Passing through Maasailand.

Encountering Maasai Youth and the navigation of boundaries and identity politics.

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Abstract

Thesis Title: Passing through Maasailand. Encountering Maasai Youth and the Navigation of Boundaries and Identity Politics.

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Summary

Engaresero, located on Maasailand in Northern Tanzania, has been in the last few years a good example of the rapid increase of global connectivity and the emergent possibilities arising from being connected to varied social geographies simultaneously. Based on ethnographic research in Engaresero, this thesis examines the engagements of Maasai youth in these varied social geographies. Whether it is the local pastoral rhythm and social order, the national education system or tourism activities, these competing systems each hold their set of expectations and opportunities. By looking at hairstyles, mobile phone usage, vernacular expressions and the creation of ethnographic content for tourists, this paper describes the heterogeneous trajectories emerging from these superimposed systems and structures of authorities. Maasai youth has developed numerous strategies to align expectations with their own aspirations. Their skillful navigation involves intergenerational dialogues that leads to the indigenization of modernity, and boundary work, which enables sustaining competing authorities in order to maintain harmonious relationships. This future-making process of new generations shows fluidity and self-reflexivity and this thesis suggests that it is also historically contingent to the ongoing pressures over the pastoralist lifestyle, land and the idea of being Maasai. The historical plight of oppressive colonial and other dominant powers have shaped this capacity to negotiate competing authorities, and this includes anthropological theories and representations. Reflecting on positionality and land struggles, this thesis questions the anthropological tendency to critique notions, such as "Maasai culture," at the risk of diminishing the local discourse and commitment to cultural reproduction. Instead, it proposes adopting a similar fluidity in anthropological considerations of cultural representation in order to take seriously the everyday struggles to maintain self-determination in Maasailand.

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It is incredible how unexpected turns in life can make you grow. I am immensely grateful to the TATU Project team and all of our collaborators in Northern Tanzania who became the reason and inspiration for my repeated and extended stays in Tanzania and for many of my life choices, including this research project in Anthropology.

For the weeks of my fieldwork, I cannot thank enough the people of Engaresero, who were all so generous at sharing their time, their vision and knowledge and guided me so wisely in this process. My initial contact and my host family made sure that I was always feeling comfortable and supported. Everyone I met there, guides, leaders, neighbours and many children were particularly thoughtful and kind. I am forever grateful to have been invited to Eunoto and be present at this significant rite of passage for the Ilnyangulo generation - Hongereni sana! All of this is the main reason why my experience has been so positive and impactful. Extraordinary moments. Ashe Naleng.

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Introduction

Stereotypes

June 2013. While sitting in on the weekly women's group meeting in a rural area of Northern Tanzania, I observed yet another debate about voting within the group. As the women wanted to make a decision regarding their financial structure, a vote was needed. Some of them wanted to have just one vote to represent them as a block: the "Maasai vote". The other ladies argued it would not make sense that they as a group would get just one vote - and the idea was to allow for each woman to have her own say in the future of this collective project. They requested that all members close their eyes and raise their hands. The ladies who had identified themselves as part of the "Maasai group" all raised their hands at the same time. They would be discreetly opening their eyes to check that they were still voting together for the same decision and laughing away. Good food for thought on the politics of democratic representation!

Since 2012, I have been involved in community development projects in Northern Tanzania, in a rural area where a mix of ethno-linguistic groups reside. These projects are made possible through an NGO called TATU Project that I co-founded with a group of friends and peers in 2013. The NGO collaborates with two villages in a rural area to support local development initiatives. One of these initiatives is a women's group that grew to be autonomous, with its own legal status. As I have continued to work with this women's group over the years, my curiosity grew as some of the members were women identifying as "Maasai." "Mimi ni Maasai" as they'd say in Kiswahili - "I am Maasai". They clearly saw value in standing together as members of the Maasai ethno-linguistic group, even if this would require adjustments from the rest of the group or mean giving up decisional power in the usual democratic sense. I grew more intrigued by the politics of identity and representation that were taking place within the group. When I had the opportunity to pursue a Master's degree, Anthropology seemed to be the most adequate lens to take a deeper dive into this "Maasai culture". This degree allowed me to re-contextualize and complexify my thoughts as well as re-frame more theoretically the awkwardness of my positionality. As a 31 year old single woman (at the time of my research), holding a Bachelor's degree in Business Administration, questioning capitalism, patriarchy and the industrial civilization, I can see how my uprooted and politically frustrated state of mind opened up a large window for romanticizing this encounter. It seemed to offer so many fascinating alternative perspectives and practices! Luckily, I have benefited greatly from the support of Julie Archambault, my supervisor, whose endless patience and wisdom guided me towards weeding out these romantic and often simplistic ideas and step by step work on deconstructing my subjectivity. This work is still in progress. Adapting a researcher's perspective, with my action-driven personality which thrived in the development world, felt quite challenging to only observe and discuss. As much as I had previously worked on my positionality as a French white woman working in development in Tanzania, I found the experience of doing anthropological research yet more distressing, as I would be "doing nothing" in the field. This feeling was significantly enhanced by numerous in-class debates about the colonial foundations of Anthropology, realizing that the discipline itself is in crisis, and also by the fact that I was working with a self-identified "Indigenous" group in "Africa". In short, by the time I had to leave for my field research, I grasped in more academic terms my stereotypical representation of the white researcher going to "Africa", on top of the development worker that I already was. Aware that I would tick all the boxes of the extractivist and neo-colonial Anthropologist regardless, I decided to give it a shot, while keeping in mind the pitfalls of the discipline and aiming to be as open as possible in my research objectives. July 2019. Recognizing my contradictions, I moved to a remote "Maasai area" - or "Maasailand" - for my ethnographic field research.

View of the Ol Doinyo Lengaï volcano in Lake Natron. Picture taken by the author - July 2019.

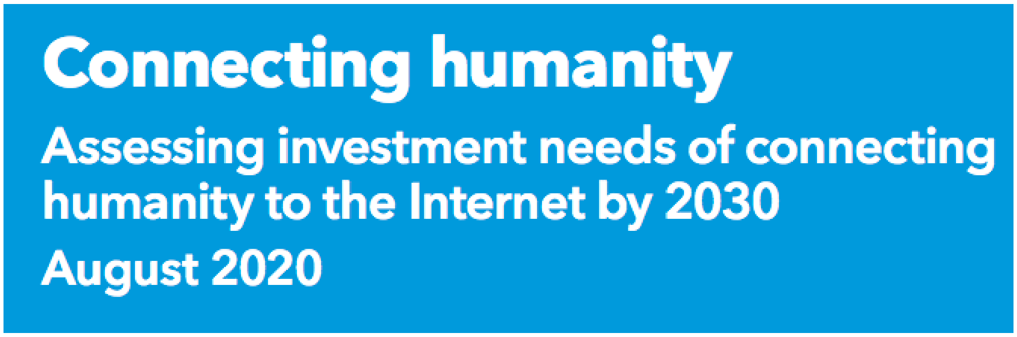
For this paper, I spent about 6 weeks living in Engaresero followed by a few more visits. I was generously hosted by my initial contact and friend Teme's mother in law, Nanyor. It was a real joy and honor to share her family home and to spend time with her and her three young children who live there. My gratitude extends to the other, welcoming members of this "boma" (traditional Maasai homestead in Kiswahili) and all the generous residents of Engaresero who were part of my day-to-day life there and made it so wonderful.

Ndalalani neighbourhood. The Boma in the middle of the picture is where I stayed with Nanyor and her extended-family members - our home is easily located by the car parked aside. Picture taken by the author in July 2019.

During this time, I "hung out" as anthropologists do, keeping daily notes of my observations and random informal conversations. I also conducted about a dozen open-ended interviews. Guided by the people I met, I followed their suggestions on who I should interview and what topics mattered. I returned to Engaresero a few times for shorter visits in the following 3 months and have kept in touch with several people by phone to this day.

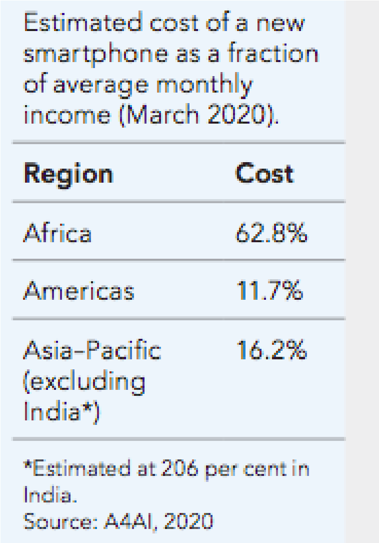
Global Connections

For this first anthropological research project, I hoped to approach the mobile phone as a window into people's actual lives and aspirations (Archambault 2017), and focus more specifically on internet access, given the social media scene that has been transforming the global communication landscape so rapidly in the last two decades. I was trying to follow up on some of the statistics[1] on mobile phone adoption given by Julie Archambault (2017) in her book. As I kept searching, the new focus on smartphones and internet-capable devices was clear as it was difficult to find data on mobile phone adoption. I did, however, come across a report bearing the title:


Connecting humanity
Assessing investment needs of connecting humanity to the Internet by 2030
August 2020

Connecting humanity is now measured by access to the internet and not simply phone networks. Connectivity has reached a new definition, making it global or nothing.

Certainly, according to this report, access remains a huge challenge. In the last few years, this digital divide is "seen as particularly problematic and as needing to be urgently bridged" (Archambault, 2017: 4), specifically because of the phone's assumed transformative powers. Looking at some more detailed data in the report, even if investments for infrastructure are prioritized, currently the estimated cost of a smartphone device represents 62.8% of the average monthly income on the African continent, compared to 11.7% in the Americas. At this rate, the decision to own a smartphone might be the result of a deeper analysis than good infrastructure and marketing. Probing around the use of smartphones for my research was a great way to kick-start a fun conversation. As participants kept talking, technology ended up being just an introductory frame for the dialogues that took place, as my interlocutors turned to more personal and collective questioning. I am quite grateful for all the conversations I had with people in Engaresero; their candid accounts and sharp observations were very insightful, regardless of whether they owned a smartphone.


Estimated cost of a new smartphone as a fraction of average monthly income (March 2020).

Region	Cost
Africa	62.8%
Americas	11.7%
Asia-Pacific (excluding India*)	16.2%

*Estimated at 206 per cent in India.
Source: A4AI, 2020

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[1] From the website http://www.itu.int - accessed by Julie Archambault in February 2016, and by the author on the 8th of April 2021.

When choosing to look into smartphone adoption, I use the premise that “society and technology are interdependent and are evolving in a dialectic process of cultural and social appropriation” (Bruijn, Nyamnjoh, Brinkman, 2009: 11). Indeed, it seems to me more realistic than to affirm that these new technologies will help bridge the many gaps and eventually contribute to the “development and progress of the African continent”, as critically exposed by Brinkman, De Bruijn and Bilal (2009: 88). These objects and the access to information and social networks spur much debate locally around their “positive and negative impacts”, as some of the field participants I interviewed liked to put it. Julie Archambault (2017) pinpoints some of these controversies as the expression of “competing notions of morality and purpose” (p.7). This insight from Mozambique has guided me in writing this paper and looking at how it translates in Engaresero, Tanzania.

Engaresero

The village of Engaresero is located at the frontier between Kenya and Tanzania. It is bordered by the Great Rift Valley and neighboured by the famous Serengeti National Park and Ngorongoro Crater. The area is known for its gigantic salt lake, a breeding site for millions of Lesser Flamingos and its active volcano Ol Donyio Lengaï, Mountain of God in Maa, language of the Maasai ethno-linguistic group. Four hours away from the nearest tarmac road, which ends at the junction of the town called Mto Wa Mbu, on the way to the Ngorongoro crater, Engaresero could be described as remote. In 2020, the area counted about 5875[2] inhabitants quite dispersed and most of whom were members of the Maasai ethno-linguistic group. The village center consists of small shops, a guest house, restaurants, some residential homes, and a marketplace, gathered over a perimeter of about 100 metres around the one and main dirt road, linking the Northern Serengeti Gate to Mto Wa Mbu. Since the start of the 21st century, the area has seen an increase in tourism and other related activities. Indeed, not only is it home to many unique landscapes, and a site advertised as providing “authentic” cultural encounters, it is also one of the few gateways to the Serengeti National Park, one of the most famous safari destinations on the African continent. The increasing number of safari tour operators coming to the area has brought new infrastructure for accommodation and other tourism activities.

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[2] Information given by one of the local residents based on the most recent census.

