to the WMA reference manual, "the Director may withdraw a User Right for good cause" on the basis of the WMA's RMZP (2013:

24). As user rights are granted on short term basis, the AA must reapply ever five years to get approval from the Director of Wildlife, which reveals the retention of power over wildlife management at the national level.

Beyond user rights and grazing issues, CBO members generally have very little knowledge about other policies related to WMA governance. For example, although all understood that joining the WMA meant future tourism revenues would be distributed to their villages, very few knew how revenue-sharing would be arranged. Some understood that their villages would be receiving a large percentage of revenue, but most were not aware that these percentages were different according to the type of tourism (i.e. photography versus hunting), and that this revenue would have to pass through a number of channels before reaching their villages. For example, if a safari company were to operate in the Lake Natron WMA, 65% of its revenue would be paid to the AA (via the Wildlife Division) and then distributed equally among all 32 member villages, while the other 35% would be absorbed by the central government. This revenue-sharing arrangement may result in an increase in economic gains to villages, but in the end powers are still retained, and seemingly recentralized, at regional and ministerial levels.

Now, assuming democratization relies on informed, reasoning actors, it must be considered that if local authorities do not have the information or the knowledge needed in order to influence decision-making, then it needs to be questioned whether or not decentralization through WMAs is truly devolving natural resource authority to locals in a democratic fashion. For example, throughout WMA promotion to the general village population, information on WMA policy and structure was shared on a 'need to know' basis and most of my informants only retained the most basic of information required to make informed decisions. As such, ambiguous and vague policy prescriptions have resulted in inconsistent knowledge among WMA actors. Humphries (2012) suggests that information itself has become a resource within WMAs and its exchange is subject to the relations of patronage operating within. Thus, the control of information that should be accessible to all ends up restricting opportunities for the wider local community to engage in the WMA governance system, and this becomes a "form of institutional violence" as already existing systems of power are reinforced (ibid:183-184). In one conservation, a CBO member I knew was active in WMA activities disappointedly said, "I know a CBO who doesn't even know what the WMA is, we asked and he failed to even give a response, this is a big problem" (personal communication, 30-06-15). This reveals doubts about

the level of active citizenship and self-efficacy among locals considering their lack of engagement and concern with regard to WMA activities (i.e. beyond the issue of grazing), which presents possible concern regarding a disempowered or prostrate civil society that could lead to poor governance in the WMA.

It should be noted that in April 2015, a general CBO meeting was held where members were informed by the AWF representatives that the Lake Natron CBO body was too large, and was incurring high administration and establishment costs. For instance, every time the CBO need to meet, all 96 members require transportation and lodging compensation, which has become too costly for the AWF to fund. The suggestion then was to reduce the number of CBO members down to two per village. However, this idea was immediately criticized and rejected by the CBO members who argued this went against a participatory approach to WMA management and proposed leaving things as they were (personal communication, CBO member, 20-05-15). While the CBO members' interest in maintaining their structure is valid, there have been rumors that the AWF will soon be removing all financial support from the Lake Natron WMA. This means that, even if the CBO receives wildlife user rights and begins to accrue venue through business agreements, the CBO may not have access to the necessary funds needed to develop the initial infrastructure on which these future WMA businesses depend. In turn, this will make it more difficult for the CBO to undertake management tasks and could mean the WMA will struggle to generate sustainable revenue, which is a common issue for most WMAs throughout Tanzania.

Finally, there is concern that the government is currently delaying user right approval. A local who was employed by one of the hunting companies based in the Longido District said, "I think this is because the government are getting some money from the [hunting] companies and if the WMA is given authority, I mean the user right, the amount will reduce" (interview in English, 09-06-15). This idea was assumed by several of my informants, as they have been frustrated by the amount of time it has taken for the government to approve their user rights, believing this is because the government does not want to give up revenues they accrue from lucrative hunting contracts. While it is difficult to know the amount of truth in these claims it is clear that the state and hunting companies have quite a bit to lose when it comes to the devolution of wildlife management.