As one of these visitors in 2013, I had the opportunity to discover the beautiful sights of the area and kept coming back as I could not get enough of the stunning landscape. From the volcanic black sand, to the reddish tint of the lake, the dry acacia forests and lush waterfalls hidden in the canyons of the Rift Valley, this area felt like a hidden paradise. How romantic! This sense of remoteness was enhanced by the 4 hours of rough driving to reach the nearest tarmac road. The ride was usually very dusty yet enjoyable because of the occasional zebras, gazelles and giraffes spotted on the way. After a few visits I got to know a few of the local residents, mainly the guides that would take us on hikes in the area, or up the volcano that overlooks the lake. One of these guides, that I will call Teme[3], has been a great help to my research in Engaresero. At first, every visit had been an opportunity for us tourists to disconnect as there was no network in the area, except up a plateau, a steep walk of approximately 2 hours from the village. This seemed enough for most guides I had met to own a mobile phone. During my last visit as a tourist, in 2017, the telecommunication network had finally reached Engaresero. I sat in a local restaurant with one of the guides and watched him call his repertoire enthusiastically, letting them know that he was actually calling them from the village center. As much as I couldn't be disconnected while in Engaresero anymore, I did enjoy the opportunity to keep in touch with some of the Engaresero residents thanks to these new communication channels. Very quickly, phone conversations became WhatsApp messages and Facebook invitations. I was impressed by how fast the local residents were adopting all of these global social networking platforms. Combined with the fact that most of the residents of Engaresero were considered part of the Maasai ethnolinguistic group, this seemed like the perfect space for me to spend time and try to understand some of the cultural dynamics that had piqued my curiosity in development work.

In a similar fashion as road infrastructure, Julie Archambault (2016) notes, mobile communications allow for a space-time compression that comes with “promises of a better world” (p. 2). As she highlights through subtle observations of everyday practices in Mozambique, one of the popular incentives for mobile phone utilization is the “part it plays in helping young people to juggle the demands of intimacy, to keep others happy (and quiet) while making their own happiness.” (Archambault, 2016: 8). During my experience in Engaresero, I also was told that mobile phones and the internet are important tools for the local residents to juggle the demands of their everyday lives. No matter their age group, all agreed that fast and direct communication facilitated by the phone was highly appreciated. Some of its usage examples range from “simplifying the work”, as put by participants, socializing with friends who are living away by establishing “direct contact”, or developing business with potential tourists. It also facilitates discreet romantic meetings, accessing grades online for students, watching parliamentary debates on YouTube, and much more. Used for all sorts of engagements, “the phone transforms experiences with space not only in terms of space–time compression but also by providing individuals with more latitude” (Archambault, 2013).

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[3] All of the names of my interlocutors have been changed for this paper

Producing Youthful Aspirations

When I first set out to examine the recent uptake of smartphones and internet access in Engaresero, I knew that this would be a difficult endeavor. Before I arrived, my main initial contact there, Teme, would often complain about being weeks with no network and hand-counting the number of people he thought I could interview regarding smartphone adoption. I started to fear that I would run out of research material after a few days. Of course, once on site I realized that owning a smartphone was just one of the tactics deployed by youth for “addressing the rift between desired, the expected and the possible” (Archambault, 2017: 5). Attention to these various tactics has since become much more central to this research.

Youth are often early adopters of technology which stands as a “symbol of modernity” (Mains, 2011: 124). In Engaresero, young people would also be exposed to more urban and connected lifestyles throughout their higher education journey which often took them away from Egaresero or through their involvement in tourism. When speaking with the early adopters of smartphones in Engaresero, I found a certain alignment with the definition of “youth culture” as “linkages between the global flow and local geographies and imaginaries” (De Boeck & Honwana, 2005: 9). Interestingly, this definition of a cultural group does not necessarily lead to homogenizing but rather leaves open the possibility of many interpretations and embodiments of what this youth culture can look like. In this paper, I will discuss the different social geographies that overlap in Engaresero and to which youth are exposed. I will include the education system and how it has been seen as transforming young people into “instruments of modernization” and also the idea that they are subjected to the “tyranny of the ancestors” (Diouf, 2005: 229). I will argue that through these different pressures, young people learn, develop their own agency to explore their own future and may even seek their ancestors’ wisdom when relevant. Diouf (2005) describes

African youth's "struggles to conform itself to the contemporary world - that of globalization - and to extract itself, however brutally, from the vernacular orders of indigenous modernities" as they navigate expectations from juxtaposed social geographies like education systems, the modern state and their "ancestral African culture" (p. 229). In Engaresero I found that the contrast between different orders was more fluid than brutal. "Ancestral African culture" is quite a historically contingent and vernacular notion which impacts its specific modes of expression. I argue that in Engaresero, the historical struggle of generations to circumvent imposed orders to enable themselves to fashion their own future, inclusive of their ancestral knowledge and practices, had led to skillful reconciliation tactics. I will add some insights from Brad Weiss (2002) who conducted research in Arusha, the closest city to Engaresero, and examined the ways people engage with global forms of imagery which reveal "the production of locality as part of the constitution of the global". The following ethnographic examples focus on the engagement and stories associated with certain material objects, including smartphones and their media content, hair, and posters made for the local museum. Each in its own way illustrates Weiss's idea of producing locality in relation to the global, and how youth in Engaresero demonstrate that preserving harmonious relationships while reconciling competing authorities is possible.

I hope to contribute to the literature on African youth through an ethnographic exploration of the local nuances from Engaresero, and expose some of the existing challenges of certain categorizations of African youth. It has been thoroughly discussed that the category of youth, especially in Africa, can be problematically seen as a unilinear "classic model associated with modernity, in which youth is a protected phase en route to adulthood" (Cole, 2005). This perception tends to inflict a Western modernist perspective, hardly attainable or simply unadapted, to its targeted population, taking away some of their agency (Amit & Dycke, 2012, Masquelier, 2013, Brandon & Oldfield, 2015, Archambault 2017). Indeed, as some modernist standards are not adapted to the local reality, it becomes difficult to fulfill "normative social responsibilities of adults" (Mains, 2011: 113). Therefore, youth find themselves in this "liminal world where they are neither children nor adults", also referred to as waithood, "a prolonged period of suspension between childhood and adulthood" (Honwana, 2014). In Engaresero the local configuration of personhood is organized by an age-set system that establishes the local hierarchy and social structure. This system is how people were introduced to me onsite while some of the youth encountered were also engaging in activities that revealed a certain dislocation of that system. This “new kind of youth” emerges in “the confrontation between local, established categories of personhood and the new contexts produced by social and economic globalization” (Cole, 2005). From her work in Madagascar, Jennifer Cole invites us to “rethink the normative developmental model” and suggests looking “more deeply into the historical circumstances which seduce us into believing that what we took as inevitable is in fact historically contingent” (Cole 2005). In this paper, I will bring forth some historical events that may influence some of the local discourses and practices.

Historical Contingency

Post-independence Africa saw a revival of the “African personality” (Ivaska, 2011: 4) and the capitals of free nations became cultural centers for the development of national pride, which was also part of the liberation process. In order to re-claim ownership and authorship over the idea of culture and national identity, the newly established governments took over the colonial cultural politics (Ivaska, 2011). For decades, modernity has been an inevitable part of these considerations as an “ideological formation which naturalized its own telos in a model of human development” (Comaroff & Comaroff, 2005: 19). This section gives a brief overview of Tanzania’s post-colonial journey, with some of the ruptures and continuities.

Following independence, Tanzania, led at the time by its first President Julius Nyerere, innovated with its own version of African socialism. President Nyerere decided that recovering from the “colonial divide-and-rule policies – required a form of socialism that would not exacerbate existing divisions but would instead cultivate national unity” (Pitcher & Askew, 2006). He implemented his vision for unity and national identity for Tanzanians through TANU, the official nationalist party. TANU had the mandate to implement the official state policy “Ujamaa”, declared in 1967. Ujamaa is inspired by the “Swahili concept of utu or common humanity” and based on principles of peace, justice and reparations (Campbell in Chachage and Cassam, 2010: 51). Ujamaa intended to divorce Tanzania from the prevalent urban model of modernity promoted during colonialism. Instead it proposed the villagization of rural areas towards a “traditional African” mode of life (Ivaska, 2011). This vision included agricultural productivity, national education, promotion of Swahili as a national language, reinforcing national identity, provision of health and a standardized political system. Ironically, this sometimes had to occur through resettlements and changes in livelihoods and production modes. This was deemed necessary in order for the state to provide and control equal access to health, education based on a Tanzanian curriculum and the political structures required (Hodgson 2001, Ivaska 2011).

On the same line as the geographic villagization initiative, Ujamaa had its modernized rural version of “the figure of the healthy citizen-youth” (Ivaska, 2011: 59). As a re-formulated African ideal, modernity was based on bringing together the “traditions and customs” from the estimated 120 ethnic groups existing in pre-colonial times (Lawson, Mulder, Ghiselli, Ngadaya, Ngowi, Mfinanga, Hartwig, and James, 2014); TANU would filter what they deemed appropriate, and through this revive an authentic “rural frugality” type of productivity to become the Tanzanian development model (Ivaska, 2011: 207). The projected ideal development sought to drive youth and the unemployed away from what was deemed problematic urban decadence, centralized in Dar es Salaam, brought by “foreign-inspired indecency”, back to the African indigenous and hard-working ways of life in the countryside and “traditional dignity” (Ivaska, 2011: 58). From this perspective, the national culture project started defining both the desirable traditions that could be integrated in their vision of Tanzanian modernity. As Ivaska (2011) argues and describes well, these modernizationist ideas of cultural development resonated with some of the colonial approaches to culture, namely by imposing their own dominant ideals. Many debates ensued on what is *tradition*, on how it should be infused into this new cultural project, and on what it means to be properly *modern*. These debates were largely led by “young people in Dar Es Salaam directly challenging official parameters of authenticity and foreignness, decency, youth, and the modern” (Ivaska 2011: 208).

Some of these parameters led to the stigmatization of certain traditions deemed indecent. The Maasai dress for example was looked down upon as it did not match the development ideals of TANU officials (Ivaska, 2011). It was described as primitive, sometimes even excluded from public spaces (Hodgson, 2001, Ivaska, 2011). Agreeing with previous colonial powers, some ethno-linguistic groups in Tanzania, such as the Maasai, have been continuously seen as barriers to modernization (Hodgson, 2001).

The cultural project was left aside, as Nyerere retired in 1985 and Mwyni, the second President of Tanzania, took a neo-liberal turn, sharply followed by the next Presidents Mkapa and Kikwete (Weiss, 2002, Askew & Pitcher, 2006, Ivaska 2011, Hodgson 2011, Gardner 2016). The focus became liberalizing the economy and attracting foreign investment. The 1990’s were marked by “the emergence of transnational images, products, and styles" as well as a “widening gap between rich and poor" (Ivaska, 2011: 216-217). To access loans and stimulate investments, Mwyni opted to decentralize and privatize the economy, and sold local parastatals to foreign investors, mostly from South Africa. Some describe the new policies under Mwyni as open-doors or even wild capitalism and locate the rise of corruption during this new administration (Askew & Pitcher 2006, Schroeder, 2012: 40). Mwyni, the second president of Tanzania was nicknamed "'Mzee Ruksa' ('Mr Permissiveness'), for whom anything goes" (Askew & Pitcher, 2006).

Around this same time, members of the Maasai ethno-linguistic group also became more connected and actively engaged with global indigenous movements in order to defend their ways of life and their access to land (Hodgson, 2011). The Maasai typically are known for partaking in pastoral activities, producing their distinctiveness as a "distinct livelihood strategy", and which "conflicted with the dominant, state-endorsed livelihoods of settled farmers, resulting in their economic, political and social marginalization as 'second-class citizens'", as Parkipuny, a Maasai activist, explained (Hodgson, 2011: 37). Indeed, pastoralism was deemed pre-modern and large-scale farming or conservation efforts, often separating people from land, were prioritized for economic development (Gardner, 2016).

The economic transition largely accelerated large-scale investments and again land alienation continued, notably in the Maasailand of Simanjiro, Mkomazi and Loliondo (Hodgson, 2011). As Tanzania opened up to the global economy, it continued betting on tourism as one of its main attractions. This time foreign investment and state elites replaced the parastatals and continued appropriating Maasailand for the national and private tourism economy (Hodgson, 2011). Culturally, however, a new (or renewed from colonial times) perspective on the "Maasai culture" emerged, as their "authenticity" attracted tourists for what is sometimes referred to as "primitivist tourism" (Comaroff & Comaroff, 2009, Meiu, 2015). At the start of the 21st century, advertisements on billboards and television would show young Maasai men in their stereotypical outfits. Maasais went from being considered a "primitive embarrassment" to the country, to "being touted, not only by the local tourist industry, but also by private security firms in Dar Es Salaam"; they were now perceived as "formidable and noble" (Ivaska, 2011: 216) or "fearless warriors" (Meiu, 2016). In tourism, Maasai leaders got involved and started negotiating direct foreign investment on their lands, in competition with state efforts to control tourism (Gardner, 2016).

The third president, Mkapa, held office for two terms. By the end of his presidency, a feeling of “shattered expectations” from this neo-liberal turn overcame residents of Tanzania, to the point that his presidency is referred to as “Ukapa" or downfall (Weiss, 2005: 105). The end of the 1990’s was marked by Nyerere’s death in 1999[4], bringing back his vision and legacy into people’s minds and hearts. Kelly Askew notes the praise for Nyerere’s vision of peace, unity and equality in the songs written to honour his death and memory (Askew, 2006). She also highlights the lack of references to Ujamaa or even socialism, yet mentions how his vision as a “continued salience for understanding the present should be recognized” (Askew, 2006).

Mkapa’s successor President Kikwete, also with the CCM party, inherited the neo-liberal program and opted for “political continuity that builds on the achievements of Mwinyi and Benjamin Mkapa but also seeked to generate greater economic growth and reform” (Dagne, 2010). As Kikwete continued to grow tourism as one of Tanzania’s most important economic sectors, he also consolidated the centralization of state-control over wildlife and wildlife land use (Nelson, 2012). For example, the infamous Wildlife Conservation Act 5 of 2009 was passed, which called for enlarged protected areas, and gave the government the power “to declare any land, including village lands, as a protected area” (Weldemichel, 2020). This brought about a “strong anti-pastoral environmentalism” leading to displacements, violent evictions and continuous pressures on Maasailand (Homewood, Trench & Brockington, 2012). As I will discuss further in the last chapter, the area of Engaresero has suffered through years of land conflicts and still today the autonomy of the local communities over their land is constantly being negotiated.

Timing

It is in this post-socialist context that I arrived in Tanzania, first in 2012, under President Kikwete. Since then, the election of the new President Magufuli in 2015, and his re-election in 2020, has brought forward a renewed nationalist project for Tanzania. With his slogan “Hapa Kazi Tu” (only work here in Kiswahili), he has been invoking Nyerere to support his political vision of “hard work” and focusing on getting rid of corruption, unjustified government spending, as well as a better utilization of local resources at all levels. On social media, a popular hashtag followed his election: #WhatWouldMagufuliDo was used to call out exaggerated ways to save money or other presidents' lavish lifestyles (Ogola, 2019, Wong, 2016, Shaw, 2016). Since his election, Tanzania has seen several radical reforms. Magufuli was nicknamed the "Bulldozer" based on his past experience as Deputy Minister of Works, where he expedited road construction. Some of these reforms are renewed attempts to formulate what is "traditional" and morally acceptable, ranging from banning birth control or unnecessary foreign travel for members of his cabinet (Paget 2020, Ogola 2019).

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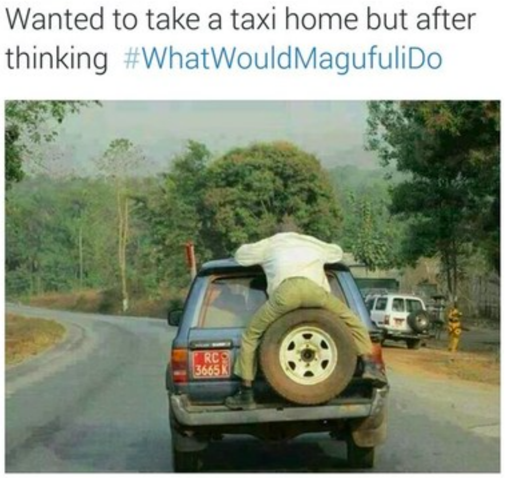
[4] October 14th - this date is now a national holiday: Nyerere Day



Wanted to take a taxi home but after
thinking #WhatWouldMagufuliDo

Example of a tweet tagged #WhatWouldMagufuliDo found in the Huffington Post online.

Tourism is still high on the agenda. In his bulldozer style, one of the first massive investments by President Magufuli in the first months of presidency was to revive the national airline, Air Tanzania, and purchase a new commercial airplane.

Some of the most renowned safari areas, ones that were considered "Maasailand", continue to see increased government control based on neoprotectionist and extinction discourses on conservation (Weldemichel, 2020). These discourses instrumentalize ideas of conservation such as anti-poaching and wildlife reduction to fuel a process of othering some groups, especially pastoralists in this specific area, to justify control over land. Motives such as "protecting Tanzania" and its wildlife serve to justify the militarization of land control in these protected areas; also called "green militarization" (Weldemichel, 2020). Local communities suffer from evictions, land grabs, and control over the natural resources of the areas. Between private tourism companies, international NGOs working on similar conservation principles and the government, there are many actors involved in this complex situation where different agendas get imposed with a "maldistribution of benefits" for local communities (Igoe, 2007). Trust between local communities and external actors, including the Tanzanian government, has long been eroding, to the point that a Maasai leader mentioned in an interview with Weldemichel (2020): “In the future, whatever decision the government will come with, we will fight it. We will never accept it.” Overtime, Maasai activists in indigenous rights also decided strategically to adapt their struggle towards defending “pastoralist livelihoods”. This was partly in response to a lack of national recognition, which continued to align with other African nations on the idea that “we are all indigenous in Africa” (Hodgson, 2011: 26). They refocused their discourse on pastoralism and worked on disseminating the instances of “human rights violations afflicted on pastoralist communities by the government, institutions, and or individuals” (Hodgson, 2011: 127). This new positioning aimed to be “more pragmatic and less political” in order to find less confrontational and more effective ways to defend their “livelihood”, the new popular term for “progressive development scholars, policy-makers and practitioners” (Hodgson, 2011: 157-162). Activists still hang on to the cultural dimension of this advocacy, as Hodgson quotes: “Indigenous is a network - it doesn’t prevent you from presenting your case in other ways.” (Hodgson 2011: 214). This diversification in terms of activism is also reflective of the variety of actors involved in regulating protected areas and of the economic focus on the fast-growing tourism industry which “reinvigorated the government’s interest in reconsolidating control over local resources” (Weldemichel, 2020).

These different figures and events shape the landscape and identities of the Tanzanian youth that I focus on in this paper. Agreeing with the need to “shift our attention from category to context” when we talk about young people (Amit & Dyck, 2011: 7), each chapter will include some of the socio-historical facts that impact “how youth try to bridge the gap between their present lives and the futures to which they aspire” (Oldenburg, 2020). I also want to show how the post-colonial, post-socialist context and history are making this juggling yet more acrobatic, while also equipping young people in Engaresero to skillfully navigate uncertainty and competing expectations (Masquelier 2005, Mains 2011, Cole 2004, Weiss 2002, Archambault, 2017). Thanks to the accounts of residents in Engaresero, I want to share my widened understanding of the different possible trajectories for young people in Africa in the “post-postcolony” (De Boeck & Honwana, 2005: 11).

Trajectories

Tourism and growing access to formal education have brought new types of development models and shaped the circulation of people and ideas in the area over the last few decades. With these, all sorts of material and non-material innovations flow in and out, such as the mobile phone, or a growing knowledge of English, for example. These flows also bring prescribed ideals of modernity, which for some have been historically imposed, but also reformulated according to local aspirations (Hodgson, 2001, Ivaska, 2011). Engaresero was part of the post-colonial project of African socialism, thriving amongst other things to make education accessible to all, and mandatory. This meant that children in Engaresero were expected to attend at least 7 years in the national primary school system and after graduating and passing exams, could then potentially choose to move on to secondary education, if affordable and desirable. Over the last few years, the local tourism office has started sponsoring some students to higher post-secondary education. During my stay, I even had the opportunity to meet the first University Graduate from Engaresero: Danny. He had recently finished writing his thesis in Sociology and on the impact of social media on university students. Such a happy coincidence! In the few weeks I spent on the field, one of the topics that kept coming up with the people I spent time with was the idea of making plans in order to fulfill these aspirations. Whether it was to get married, have a family, make a living or study further, most of these goals required thoughtful planning over a few years. Good planning was an essential part of juggling these competing systems and creating a path that made sense and fulfilled both expectations and aspirations. Plans for the rite of passage which occurred during my visit, had started more than a year earlier, taking into consideration the different preliminary rituals, the seasons, the time it took to gather the resources, and for the information to reach everybody concerned. In fact, this plan was part of a larger cycle of growth - which maps out young Maasai men's lives over approximately 15 years, with specific moments and events that will mark their social progression. In the meantime, they would probably also be finishing school, working, looking after their livestock, building their homestead and starting a family. Prioritizing and planning in order to move forward in all these different aspects of life wasn't straightforward.

De Boeck & Honwana's observations that "young people exercise their creative power discursively but also in and through their own bodies, setting in motion a process of self-realization and promotion of social status through consumption and expenditure, appearance and fashion” (2005: 11) resonates in Engaresero as well. Whether through expressions, objects, aesthetics or transmission of information, young people in Engaresero are re-centering their location as a crossroads between “different cultural itineraries” and creating new possibilities locally (De Boeck & Honwana, 2005: 11). These possibilities also enable them to express their ambitions and live more or less unconventionally, yet harmoniously in their community, as they learn to navigate varied social orders and incompatible expectations. Through their bodies they are bringing characteristics of one social order into another and displaying the contradictions that they must manage in order to live meaningfully. The objects they buy, the media content they produce and the way they participate in information sharing are also representative of the vernacular reformulation of juxtaposed trajectories and ambitions. As I will demonstrate in the following chapters, they have a capacity to “mediate the contradictions in the socio-cultural frontiers which they tend to occupy” (De Boeck & Honwana, 2005: 11). In fact, I found quite a remarkable engagement in local politics and most young people I talked with were quite aware of current events. This can be explained in part by the specific roles and rules assigned by their local age-set system. This system has been traced all the way back to the 18th century, according to some field participants, information which I will present below and in annex. For example, a young man not yet circumcised is considered under the authority of all warriors and elders. If a woman marries a man already in the elders’ group, she is given more authority than another woman married to a warrior. As we will see later on, young Maasai men historically enter “warriorhood” at puberty, as part of a larger group referred to here as generation and are expected to participate and take responsibility in societal matters. It is customary for elected representatives of each generation, laigwanani in Maa, to be present at any discussion concerning village-wide matters, in order to be involved in the decisions, and share the information with their peers. The laigwanani therefore has a role as a mediator, but also needs to juggle his role and his education and economic development, another type of mediation between diverging social geographies. Through material and aesthetics that reveal competing trajectories, the next chapters will describe further how warriors are expected to attend school, making it difficult for them to fulfill their role towards society as a warrior and sometimes having to choose between one or the other, or a complex mediation between systems.

The warriors are also involved in economic activities, primarily as those responsible for bringing the livestock out to pasture safely each day. More recently, the main tourism office, locally initiated, is also managed by representatives of the current generation of warriors. Once the new generation of warriors is set and ready, they would hand over the responsibilities to the next willing warriors. The board of this tourism office would be composed of representatives of older generations. As I will discuss in the last chapter, this is another example of how commercial trends and business structures are used locally to sustain their own hierarchy and claim ownership over local resources.

The ethnographic examples in each chapter aim to show how the next generation is juggling different structures and systems of authority. Instead of waiting or being at the mercy of external determinants, the new generation in Engaresero is actively crafting alternatives to build fulfilling lives and show self-reliance in this complex navigation. These crafting techniques adapt dominant developmental models into more local versions of a desirable future. Aspirations for the future in Engaresero seemed to be constantly recreated by intergenerational dialogue and youthful local initiatives. Through this process emerges what could be considered a form of indigenization of modernity and a “resistance of culture” (Sahlins, 1999). As I argue, creating these alternatives is a way to refuse a dominant, blanket model for the inhabitants of Tanzania as a postcolonial and postsocialist state as well as any other forms of dominant authority..