Throughout this chapter, WMA implementation processes have been seen to involve simultaneous decentralization and recentralization of wildlife management powers, suggesting that the structure of WMA policy may be limited in its ability to devolve all decision-making powers to local authorities. While a political space has emerged where local actors have been able to put forward their own interests in the set-up of the WMA, there are still several structural obstacles that could impede those interests. At this time it is difficult to say whether or not the approval of user rights will be sufficient for local actors to effectively manage and benefit from wildlife resources in the Lake Natron WMA. In turn, the question still remains:

“Is it us as villagers who have power of the WMA or is it the upper power from the government? If I am told that it is the Ministry of Natural Resources who has all the power and not us villagers, then it seems like we are doing nothing. But if we are the ones with all the power, then we can see there are some benefits” (translated from Swahili/Maa, CBO member, 19-09-13).

Chapter V: Conclusion

Over the last two decades, CBNRM approaches have been promoted across the world under the assumption that devolving natural resource management powers and benefits away from the state to local communities will result in more sustainable and equitable approaches for both environmental preservation and for local development. In Tanzania, the creation and management of WMAs has had varying degrees of success in terms of its ability to devolve power and benefits to local authorities and this reveals the need for more critical analysis. In the case of the Lake Natron WMA, the processes of establishing the WMA, extending over the last five years, have involved real efforts to engage local authorities in decision-making regarding the management of natural resources in Longido District, revealing an emerging space of participation. However, decentralization is technically still incomplete as the CBO has not yet received official user rights from the Wildlife Division and there are concerns that power is still being recentralized to the state level.

In the WMA promotion phase, efforts were made to educate the general village population about the purpose and benefits of joining a WMA, and to give them the choice of either accepting or refusing to become a member. A concern with this step is that the wider local population was only given information on a ‘need-to-know’ basis by state and NGO actors and final decisions to join the WMA have been made without full understanding regarding WMA structure and policies. This reflects poor diffuse of information to the general population as only a minor proportion of the village population may have ever participated in decision-making mechanisms or received any substantive information about what a WMA actually is and their responsibility in its management.

Furthermore, as explained in the previous chapter, some villagers were initially worried that joining the WMA would result in yet another state-led conservation project that would lead to their further dispossession of their traditional grazing lands. Government and NGO actors responded by continually reassuring Massai communities that WMA conservation areas would not prohibit grazing, and despite any written documentation of this promise it appears that locals have begun to conceptualize conservation areas as being inclusive of customary pastoral practices and claims. Throughout the land-use planning process, Village Council authorities were consulted and made responsible for creating their villages’ LUPs. By integrating traditional

divisions of land-use, both discursively and through counter-mapping, LUPs were assumed to reflect customary land-use practices and were approved by the village population. What many villagers did not realize was that these LUPs were used to inform the zoning of the WMA, although their final versions were never sent back to villages for approval. So, few were aware that their *engaron* (dry season grazing areas) were being classified under ‘core conservation areas’, which in earlier RMZP drafts prohibited cattle grazing. This lack of awareness and inadequate information circulation serves to disempower local actors and should be addressed in future LUP projects.

In terms of arranging management schemes in the Lake Natron WMA Constitution and RMZP, CBO members were key participants in their negotiation. It remains to be seen whether or not the CBO will serve as a representative body accountable to the wider Longido population, although its members do seem to be actively concerned with maintaining grazing practices within the WMA. The CBO also appears to be somewhat representative of women’s interests as well, as at least one woman is required to represent each village. However, traditional gender hierarchies still persist in Maasai culture and may limit the extent to which women will be able to effectively participate in WMA management. While CBO members have been continuously reassured that customary grazing practices will not be disturbed in WMA conservation areas, a consensus on this question with government agents has only been reached in informal terms, and it remains unclear whether or not it will be reflected in the documents that must be submitted and approved by the Director of Wildlife. Also, considering that the WMA governance structure relies on a final say from the Wildlife Division reveals ultimate retention of power at the central government level.