Becoming an Anthropologist

Bridging the divide between global or universal theories and local or particular realities has also been an old refrain in Anthropology (Jackson, 1998, Engelke, 2019). This tension is still under high scrutiny as there is no such thing as a “bounded, culturally homogeneous African culture” (Piot, 1999: 23). I won’t dwell too much on the crisis of representation, with which the reader might already be familiar. However, keeping in mind some of these highly scrutinized notions made writing about my field work, experience and relaying the discourse of the people I met there a little awkward. Even if my initial research framework revolved around the mobile phone and internet access, one of the interpreters that accompanied me through many of my interviews and days in Engaresero would consistently drive the discussion towards the traditions and customs (Mila in Kiswahili) that make up “Maasai culture.” In many instances, participants would refer to the “positive and negative” impacts on “Maasai culture” and the “changes in traditions” that they would observe. Usually that would entail a thorough description of these traditions. Participants made many efforts to give me a full picture of their traditional practices. Tom, the interpreter I mention here, was also one of the founders of the local ethnographic museum and he suggested at one point that we work on the creation of more posters depicting particularities of the Mila. He felt that the existing posters, previously made by a group of local and international organizations, such as the FAO[5], should be reviewed by residents of Engaresero as they were sometimes either inaccurate or missing information. Together with some of the guides from the local tourism office, we worked on making new posters representing specific aspects of the "Maasai culture." To cap it all, my stay was unexpectedly marked by a significant rite of passage (called "Eunoto" in Maa) for the local young warriors, giving the perfect occasion to reiterate the idea of being Maasai. This ritual was a major event that influenced village activities, conversations and focus during the time I was there. On my first day onsite, I went to introduce myself to the village executive officer, the government representative, locally referred to as "Mtendaji." His first recommendation was to watch out for the growing number of roaming young men in a celebratory mood due to Eunoto.

The local attention and importance given to this event made it inevitably central to my field experience. From the first day of my stay onwards, this event was part of the local preoccupations and a number of times people I met explained the age-set system leading to this particular moment. For the next few weeks, I would also be looking forward to the highly-anticipated Eunoto ceremony, and witnessing the demonstration of their collective commitment to this cultural happening. Faced by this conjuncture, it would be too easy to succumb to the risk of falling into a romanticized account of my experiences, potentially essentializing or othering and in some cases depicting the "Maasai culture" as homogenous and timeless. In practice, it was quite the opposite, and as I will be showing in my paper, my interlocutors were quite aware of the heterogeneous reality. In fact, it seemed to me that they were using their discursive agency to engage in "boundary work" (Sahlins, 1999, McIntosh, 2009). Boundary work means delimiting concepts such as "Maasai culture", "globalization system", what is "urban" or what is "rural", for example, as a way to establish one's positionality. Tied with the underlying politics of identity and land and access to resources, I started to wonder how this tendency towards setting boundaries and essentializing was also historically contingent and strategic to defend personal and collective rights and freedom that were at stake in this area, especially when it comes to land. In other words, what if this was part of the new generations' "ontological quest" or "self-determination" or "reconstruction" (Jackson 1998, Viveiros de Castro, 2003, Comaroff & Comaroff, 2009 Candea, 2011, Archambault, 2016)? I became unsure of how to create acceptable (a.k.a. non-essentializing) ethnographic representations while sustaining the accounts of participants and my own observations. Maybe feeling that crisis yet more vividly is what brings me closer to being an anthropologist?

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[5] Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO): "The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations is a specialized agency of the United Nations that leads international efforts to defeat hunger and improve nutrition and food security" (Wikipedia, 2021). available online: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Food_and_Agriculture_Organization

Chapters

In my first chapter, while drawing on the literature on youth and my own ethnographic material, I first aim to show how youth in Engaresero is a fragmented category. In order to be more context-specific, I will bring in the type of age-set system that was presented to me in Engaresero and use some of the local vernacular to talk about youth groups. The age-set system, part of the local and customary hierarchy, is organized by generations and gender and has its own set of immanent expectations and aspirations. Chapter 1 will delve into this age-set system and show how the next generations in Engaresero make use of boundary work to define their lifestyle, while paying particular attention to the notions of modernity, the urban and the rural. Historical accounts will bring more context to the relationship between the rural and the urban in Tanzania. In Engaresero, intergenerational dialogues on the topic induce self-reflexivity and even bring younger generations to review their priorities. These exchanges are a valued part of the local future-making process as another source of wisdom that contributes to building self-reliance. In Chapter 2, I will take a closer look at the notion of planning. Communication is an important part of this process as participants keep in mind how, when and to whom to communicate information in their network to make sure that trajectories can converge. Looking at family planning and the local "booking" process, I examine how younger generations juggling many priorities also try to "keep others happy (and quiet) while making their own happiness" (Archambault, 2017: 8). Some of these strategies show how youth are integrating new alternatives for intimacy into their locality while trying to preserve harmonious relationships. Intergenerational approval and support are key aspects of a successful marriage and therefore discretion for any subversive romantic pursuit requires "high knowledge", as participants put it, along with careful planning. "High knowledge" is an expression heard locally that I will use to refer to the scheming mind of young warriors striving to achieve objectives that are not always in line with the local expectations, without ruffling anyone.

The idea of the body as a space for mediation (Masquelier, 2005) will guide chapter 3. Hair is used as an example of the aesthetics and politics of belonging in Engaresero displaying the embodied diversions and subversions from one set of aspirations to another. I will describe in more detail the ritual of Eunoto during which the shaving ritual was the central event. Hair is a significant marker of "inclusion in the community as well as separation or deviation" (Masquelier, 2005). Through the collective shaving at Eunoto, every warrior from one generation convened to undergo the same procedure in order to move from one status to another simultaneously. This form of conviviality reduced the "social distancing" (Weiss, 2002) between differing trajectories, not only as they converged at the same place and time, but also as they all ended the ritual with shaven skulls, displaying the same hairstyles and the social status attached. The animation and conviviality of the moment showed a clear collective commitment to Mila, reconciling modernist trajectories with ancestral knowledge. The resistance of culture in this case is illustrated by this "inclusive form of differentiation" (Sahlins, 1999), homogeneously shaved heads, reinforcing the imagery of being a Maasai warrior.

Through the materiality of phone memory and the creation of ethnographic posters, I use Chapter 4 to explore mixed modes of transmission to mixed audiences. These varied modes of sharing knowledge and talking about Mila also demonstrate how memory and aspirations intersect, from a generational perspective, and the part technology plays in mediating these dynamics. The embedding of new technologies in the local context as a way of transmission can also be examined as a process of indigenization. Bringing in the politics of representation, I want to acknowledge my contribution to the timeless representation of the Maasai culture through the posters and commercial videos that I helped produce. As I found that these politics of representation closely intersect with the local politics of identity, it is relevant to reflect further on my role as an anthropologist. As the coordinators of their own ethnographic museum, and through social media, younger generations are creatively adapting to global trends of producing and sharing knowledge and content to express their identity and establish their own goals. The relationality of how they produce, disseminate and consume these forms of knowledge is representative of a multiplicity of epistemologies that they navigate quite smoothly. Therefore, how can I relay some of the ways of representing themselves and Massai culture through a critical anthropological lens, without diminishing the validity of their accounts?

The last chapter will look into the more sensitive, and unfortunately timeless debates around land and its appropriation. In Engaresero, the tourism landscape has led to what Comaroff & Comaroff have coined as "Ethnicity Inc.", or the commercialization of identity. As producers and consumers of their own ethnicity, the local guides skillfully juggle with the notions of authenticity and identity which are tied to land. When visiting Engaresero it is mandatory to hire a guide from the local community to visit the area and this guide must be dressed in a typical Maasai outfit, as appreciated by visitors. While some theories question the validity of such representations and the concept of authenticity, this strategy of ownership over representation is also a self-reliant way to deal with local political pressures that I will expand on in this last chapter. In this case, as mentioned earlier, the local tourism office is also a form of indigenization of the global flows coming from the tourism economy. Residents of the area have had a long history of marginalization over access and control of natural resources. These politics of identity are a way to create leverage in that unbalanced power negotiation with the Tanzanian state, and in debates over sovereignty. With that context in mind and revisiting my role, how can I ensure that if I add nuance to their representation, it is in favour of their claims of sovereignty over identity and land?

The Maasai as an ethno-linguistic group have experienced quite a number of essentializing and oppressive forces. "They were almost always forced to respond to policies and practices that they perceived as harmful in some way" (Hodgson, 2011: 211), usually imposed by dominant power, and dominant structures of knowledge, including Western academia. Today, the historical contingency has caused this essentializing form of language to become a form of discursive agency that some who consider themselves "Maasai" choose to use strategically. As anthropologists, it is therefore important to recognize our share of responsibility in this essentializing process and question our need to be critical about these reclaimed forms of representation. Indeed, a critique of the concept of "culture" in this case could be an imposition of our dominant theory once again, at the risk of diminishing their discursive agency. As I struggled with my own positionality, observing Maasai youth's expert navigation helped me also to move forward from an awkward position. It is somehow ironic yet redeeming that anthropological notions such as “culture” and even ethnography are being used by those who were once considered primitive. Since Maasai youth in Engaresero are now committed to preserving and owning their ancestral knowledge and cultural specificities - how can we make sure we don’t remove this agency with dominant theories while being good anthropologists?

Chapter 1

Becoming Young and Urban in Engaresero

> *“ The purpose [of education] is to transmit from one generation to the next*
> *the accumulated wisdom and knowledge of the society, and to prepare*
> *the young people for their future membership in the society and their*
> *active participation in its maintenance or development.”*
> *Julius Nyerere, 1967*

This chapter will bring in the different authorities that have contributed to shaping expectations and trajectories targeting young people in Engaresero. Jean and John Comaroff (2005) describe youth as “the historical offspring of modernity;” modernity here being an ideological formation suggesting a model of human development where youth stands as “both the essential precondition and the indefinite postponement of maturity” (p. 19). At independence, Tanzania and its visionary leader Nyerere had a defined model of development, as mentioned above, and started projecting these ideals of modernity on youth as part of the national culture program. This will become apparent in this Chapter as I will look at the specificities of Engaresero and the potential trajectories ascribed to and described by the new generations. Through ethnographic examples, I will share some of the generational perspectives on Engaresero as an urban and rural space and uncover some of the aspirations that next generations are bringing forward.

As I describe some of the local and historical structures of authority, I aim to show the competing influences that youth must navigate. Starting with the local age-set system and hierarchy, which some participants refer to as the “Maasai culture.” I want to pay attention to the tension between the descriptions of a system embodied and enacted as contemporary, plural, fluid and meaningful, and the timeless resonance it might have from an anthropological perspective because of a seemingly homogeneous and fixed representation. Most of my ethnographic examples will show a plurality of practices and fluidity from one societal construct to another. In discourse however, in describing aspects of the “Maasai culture”, Engaresero residents may be doing what scholars have called “boundary work” (Sahlins, 1999). What they are after is the “indigenization of modernity, their own cultural space in the global scheme of things" (Sahlins, 1999). These indigenization processes are combined with "boundary work" that make Anthropologists struggle since "hybridity is everyone" (Sahlins, 1999). Indeed, hybridity here is the idea that "externalities are indigenized, engaged in local configurations and become different from what they were" (Sahlins, 1999). From this point of view, the observations I share become more of an "analytic construal of a people's history" (Sahlins, 1999) that is rather invisible while participants are making clearly visible statements, verbally and even aesthetically, about their cultural uniqueness. Sahlins described this work as a sign of cultural determination and commitment, in the face of increasingly dominant global structures. The boundary work in Engaresero is a part of this resistance, and fuels intercultural and intergenerational dialogues. As I will show here, it has triggered and continues to provoke local, national, global and anthropological debates.

Introducing Social Orders

In order to discuss youth, I would like to bring in the vernacular age-set system that I found in Engaresero. An age-set system is "set in a hierarchical order, each [age-set] having an expected code of behaviour and a circumscribed public role" (Abbink, 2004).

When I arrived in Engaresero, Teme had agreed to help me with my research as an interpreter. He also suggested that I work with Tom, who was older and experienced in accompanying foreign and local researchers, mostly in the development sector and in Kenya, as well as a senior and well-respected guide for local tourism. On my second day, as I introduced myself and my work in the tourism office, one of the coordinators recommended that I be sure to talk to representatives, and if possible, the "laigwanani" or leaders of different generations to get a bigger picture of the various local perspectives on the topic. From there, Tom and Teme took their time to explain to me the local age-set system and the social hierarchy in Engaresero. The local age-set system categorizes groups of men into "generations" ("olaji" in Maa, Galaty, 1983 or "alaji" in Maa according to the Engaresero Museum members). Indeed, as I paid more attention, I observed quite a few times that in greeting, men would ask each other which age-set groups they belonged to, in order to clarify the hierarchy between them. Tom continued to explain that each generation will go through a cycle of rites of passage called "Orpiron" in Maa. Orpiron starts around puberty with circumcision. From there, men go through different phases. Once circumcised, they become "warriors" or "morans" (in Kiswahili and Kenyan English, Galaty, 1983, Meiu, 2009) or “ormorani” (in Maa according to Engaresero Museum members). Once men achieve the status of warrior, they are bestowed responsibilities towards their society and are expected to be involved and active in economic and political matters of their society. This status is kept for about 15 years, until they retire to elderhood. At one point, the next generation of warriors is set up and initiated, until they officially take over the full responsibility of warriorhood for their society. Each generation is meant to be respectful of the previous generations that are “like their fathers”. Teme, who was just a few years older than me, proudly mentioned that he had recently “retired” from warriorhood, just like all members of the Ilkorianga generation, and was now considered an elder, or “Irpayani” in Maa (interchangeably used for “husband” as well). Therefore he was in the same stage as Tom, however, as he was two generations younger, a certain hierarchy remained and prevailed between them.

For women, rites of passage were more private than collective. As they get older, their social status becomes connected to their marital and maternal status. Starting around puberty, they historically also would go through female circumcision (a practice criminialized in Tanzania since 1998), going from “Endito” or uncircumcised girl to “Esiangiki” a circumcised young woman on her way to making a family. Once they are initiated, their social status will depend on which generation their husband is from. For example, a woman married to an older man, is to be respected as the mother of a woman married to a man from a younger generation, even if they are both the same age. Women who are settled with children are called “Yeyo”.

The majority of the participants I was able to talk to for this research were men. Reflecting back, the main explanations I could find were that my initial criteria was users of smartphones, and I was pointed to the local guides at the tourism office, a large majority of whom were men. As I looked for other early adopters known in the community, most were also men working outside their homestead. I even had to drive a few kilometres out of the village to another area of Engaresero to speak to one of the very few known female smartphone users. Also, not many women spoke Kiswahili locally, and even less spoke English, which made more spontaneous communications and conversations quite limited in the field as my knowledge of Maa is unfortunately very basic. Finally, as I was pointed to laigwanani or other members of society with a specific role for interviews, they were also all male authorities. I have therefore gained mostly insights on this age-set system and in this overall research experience from the male perspective and this is what comes out in this paper.

Shortly after my stay, I was sent the list of generations of warriors traced back to the 18th century, which I have annexed. Here below are the main generation names in chronological order that include research participants mentioned in this paper and that I will refer to:

- ILMAKAA: members' initiation through circumcision happened between 1969 (official start of this new generation and start of the Orpiron) to 1976 (cut off date to belong to this generation and to start moving through different stages of the Orpiron). Tom is part of the Ilmakaa generation.
- ILKING'ONDE: 1983 to 1990.
- ILKORIANGA: 1997 to 2004. Teme is part of the Ilkorianga generation.
- ILNYANGULO: 2011 to 2018. Current generation of warriors during the time of my research.

For each rite of passage or other related event, different generations are brought together and older generations are expected to share their blessings and advice to the younger ones. I will get into more detail on this in the next Chapters. I also learned that each generation is assigned two leaders, called "laigwanani". They are expected to be involved in any village concerns and sit as representatives for societal matters, together with the laigwanani of other generations, institutional leaders and governmental authorities.

There is therefore a clear social order in the Maasai system of Engaresero anchored in intergenerational hierarchy and implying specific expectations from each new generation. Tom specified that this system is regional and applies to all Maasais in both Tanzania and Kenya. They usually try to harmonize the timeline, names of generations and practices, however the border system that has been reinforced overtime was making this trickier. He mentioned that there were 16 different Maasai sections in Tanzania, attached to Kisongo, "the traditional center", a specific place where a group of Maasai elders worked to transmit the knowledge and processes to the laigwanani of each section and each generation. Engaresero was one of these 16 sections. He reminded me that each section had their own specific ways of following customs, or Mila. Therefore, everything that we discussed when it came to Mila was specific to Engaresero.

Urban Life in Engaresero

At the start of my field research, Teme was helping me find accommodation. He recommended I choose between the village center, where the network was stronger and more people were smartphone users, especially at night, and Ndalalani, further out (about a 20-minute walk from the village center), in a more traditional homestead, called "boma" in Kiswahili. I could stay there with his mother-in-law, Nanyor, and I would have a better chance of learning some Maa.

He personally had chosen to live in the village center, a place he called with a hint of humor his "ghetto." His house had a rectangular design, unlike the typical round-shaped boma. The boma would usually be built around a space for animals, or cow den and would often be shared with extended family, each grown woman, or Yeyo, having their own unit or home, "Aang" in Maa. A few other guides I met were also staying in the "ghetto", where "the network is strong and you can access Facebook". Danny was one of them. He was also the first University student from Engaresero and had graduated just a year earlier. He had come back to Engaresero to work as a guide while figuring out his next steps. He invited me over for "brunch", as he said playfully, with his friends, giving me the chance to hear the rap and hip hop music they liked and try a delicious meat stew. Like other higher education students of Engaresero, Danny had gone to the city to study. As he had graduated in Sociology, he had come across Cultural Anthropology and had found it very interesting. He shared an anecdote from that class: when he realized that it was about culture, he had decided to come to class dressed in the typical Maasai outfit "shuka" in Kiswahili, "Orbirangeti" in Maa. As the school had a uniform, however, the teacher said that even though his reasoning made sense, there was an obligation for all to wear the school uniform. He had been told that he could therefore not wear his Shuka for his Cultural Anthropology class.

Upon returning to his hometown, Danny had brought some of his new-found cosmopolitan or urban ways of living back to Engaresero. He decided to stay in the ghetto and to find one day every weekend to visit his family in their boma. He explained his choice to me: "In the other cultures (Wasukuma, Wachagga, Wapare…) they say: if you are 20+ years old and you stay at your parents' house, it signifies weakness. As a man you must depend on yourself. I feel really like that. So I say that I can live in the ghetto and depend on myself."

During my stay, I had heard guides talking about "urban life" and had initially thought they were remembering their time in the city. However I eventually realized that the urban lifestyle in

Engaresero referred to life in the village center, or “the ghetto”, away from the Maasai bomas[6]. Bomas in this case were situated in the periphery of the village center, with direct access to pastures for animals. At that moment, the expression of Charles Piot in regards to a village’s “own vernacular modernity” (Piot, 1999), took on its full meaning for me.

A few weeks later, as I crossed Danny at the tourism office where he worked, referred to as the “CBO”, he told me that he was going to take some time away from the urban life and instead stay in his family boma for a few days. He valued proximity in order to maintain familial relations: “face interaction encourages unity” as he had told me earlier while talking about the risks of relying too much on mobile phone communications.

I chose to live in the more rural environment of Ndalalani, where I was able to experience the steady pastoral life-beat, mostly quiet after dark and a very reliable routine. On the other hand, Teme would often talk to me about the party life in the village center after dark, sometimes involving showing off on motorcycles, drinking and dancing. Teme was also correct about the very unreliable access to the network, whether the internet or even the regular phone line in Ndalalani. My neighbours would show me the specific locations in Ndalalani that increased our chances to be able to make a phone call.

The other interpreter I worked with, Tom, is from the Ilmakaa generation. He was one of the few older guides working in the CBO. He was also one of the few members of generations older than Ilkorianga that I met in Engaresero who spoke English. In the past he had worked for international organizations, mostly in Kenya, and even had the opportunity to travel to Europe and North America for meetings or conferences. He had therefore lived and worked in different multicultural settings, mostly hired for community development projects in Maasai areas. Eventually Tom came back to Engaresero and had chosen to live in his Boma, near the CBO, with his wife, children and animals. When we first talked, he had told me that I could confidently rely on him for my research since “he is a Maasai but also has passed through modernity.”

As we were discussing the topic of urban life with other local guides, mostly from the Ilnyangulo generation, Tom expressed his own impressions: “Urban life is like you can be illiterate but you live around people with high capability and you adapt to know how they are working and talking, and you become mature like them. Wisdom is used for people outside of school, and psychology or philosophy is for people who are learned [they received formal education].”

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[6] One of the guides asked for my assistance to make a promotional video for tourists to stay in his boma, which you can find here. This video shows what one can find in this boma and what it can look like.
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mWN6fZ4n-C8&ab_channel=SapuroMoinga

Looking at modernity as a model of human development that one can “pass through” as Tom described, was, I found, a nice way to describe the mobility of people and ideas, without being attached to one sort of linear system. Hearing the spectrum of experience and appreciation of urban life that had infiltrated Engaresero lifestyles was also an illustration of Piot’s idea: “I know of no bounded, culturally homogenous African culture” (1999: 23). Danny shared a similar perspective: “I believe culture is dynamic and adaptive, you can adapt something that you see is good. That is my personal point of view.”

Self-reliance as Social Order

This navigation of different models that Danny and Tom describe, retaining and adapting knowledge and experiences to tailor one's own aspirations, resonates with the idea of “self-reliance” brought by another father figure in Tanzania mentioned earlier: President Nyerere. As the first president, Nyerere was actually nicknamed “father of the nation” or “Baba wa Taifa” in Kiswahili (Chachage and Cassam, 2010). He had big plans for Tanzania, its development and creating a social order, independent from colonial powers. Nyerere first focused on national identity, unity and self-reliance (“kujitegemea” in Kiswahili) with the intention to break from the colonial past. He therefore prioritized the creation of a “Ministry of National Culture and Youth, responsible for seeking out “the best of the traditions and customs of all our tribes and make them part of our national culture” (Ivaska, 2011: 37). Nyerere was also keen on establishing national standards of modernity to be implemented by TANU, through a “top-down vision of the state’s role in shaping culture” (Ivaska, 2011: 5). As Ivaska (2011) shows, TANU soon encountered resistance, especially after the liberation movement spear-headed by Nyerere in various areas of the continent. It seemed contradictory to impose yet another vision of what modern decency might look like. Debates were especially heated in Dar Es Salaam, as urban life for TANU was more of a source of anxiety around what they considered decadence brought by past colonial modernity. This fixation led to an “idealization of the rural” by government authorities (Ivaska, 2011: 17-18). The idea of the urban however, as shown in Engaresero, is quite versatile and also popular amongst younger generations, as TANU will experience in Dar Es Salaam. Young Tanzanians were quite interested to take part in the "cosmopolitan field of global culture", rendering more complex the question of what is foreign and what is indigenous (Ivaska, 2011: 22). As the state was encountering resistance, notably from urban youth in Dar Es Salaam, the national culture project quickly became proscriptive, attempting to stifle some of the dynamism of culture that Danny refers to above and stirring "urban struggles" (Ivaska, 2011: 23). The national culture project started defining and imposing both the desirable traditions and the proper urban behavior, through policies such as the mini-skirt ban, a type of clothing seen as a marker of urban indecency, but also banning the "Maasai traditional dress" (Ivaska, 2011: 59). Both were deemed too revealing and indecent, not fitting with the projections of postcolonial Tanzanian ideals.

The Tanzanian nation-state was therefore not only imposing its own version of decent modernity, they were also triaging what traditions were appropriate for the future of the nation. Paradoxically, like their colonial predecessors, they "accused Maasai of being anachronistic relics of 'the past' and 'the primitive'" (Hodgson, 2011: 66). In the last few decades, in order to defend themselves, some newly registered "Maasai NGOs" reappropriated in their own discourses the "enduring stereotypes of Maasai as culturally (and even at times, racially) distinct" in order to gain international support and legitimacy in their political claims (Hodgson, 2011). Therefore, generations of Maasai have seen overlapping and continuous historical dynamics of "cultural appropriations" and complicated "notions of the authentic" reflective of the socio-political struggles of the moment (Ivaska, 2011: 217).

Going back to Nyerere's plans, one of the strategies to build national unity was through an education system accessible to all: free of charge and which would not distinguish children by race or religion (Nyerere, 1967). The curriculum would be "Tanzanian in content," in the national language of Kiswahili and filled with "our national songs and dances" (Nyerere, 1967). For Nyerere, his people had to liberate themselves by expanding their own consciousness through education, or "education for self-reliance" (Nyerere, 1967). As this national system was presented as desirable and mandatory, next generations in Engaresero have therefore been attending the national schooling system like all other children in Tanzania and follow the Tanzanian curriculum.

Tom, Teme and I had gone to meet Tom's friends. They were two other elders, laigwanani, leaders from the Ilmakaa generation. According to them, "changes in traditions" were influenced by institutions such as national education or church. They did regret that education made young people less readily available to serve their society, however commented that education also lessened ethnic conflicts, whereas in the past they would often quarrel with neighbouring ethnic groups.

On the other hand, they also believed these youthful behaviours to be temporary: "People who are educated are eager to try new things. It is very difficult to learn the Mila [customs] completely - but we've seen that as they are young, they run, they run, but then they come back to traditions. When you get mature - then you can choose the right way."