An interesting finding is revealed in the shift from pre-existing Maasai notions of wildlife being a neutral or non-beneficial resource to wildlife being increasingly viewed as a means through which village communities can obtain the power and economic benefits on which the state previously held a monopoly. This shift has significantly changed local perceptions, to the point that Maasai are beginning to view the conservation and management of wildlife as having the potential to be as lucrative as livestock production. This shift in attitude towards greater concern for the conservation of wildlife could be related to the emergence of new “neoliberal subjects” or “neoliberal environmentalities” (Fletcher 2010), whereby individuals respond to external incentive structures (e.g. financial benefits) created by the government that motivate

conservation-friendly behaviours. Further inquiry through future research should examine to what extent local Maasai conservation thinking and practice regarding wildlife is being impacted by their participation in WMA establishment and management.

It is hard to say what the future will bring for the Lake Natron WMA, but it is quite clear that inappropriate use of village land (according to Maasai interests) could fuel significant controversy between state and Maasai actors. Just looking next door to the Enduimet WMA it is already being revealed that the shift to a WMA structure has provoked contentious politics and “turbulence” between Maasai residents, the state and foreign hunting operators (Wright 2014). For instance, in 2014, the community issued an eviction notice to a hunting operator as they no longer wanted the company operating on its village lands, but the operator resisted by filing a legal case. These types of relations continue to fuel resentment within the community today and have motivated local actors to find avenues through which they can minimize trophy-hunting operations within their WMA. Wright argues that Lake Natron WMA community members may follow in Enduimet’s path and opt for photographic tourism operators, rather than trophy hunting, as hunting safari companies have histories of corruption, exploitation and colluding with government officials (Wright, *forthcoming*).

Finally, if the government were to curtail grazing privileges in the Lake Natron WMA conservation areas, it would most likely result in local resistance. When asked what the community would do if grazing would be prohibited, a CBO member from Olkejuloongishu suggested that “automatically there would be fighting and rioting, because livestock is what the Maasai live for and you cannot separate a Maasai from his livestock. It would be the end of their life if they did this” (interview in English, 30-10-13). Given the repeated promises made by officials that Maasai grazing practices will not be hindered, a safe assumption made by several colleagues is that the final RMZP may contain seasonal grazing regulations (e.g. x area is only allowed during y period for grazing) that satisfy the government and do not substantially alter customary patterns/management. Or, another avenue could involve the Lake Natron WMA following suit of the Enduimet WMA, which stated in its RMZP that livestock grazing numbers in hunting and photography tourism are still “to be determined” – bypassing any fixed restrictions or prohibitions for the extent of the 5 year plan (Enduimet RMZP, 2011: 35, 37).

As a political space and a territory, the Lake Natron WMA has served to invite and engage Maasai actors in the governance of natural resources their communities have been

historically alienated from. For instance, Village Council authorities have been empowered to negotiate the boundaries and definitions of different land use zones through participatory LUP making, while CBO members have continuously negotiated RMZP drafts to reflect wildlife and livestock joint use of rangeland resources. Discursively, local actors imagine that the WMA will reflect Maasai land uses and claims, but with the added bonus of being able to control and benefit from the wildlife around them. In turn, all of these establishment processes have been negotiated in some way according to local mechanisms of decision-making, resulting in a hybrid form of environmental governance. In this way, the Lake Natron WMA has the *potential* to act as a “new democratic space”, however at this point in time there is still much to be done and it is difficult to say whether WMAs will actually support Maasai interests in wildlife management or if WMAs are still yet another “cunning way” for the government and foreign investors to grab land from local resource users. The problem persists that the old power relations imbued within fortress-based conservation persist within prescribed WMA policy and in the end WMAs may only function to retain and recentralize natural resource management powers at the state level. It might be that all the talk about WMAs being participatory and devolving power to the locals is just a charade and the show must go on.

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