One of the assumptions used by Nyerere in his philosophy of education was that "the individual becomes meaningful to him or herself and to others only as a member of society" (Nyerere, 1985). Nyerere (1985) also recognized that "education is not something which is done just in schools." Before colonisation and the establishment of a formal education system, to become "learned," as Tom would say, children were still getting an important education, even if informal. In the logic that "every adult was a teacher to a greater or lesser degree," children would learn their history "by listening to the stories of the elders" (Nyerere, 1967).

It seems like this might be a shared principle with the Maasai elders' point of view that the role of society from an intergenerational perspective is quite important in their prescriptive social order. The Ilmakaa laigwanani described that "Maasais used to always ensure everyone had equal access to resources" and that the Maasai society "used to help so that you are not alone - because alone you can die of thinking." However, since the constitution was implemented, they also agreed that "education is a key of life - it is a human right." One of the students I met who had pursued higher education observed another generational gap as "many parents are wondering what's the use of sending their kids to school since when they come back they do not find a job." The final line of Elders was that as "things are changing," it is necessary to give their children the choice of what they want to do. "This is the most important - according to Tanzanian law and as the heritage from Nyerere."

At the end of this intense conversation with the Ilmakaa elders, Teme came out pensive and mentioned to me that he was now thinking about leaving urban life. Since he had a plot in

Ndalalani, he could start building his own boma and move his family there. He mentioned that he would discuss it with his wife, who was living in a slightly bigger town about two hours away by motorcycle. Later on he would encounter his wife's resistance as she was quite happy with her urban style of living and did not want to go back to living in a boma. Teme dropped the idea for the time being.

Going back to Abbink (2004), "In explaining the youth experience in Africa, a processual view on the place and role of youth is needed to take into account both these struggles [between older and younger generations] as well as the existing cultural representations of youth, recognizing that they are set in a context of faulty modernization, social rupture and inequalities of economic opportunity or power." Faulty modernization, as some of the elders also liked to describe it, adds perspective to some of the metropolitan imagery that might seem just as romantic as my imagery of Engaresero when I first arrived. The general global confidence in modernity's potential for development and progress is paired with growing inequalities; just a small example of that is the cost of a phone in relation to the average salary, which varies drastically from one continent to another. The "globalization system", as Tom called it, was often desirable for new generations, but mostly inevitable or "not alternative", as Ivaska mentions (2011: 28). Therefore, competing ideologies expressed by different authorities, at school or at home, could also trigger some critical distance for one model over the other for the younger generation. As I will continue to show in this paper, the next generations listen to the stories of the elders while also attending the education system, while "passing through modernity" and participating in the global flows of imagery, technology and economies. In this context, the plurality of representations of modernity and desirable futures is as inevitable as the singular appeal of modernity as a global feature. The new generations are demonstrating significant reflexivity and self-reliance in crafting meaningful lives in relation to the multiple systems and authorities with which they interact.

Being Connected in Engaresero

An important piece of equipment for urban life is the mobile phone and more recently, access to the internet. Tom told me that "according to globalization, now young people use the phone." It was also explained to me that in Engaresero, of the last generation of Ilkorianga warriors, "about 30% were using mobile phones." Throughout my research I was pointed towards one of the first of the Ilkorianga generation who started using a smartphone about three years earlier. He had come to use it thanks to the manager of the campsite where he worked, who had come from Arusha to check on things once in a while and had installed WI-FI. In the case of the Ilnyangulo warriors, approximately 70% of them were now using phones, according to another estimation. My interlocutors would differentiate a smartphone, “simu kubwa” in Kiswahili, or “touchi” with access to internet and social media, from the regular smaller mobile phone, “simu ndogo” in Kiswahili, mainly used for calls and texting; although new models also had storage capacity and sometimes even access to a light version of Facebook Messenger.

Most of the smartphone owners I met from the Ilnyangulo generation had gone to school and returned or were engaged in a schooling program and temporarily living in Engaresero. As it was the high season for tourism, they could find opportunities to earn money as guides.

When I did my interview with Danny and discussed user profiles, two warriors walked by playing music through a small phone. Danny got up and went to ask them why they didn’t have a big phone. He reported back: “They don’t need it. According to them, it’s only for those who went to school and can use it very well.”

Using the phone allowed those who had spent time away or were living outside Engaresero, to stay in touch with friends and family. The smartphone with access to social media would be appreciated as it allowed users to share images of their different experiences with their friends. On a more practical basis, students I met also mentioned the fact that with a smartphone they could access their school results online, which saved them a trip back to school.

During my first interviews, participants of the CBO pointed out to me some of the few Maasai ladies known to have a smartphone and to use social media. Two of them were working as guides, and one as a teacher at the local primary school. They had gotten a phone while they had been living away to study, as a way to stay in touch with their family. All three women explained that following their return to Engaresero, their smartphones had broken and that they had not been able to repair them yet. Indeed buying a new smartphone involved going to the city of Arusha, requiring a significant amount of time and money. They all mentioned missing using these devices as it would allow them to stay in touch with their group of friends from school and see their life updates through social media. However, they didn’t need them on a daily basis. All three ladies had plans to get another smartphone or find a way to repair theirs when possible, even if it had already been a few months. It seemed like their future was more certainly established in Engaresero as all were mothers, ran a business, were teaching at a local school or guiding tourists and living in their family boma.

In our first days, Teme also told me that he was using his wife's smartphone as his was broken, and meanwhile she could use the small phone. He was trying to get a new phone and evaluating which model would be most adequate.

These generational and gendered dynamics were also explained to me through the distribution of roles in society when it came to communication. I learned that warriors historically have had the responsibility of sharing information and to be messenger, "Orkilikwai" in Maa. If anyone, especially elder generations, had a message they needed to share, they would ask a warrior to walk to that person or place and ensure the information is passed on, and warriors would be much obliged to do so. Even before the messengers system, two elders mentioned the use of ropes connected to cow bells, linking one place to another. If one was to ring those bells, the recipients would send their messengers over to get the information, "even if they had to walk all night." As Salazar and Nillson observe: "We see 'new' mobile technologies as an extension of old ones, often serving a catalysing purpose, compressing time and space. In a 'moving landscape' such as Maasailand, this gives rise to interesting dynamics and restructured power relations." (Salazar, Nilsson, 2017). In this case, as I will describe below, not only is the phone an extension of old technology, it also reproduces social dynamics where the warrior or messenger is responsible to pass on the message, responding to the elders' orders, with more agency and control over their time. Since it is also a powerful tool of communication, with the more recent possibility of being in contact with international entities, it is creating relatively exclusive access to certain networks and resources.

Nowadays, with phones, transmission of information is easier and faster. It was still important however to examine the type of communication achieved through the phone. Some participants mentioned that even though the phone "simplifies the work", some information is better passed on from person to person. For example, death would be announced in person, at their family's homes, usually by chosen elders, and with gender roles: to talk to the woman who might be affected, an older woman would be sent over. In this way, all members of society have their specific responsibility of sharing information, carefully and according to circumstances. Indeed,

another handful of participants interviewed said that a negative aspect of using the phone would be to potentially receive “bad or sad news” in abrupt ways which could cause a state of shock.
Certainly this new style of passing on information required some adaptation as well. Teme recalled a time when phones were still seldomly used (mainly because of a lack of network), and his father had asked him to go and check whether that day’s expected guests were on their way. Teme took out his phone, called the guests’ son, and updated his father that they would be arriving soon. Teme’s father, seeing that his son was still nearby, questioned whether the information was true: how could he know if he didn’t walk there and talk to them directly? For a moment, Teme was in trouble, but the guests arrived soon enough and his father was surprised to see that indeed the information had been accurate.
Ilmakaa elders also mentioned that using a phone definitely “simplifies the work” but also that it makes lying easier, and facilitates “empty messages,” or even sending out “abusing messages.” Although they recognize the efficacy of using mobile technology for communications, they still have reservations and suspicions towards these new practices that could be subversive. While their doubts revealed some generational blind spots, they also led to a deeper analysis of the consequences of using a phone, versus in-person communications. For example, most participants mentioned how they found that mobile interactions reduced the “face interactions,” and this growing distance could “destroy neighborhood relationships.” Indeed the pastoral rhythm, between morning and evening tea and passing through the neighbourhoods on the way to and from their pastures, would include greeting your neighbours and sharing updates. Danny, from his urban life perspective knew this: “The goodness of this [calling on the phone] is if I’m busy I save time and distance. But on the other side I feel bad because it is not the same when you face your neighbour physically and share stories.”

According to the Ilnyangulo warriors I talked to, the mobile phone facilitates several of their activities, especially because they don’t need to move around to communicate. For example, for social events such as weddings, someone skilled with the phone could more easily and promptly organize fundraising through the phone, especially with contacts living away. One of the coordinators of the CBO mentioned how using Whatsapp allowed him to partake in political discussions around development issues, towards which the CBO was contributing some of its

profits. That way he could juggle more easily between his office job at the CBO, where he was expected to be all day in case tourists arrive, and other matters underway.
In these examples, warriors juggle expectations that could usually involve walking for hours or even days to pass on a message, while they might have a job to do or other obligations. This might seem senseless now that mobile communications exist, even if sharing information over the phone is not the same as doing so in person. While they sort through recommendations from their elders, and experience different systems first-hand, they are reimagining the role of the "Orkilikwai" or the "Maasai messenger" as Tom translated, based on their knowledge of possibilities, and their access to technology. They are developing new contemporary practices, more in accordance with their daily activities and life-style choices - for example, being a tourist guide. As McIntosh explained in her research in Kenya with the ethno-linguistic group Giriama on the Kenyan coast, technology and language usage shows "a new way of being Giriama, in which one retains ethnic specificity yet, rather than being framed as backward-looking, aspires to be a successful participant in a wider world" (McIntosh, 2010).

Resonating with Sahlins and Piot, vernacular modernity or in this case the indigenization of modernity, is created by this circular migration of people, goods and ideas to and from Engaresero (Piot, 1999, Sahlins, 1999). As these warriors dichotomize the village center as urban life and the surrounding bomas as rural life, they are also creating continuity between their experience in the city and their return home. They are "reversing center and periphery" (Sahlins, 1999) and applying their own lens and visions of modernity within their context. Danny and Teme, amongst others, are re-creating the urban experience locally and bringing in new global forms to materialize their aspirations (Weiss, 2002).

Chapter 2

Expectations and Aspirations for the Young in Engaresero

Soundtrack

Recorded Ossongolio songs with children at the Boma

Achille Mbembe (1992) helps to set the scene with his description of the post-colony as a plurality of public spaces:

> “each having its own separate logic yet nonetheless liable to be entangled with other logics when operating in certain specific contexts: hence the postcolonial 'subject' has had to learn to bargain in this conceptual marketplace. Furthermore, subjects in the postcolony have also had to have a marked ability to manage not just a single identity for themselves but several, which are flexible enough for them to negotiate as and when required.”

Contemporary practices of being a warrior in Engaresero require such articulations and negotiations between identities. The plurality of “being subject”, when activated strategically can allow more ownership over one’s positionality in terms of relative distanciation from the power structures that they interact with in the different “conceptual marketplaces” (Mbembe, 1992). This section will highlight this idea through the complex mapping and timing of the different local trajectories experienced by warriors and the idea of “making a plan.”

The first chapter discusses the ways in which warriors of Engaresero managed to create their own vernacular modernity from all the models encountered, which reminded me of the idea of visão, vision in Portuguese, described by Julie Archambault (2017). For Mozambican youth, “Visão is the ability to see and read the landscape” and “make the most of whatever they encounter,” amongst many other aspects (Archambault, 2017: 18). In Engaresero, I would say that participants had similar skills, although they would refer to this concept as “applying high knowledge” or “making a plan”. Both of these terms referred to implementing one’s vision for the future through careful planning and sometimes cunning stratagems, in order to maintain social status in different places, preserve relations and accomplish personal objectives. As McIntosh describes for the Giriama in Kenya and their versatile use of languages on mobile phones, these young people are “shaping creative new ways of simultaneously being ‘in the global system’ and being Giriama” (McIntosh, 2010), or, in this paper, being Maasai. This chapter will examine how warriors of Engaresero carefully organize their present and future activities in order to combine opportunities for work, education and social or romantic life in Engaresero. Interacting with different social geographies also allows them to explore “avenues for developing visão”: through education, involvement with organizations and foreigners, which open up access to more resources and knowledge (Archambault, 2017: 19). For those applying high knowledge and choosing to create their own track, off the beaten path, the process of mapping and delimiting these landscapes can also open up spaces for negotiations leading to their envisioned self-realization. Different trajectories also open up spaces for romantic encounters and heterogeneous ways to deploy “ideologies of love” (Cole & Thomas, 2009: 5). The context of Engaresero, with its history and its ongoing modernization, is bringing in “competing conceptions of attachment and alliation” (Cole & Thomas, 2009: 5). I will discuss in the following accounts how warriors plan for their intimate lives. Some of these stories show “the continual reformulation of cultural boundaries” (Cole & Thomas, 2009: 29), with a gendered and generational perspective. Through similar strategies as found in Mozambique, the young generations will not hesitate to use concealment and “play on the visions of others” (Archambault, 2017: 19) to pursue their romantic aspirations. In all cases, the mobile phone is the one item that enables a better navigation of these complex social geographies and supports “attempts to claim authorship over their lives” (Archambault 2017: 20).

Strategic Plans

As trajectories, lifestyles and rhythms have multiplied in Engaresero, organizing collective events following the calendar of Orpiron and getting everyone together requires good planning and anticipation. Warriors of Engaresero, depending on their activities, may be experiencing different rhythms. For example, locally, the Maasai pastoralist lifestyle is marked by the rainy and dry seasons. Evans-Pritchard (1939) who studied the “time-reckoning” of the Nuer pastoral community described this as “oecological time” or “occupational time” meaning the “reflections of their relations to environment.” He also describes “structural time” as the “relations to one another in the social structure,” like an age-set system that relates time to a “group of people” (Evans-Pritchard, 1939) and in the case of Engaresero, these groups are organized by generations.

These notions enable one to “predict and organize his life accordingly” (Evans-Pritchard, 1939). In contemporary Engaresero, there are some additional reckonings to consider when it comes to planning in time. Those attending school are subject to the national school calendar, including examination dates and holidays. Those employed are bound to their work obligations and conditions. The warriors would need to organize around these different time markers in order to maintain their trajectory and social status in different social landscapes. The Orpiron entailing rites of passage to move from one status to another was an important referential for the local social order. For example, as long as a young boy has not entered warriorhood (the initial stage is referred to as “Alayeni” in Maa) he would have to take orders from anyone older than him. Needless to say, most of these Alayeni were looking forward to progressing to the next steps. Once initiated as a warrior, or “Ormorani,” they can finally make their own decisions, obligations are transformed into responsibilities and it is up to them to start planning their life, often advised by the older generations. This section will look at the organization and communication process of one of these initiations and the experiences of certain warriors navigating different calendars and cultural expectations.

I was incredibly lucky and timely in my field research. I arrived unexpectedly amidst the preparation of an important rite of passage for the Ilnyangulo generation of warriors: Eunoto. Eunoto takes place every seven to eight years, according to the Orpiron calendar. I was able to witness the last weeks of organizing this event, and the transformations in the village as more and more warriors were coming back home to attend this rite of passage. Inevitably, organizing Eunoto would require forward planning. In this case, all members of the Ilnyangulo generation, about 700 warriors, had to be informed of the schedule so they could start preparing for their absence from their current activities. For those residing outside their native locality, this meant figuring out transport and making arrangements with their teachers or employers in order to be present at Eunoto.

Throughout the planning process, phones have been a tool of great importance to update everyone on the preparations and final exact dates, which were confirmed only about 2 weeks before the big day. Ilnyangulo warriors had also been expected to gather resources in order to contribute to the celebration, in money or in kind, and had been regularly communicating to keep track of resources and needs, up until the actual event. One of the two laigwanani of the Ilnyangulo generation, Taiko, explained their overall system of communication to get everyone of the same generation informed. When I asked him for more details on this, he generously described his experience from the very beginning. First, he and another warrior had been elected to be leaders or laigwanani. This had been at the start of the Orpiron of the Ilnyangulo generation, in 2011. The official fathers of their generation were laigwanani from 2 generations ago, the Ilking'onde generation. The Ilkong'onde had been the ones responsible for getting the Ilnyangulo generation initiated according to the Kisongo calendar. What Taiko was keen on sharing is the fact that to be chosen as laigwanani, the Ilking'onde elders had gone through a thorough investigation into their family history to check that there were no dubious character traits. He explained how they had asked: "Is my mother a good person? Was my father a good person? What about my paternal grand-father?" and so on, moving up the family tree. According to Taiko, the elders had investigated all the way up to nine generations before him. Once it seemed like the family histories of the potential laigwanani were deemed honest and trustworthy in general, the elders had presented their short-listed candidates to the rest of the Ilnyangulo warriors to confirm their choice. The first laigwanani and main leader was representing the younger age group of that generation, and the second leader was part of the older range. Taiko was 28 when I interviewed him, and part of the older section of the Ilnyangulo generation. I couldn't help thinking that this was quite a powerful case of youth empowerment! Indeed, from then on, the two laigwanani were in charge of organizing rites of passages, representing their generation at all official meetings, mediating any conflicts that required support, and more. The two laigwanani are therefore also the ones in charge of being the point of contact with the elders from Kisongo[7]. Teme translated the place of Kisongo as the "traditional center", and Tom had described it earlier as the "origin of the tradition". Once the laigwanani had been chosen, each of the 9 sub-villages of Engaresero had also elected two representatives to be the main contacts for the laigwanani. That way, Taiko and his colleague could rely on them to share information and cover the whole geographic area.

Going back to Eunoto, the two laigwanani had started planning and budgeting for the ceremony about a year ago. They had planned to figure out details and establish requirements, such as necessary financial or material contributions, in order to take advantage of the rainy season to share the information with all sub-villages. Indeed, while there was rain, people would usually be closer to home, as there would be green pastures available for their cattle, contrary to the dry season when grazing could require going and staying in quite remote places for weeks or months. The two laigwanani would contact the representatives of sub-villages through the phone with group messages, if not possible through a physical visit, and would ensure that they were able to spread the word in their area, including those who might be in more distant places. The phone therefore helped reconnect with those who had moved outside the locality whether it be for their livestock, employment or education, so that they could still be included in local ceremonies. In more general terms, thoughtful planning was essential to ensure that generations could be brought together to celebrate cultural events and create intergenerational dialogue, especially in a widening world.

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[7] Engaresero was one of the 16 Maasai sections regrouped under Kisongo. All laigwanani of each of these 16 sections are in charge of meeting in Kisongo to receive their blessings and instructions, and undergo the rituals themselves with the elders of Kisongo before everyone else does. They are initiated first, in order to initiate the rest.

Part of this physical distance was brought by the mandatory national education system in Tanzania. Nationally, as mentioned earlier, Nyerere had focused on human development and self-reliance; literacy for him, was a prerequisite. In line with his egalitarian concepts of development, he considered primary education as necessary and mandatory, and launched a campaign he would call Universal Primary Education, UPE. During Nyerere's presidency, Tanzania managed to bring illiteracy down from 90% to 10% in a little more than two decades (Chachage & Cassam, 2010). The education system often led to boarding schools, especially for secondary school levels, as students would be assigned to schools generally outside their locality.
Maasai communities, like the rest of Tanzanians have been increasingly and sometimes forcefully integrated in the national system, including the education system. As Tom explained to me, once school became mandatory and child labour considered criminal, Maasai homesteads who used to rely on children to take care of cattle suddenly had to reorganize their resources and plan differently. Nowadays, with children going to school, parents have to spend more resources to not only equip them to access education, but also to have someone else take the cattle out to the grazing fields. According to an elder from the Ilking'onde generation: "Education of children is often in opposition with Maasai traditions."

This had resulted in a decreasing number of children and wives per Maasai family. Indeed, some of the members of the new generations, while sharing their projections of the future, mentioned how they didn't want too many children as they would have to pay for their education. Some Ilnyangulo warriors with a regenerated perspective would see education as a desired path for their children and therefore prefer having fewer children in order to be able to afford their education. One warrior I interviewed mentioned: “I saw many getting education and it seems other people think that it is better to follow them rather than remain like the elder generation. They have to keep moving forward.”

Once entered into the school system, if students wanted to successfully move from one level to another, it would require a new set of time markers to plan around: accumulating resources to pay tuition fees, attending school, being home for the holidays and studying for national exams in order to pass to the next level. These requirements would not always be in line with the Maasai pastoralist rhythms. The family I lived with had their child walking two to three hours daily to attend primary school when the rainy season came as they had to move up to a plateau called Leparakash for adequate grazing fields. The younger child would skip daycare and support the herding instead, until they would move closer to the pre-primary school for the dry season. Sometimes an informal daycare would be set up by warriors themselves on these temporary settlements. On days off, herding the animals was the priority, leaving little room for homework.
As there was no secondary school in Engaresero, accessing the next level of education would also mean moving away from home. Going to secondary school and following the program of national education required juggling different responsibilities, sometimes hardly compatible even geographically. One secondary school student, Nina, who came home from the break had told me how she struggled to study at home, where she was expected to contribute like everyone else. Indeed, in my weeks in Ndalalani, even with very few expectations to manage as I had limited homestead skills, I found it hard to scribble even a few notes in my notebook, mostly because of all the young children around. I would usually end up going to the village center and sit at the guest house terrasse to find some space and quiet to focus. The laigwanani Taiko told me, a few weeks after Eunoto, how being a laigwanani made him quite proud and he was very happy to have been given that responsibility. However, this task had prevented him from pursuing secondary education as he had to stay close to his people. Today he was interested in learning English so that he could be more involved in the local tourism activities, but could not afford it for now. Indeed, laigwanani is a valued social status that is not monetized in any way.

Ali is one of the local guides that I interviewed and a member of the Ilnyangulo generation. During one of our conversations, he recalled the time of his decision to start the Orpiron and enter into warriorhood, as he also wanted to pursue secondary education. As Orpiron would last for about 10 to 15 years of his life, this was a big decision. He had decided to push back schooling for one more year in order to take the time to enter warriorhood without rushing through the different rituals. Indeed, after circumcision warriors traditionally go on an initiation trip out of their homes and stay "in the bush" for a while, a period of their lives called "Oskolio." This period can be a few weeks up to a few months or years and seems to be perceived as a time of freedom and discovery, until they are ready to come back to society and take on their full responsibilities as warriors. Another young man explained how he and his family had opted for him to start secondary school sooner rather than later. Quickly, he realized that this would delay circumcision relative to his peers. It became a cause of humiliation, even in the national schooling system. He explained that circumcision was a norm of desirable masculinity, and because of that he had even lied about his status to girlfriends and friends. When he realized the "standard of performance" expected from a young man at school, he started to review his plan. Eventually he decided to prioritize entering warriorhood while studying. He therefore started saving money through helping others with their essays and homework at school, until he had enough to buy all the celebratory material needed to go home and organize his own circumcision ceremony, without depending on his father. Over the next school break, he called his family and announced that he was coming back to finally proceed with the ritual - even if that would make his Oskolio very brief and his next upcoming school examination particularly painful.
While Ali had spent a whole year on this trip, this young man had chosen otherwise and only had two weeks of Oskolio before returning to his school program, to not miss exams.

Planning in these cases required juxtaposing different schedules and meanings. Making these decisions would impact the upcoming few years if not decades of their lives. Aspirations of the new generations do not always align with uni-linear developmental models carried by modern and traditional institutions. As they are criticized in one way or another, the next generations are trying hard to fulfill expectations. This process is furthermore acrobatic for some as mobile phones are banned within school grounds, and as the familial homestead, social responsibilities and pastoral lifestyle allow little space and time for studying. The systems that have been imposed and superimposed overtime complexify the lives of these new generations, requiring them to be self-reliant and strategic in their navigation to sustain their belonging and legitimacy in these different structures, all at once. Self-reliance in Engaresero therefore may also relate to "applying high knowledge" and "making a plan," and includes the ability to learn from multiple sources and experiences in order to pursue "successful living" in more than one social geography (Archambault 2017, 17).

Romantic Plots

I quickly realized from some of the women's surprise, and worried reactions when hearing that I was neither married nor a mother, that at my age, not having a family was uncommon. It was usually part of the usual introductory questions: what is your name, what is your husband's name - or revert back to my father's name as I am not married - and how many children I had. "Meata engarai", I don't have any children, was one of the first sentences I had to learn in Maa. After which, I was often kindly reassured: "you're just a bit late".

My research had a preliminary focus on the intersection between marriage processes and mobile phones. Following Julie Archambault's demonstrations in Mozambique, I also wanted to explore how "mobile communication was giving rise to new intimacies by opening up new intimate spaces within which new ways of being and relating could be explored" (Archambault, 2017: 156). Julie Archambault illustrates the sinuous means that people might use to preserve appearances while pursuing multiple and unorthodox intimate relationships. One of her observations is that what partners or relatives value is their kin's discretion in their pursuits, so that all can maintain order, reputation and public image: "The discretion granted by mobile communication is simultaneously transformative and conservative" (Archambault, 2017: 151).

In Engaresero, as I started to understand the different local romantic possibilities, I realized that romance and marriage also required skillful planning, mingling with intergenerational considerations and discretion.

Generations of warriors are expected to plan to have cattle ready for a bride price as they advance in their warriorhood and get closer to elderhood, "whether it is done through cattle raids, wage labor, or tourism" (Meiu, 2009). While some members of the new generation will be keeping livestock and growing their cattle herd as their primary livelihood, students and families of students will be hustling to fund their education. Instead of accumulating resources, they will be investing them, with the perspective of future opportunities. Later on, these students and their "expansive potential" (Weiss 2005: 107) actually find only a few opportunities for employment, especially in Engaresero. Indeed, opportunities to apply skills acquired through national education, for example literacy in Kiswahili and English, is mostly useful in tourism, which is a seasonal occupation and rarely results in stable full-time employment, or requires significant capital to start one's own venture. Their potential could eventually support them in accessing work opportunities advertised on the internet that often would take them to another town or city. As I will mention in the conclusion, some of the warriors I met were actively pondering on how to create space and opportunity for these new types of ambitions. At the moment Danny observed educated warriors "roaming around and developing bad behaviour". His ambition was to find ways to "keep them busy so they can perform."

For warriors pursuing education, a late start on savings, if not having accumulated debts, might delay the customary marriage process as the exchange system usually requires bridewealth in the form of cattle. Alternatively, they could be limited to marriage options requiring less bridewealth. Tom explained that traditionally it is the father who would find a friend his age and go to his home to discuss the need. They would look at their respective families and friends to see if there is a reasonable match to be made. The stronger the family ties, the less one would need to pay in exchange for the bride. Nowadays with education and even other institutions such as religion, new generations are becoming more aware of alternatives from this booking system and some choose to negotiate their way into other types of agreements.

The following section highlights some of the ways that new generations in Engaresero consider marriage, taking into account the impact of their chosen trajectories on their financial capacity and their aspirations. I aim to uncover the multiplicity of interpretations and political-economic frames that shape intimate relationships and marriage in Engaresero. Through the stories of younger generations and observations from elders, I want to share examples of romantic trajectories that contribute to crafting "local understandings of modernity as related to subjectivity in intimate relationships" (Constable, 2009).

Orgusoi, Pete, Bookings

Early on in my stay, one Saturday, my host Nanyor had kindly taken me to the Emayana ceremony that she attended with another woman from the boma. Both had sons who were members of the Ilnyangulo generation and Emayana was a ceremony in preparation for Eunoto, which I will get back to in Chapter 3. After the ceremony, I sat down with Danny and Ali. They explained to me the details of what had happened there. The general idea was for warriors and elders to get together, forgive each other of any wrongdoings, and receive the elders' blessings to prepare them for Eunoto. Part of their description and an important takeaway for them was the content of the elders' blessing that they received on that day. A specific group of elders had been invited for this ceremony. They were single men of the older generations who did not have wives or children. They had been offered many cows to participate, as they would serve as an example not to follow for the next generation. The other elders wanted to teach the young Ilnyangulo warriors the importance of settling and having a family as part of the knowledge transmitted on this day. In order to mark their point, they invited the single elders and during the ceremony would be pushing them away, insulting them and treating them badly. At the end of the ceremony the humiliated single men will have to make their own way back home, indicating the wrong path that no one should desire to follow.

My host and her neighbour on the way back to the car from Emayana

During my first interviews, the "booking" process of marriage was thoroughly explained to me by the local guides. By "booking" they meant the agreement between families to marry their sons and daughters - basically arranged marriage. This kind of plan could be made very early on.

In a group discussion with the local guides from Engaresero, they attempted to list the main booking processes they knew of:

- Exchange with a friend - if two friends both have sisters, when the time is right, the friends agree that one will marry the other's sister and vice versa.
- When resources are scarce, one can work for a rich man in his boma. The agreement would be that for some years he would work for free and after some years, the rich man would give him one of his daughters for marriage.
- The ring system: booking in advance -"orgusoi" (ring in Maa, mpete in Kiswahili): a father has a friend and will offer this friend's family to marry their young (or future) daughter with his son, or himself, in order to create a strong bond between families. Another possibility was for a father to offer his daughter to his friend or his friend's son in order to solidify family bonds. To mark the agreement, a ring is then given to the mother, if the daughter is yet unborn or too young, as a symbol of the agreement made between the two families. When she comes of age, the daughter will take the ring and get married with the promised man. This process is based more on family bonds than resources and therefore usually entails a cheaper price. For example, only two or three cows will be given in exchange for the woman.
- If there is no previous relationship between families, it is still possible to "buy the girl" from that family, as they described. In that case it will usually require negotiating the price. One needs to discuss thoroughly with the parents.

The guides agreed that one of the important aspects, no matter the way chosen to get married, is to "follow the clan" of that person to know where they come from. That way, the suitor is more likely to convince the family to support this marriage. Indeed, as mentioned earlier regarding the selection of the laigwanani for one generation, investigating family behaviours and history is considered a standard background check. Also, it provides good arguments to elect a candidate, whether for a wife or a laigwanani. It also explains why families who already know each other favour unions between their children as there is less potential for negative surprises from their respective clans, and they would mostly be tightening the already existing interfamily tie. As one of the guides said: "In Maasai it is usually a "booking marriage" - and the parents choose."

As listed above, bookings are done in advance by the father, as an agreement, usually involving payment in the form of livestock. This is why, as guides explained, it would often be hard to undo that decision. Going “against the booking”, would entail going back on a promise, sometimes already materialized by a downpayment.

A few of the Ilnyangulo warriors and local guides shared their own experiences. Some had already married according to their parents’ choice, but they were expecting to select the process of marriage for their second wife themselves. Very conscious of the importance of being on good terms with their families and elders, this was a compromise, as one of the tourism leaders explained: “If I don’t involve my parents and there is a problem, then people will run away from me. My parents prefer the exchange system, therefore I shall do this for my first wife and choose for myself the exchange system for the second wife.”

The group valued not only the parents and family support, but also the wider societal involvement when following the local standards of marriage. They explained that “the link of love makes you blind - therefore it is important for the Maasai government to support the union and cooperation.“ While they are eager to make their own choices, the Ilnyangulo warriors have a very clear understanding of the importance of the role of their family and community in their intimate relationship. These examples are representative of how Jackson relates the notion of intersubjectivity and seeing “identity as “mutually arising” - as relational and variable - rather than assign ontological primacy to the individual persons or objects that are implicated in any intersubjective nexus” (Jackson, 1998: 7). This reinforces the importance for younger generations to preserve harmonious relationships in the different networks they belong to.

New possibilities and alternatives were also emerging. Tom mentioned how the education system increased chances of meeting one’s future wife at school versus the traditional way he had described earlier: “Today it’s about 50-50. You can easily find a partner at school and need to report back home that you have found someone and want to get married. ” Teme told us about his brother who had fallen in love with a girl at school. This girl however had already been booked and the man had already paid the bride price to the parents: a total of 9 cows. His brother had come home and explained the situation to his family. His father decided to help him and offered to pay back the man who had booked the girl with the 9 cows, and then offered the parents of the girl an extra 6 cows. At first the family of the bride-to-be was not keen on breaking the promise made to this other man. Their daughter then started threatening to poison herself if they still did not let her be with the young man she had chosen and loved. In the end, the parents agreed to change the booking.

Other than at school, the group of guides also mentioned that for "people who have been on the globalization system the way to meet women can be through exchanges on whatsapp." Teme noted that "according to globalization you can marry even out of our society". As Nicole Constable (2009) writes, globalization and the increased flow of people, technology and ideas offer "opportunities for defining new sorts of relationships and for redefining spaces, meanings, and expressions of intimacy that can transform and transgress conventional gendered spaces and norms."

Other elders from the Ilmakaa generation had their own analysis of these changes: "Before, if I go to somebody because I want to book his daughter, I can be feeding cows for 5 years, then I get a wife. But now, if I go for 5 years and then my brother has a lot more cows than me, my brother could go and get the lady I booked instead of me. Normally this is prohibited because you can't go against someone else's booking. So money is the problem. And people don't care for the curse ("oldeket" in Maa)."

Ilmakaa elders underline here some of the more macro changes they have been observing, which influence people's priorities and may limit existing structures of value and power. In this case the dichotomy experienced by the older generation is similar, between loosened social bonds (as suggested by Simmel in 1978) and economic concerns - or dichotomized belief systems, between superstition and ideologies, "they don't care about the curse," and materialism, "money is the problem." According to their discourse, as they choose to blame "money," it is the monetary system that undermines their authority, not necessarily their brothers, who share a similar status as elders. Their observation resonates with Thomas and Cole's work on "Love in Africa" (2009), and the idea that monetization has strained other types of exchanges in marriages. As they have shared before, they value the freedom of choice for their kin, and if they don't agree with all of the new changes, preserving relationships is important as well. In fact, as described above, Emayana was also a ceremony to end any remaining intergenerational conflicts, especially between fathers and sons, in order for the warriors to advance in their lives with their father's blessings. Reparations for forgiveness could be made in the form of cattle or a simple conversation.

From what has been shared in these conversations, most participants had in mind the primacy of preserving their bond and relationships in order to move forward in life more easily. Intergenerational dialogue is included in the future-making process of new generations in many different forms. New generations are confronted by different structures of authority, and also realize the various opportunities to avoid seeing their lives overdetermined by only one of these systems. Intersubjectivity is an important aspect of their navigation, if not primary, and therefore it requires diplomatic skills and careful planning to keep all options open for themselves.

Applying High Knowledge

In most conversations I had with members of the younger generations, Ilkorianga and lnyangulo, it was considered that the mobile phone was a good tool to facilitate remote and secret communications between a man and a woman. This could then support a strategy to “apply high knowledge”, as Tom would say, and to “go against a booking”. Teme gave me an example of such stratagem:

> “Through mobile communication systems, you can try to find a solution [to go against a booking]. For example, you can get more information from the lady by phone communication, and adopt a strategy to use the normal skills of the human being - getting closer to the relatives and friends of the lady. This is not corruption as there is no corruption in Maasai. You can pretend that you don’t know her for example and make friends with the person who has booked her, even offer him a cow - like that for a couple of years. You get to learn about the characteristics of the man and the family, and vice-versa. Then, when the right time comes, you send your father for a visit to the family as the father is the one to raise a motion in order to get married. The father comes to see the family and they will say that the lady is already booked, so then we need to find a way to break through that booking. As marriage is all about the relationship with the families, now the family has known and appreciated the new man. And even if the one who had done the booking finds out, now that he has been a friend of the new man - he can not get mad and might accept more easily letting this other man get married with his booked wife.”

I was impressed by the amount of time and thought that could be potentially invested in order to go against a booking. Teme was describing a stratagem of concealment that ensured local hierarchies were respected and relationships preserved while gently subverting the established booking system, even if this could take years. The possibility of distant and discreet communications facilitated by the phone could make some of these relationships, or at least the pursuit of such relationships, possible. Clearly this was a strong case for youth striving to achieve their aspirations while keeping everyone else happy and feeling respected (Archambault, 2017).

One of the few young ladies working as a guide mentioned how chatting through the mobile phone also offers alternatives to booking. She agreed that "it is hard to remove the system" however she was hopeful that her daughter would be able to meet other people through the phone since: "Ladies want to avoid the system of booking, it is part of globalization."

Making it sound inevitable is a strategic foresight, opening the possibility for the next generation. As Archambault (2017) relates in Mozambique, there is an expressed desire for a "genuine intimacy" built on "feelings of true love between a man and a woman" and, more importantly, the will not to be subjected to "negotiated agreements between male elders" (p. 134). This resonates especially with the woman's comment on the case of Engaresero, described as the best interest for their daughters. Bringing forward this form of dichotomy between the booking system and the globalization system, helps realize the many possibilities arising for new generations that are not a matter of conflict with the male elders' authority but presented as a part of the future brought by "changes in tradition" and the "globalization system". As Jackson (2012) also reminds us, attempting to liberate anthropology from its tendency to conflate experience and episteme, "we express what is in our best interests, both personal and interpersonal" (p. 7). This way of presenting globalization as the inevitable opportunity for women to choose their husbands does not directly reject the local patriarchy, but formulates new alternatives for the future that sound like evidence that one must accept.

These members of the new generations are carefully disentangling expectations from their aspirations and evaluating possibilities. In general, as they value harmonious relationships with their parents and elders, they are careful to recognize the local structures of power and activate them in a way that keeps everyone comfortable and happy.

Roy was one of the Ilnyangulo guides that I was pointed towards to interview. He was a recognized smartphone user and also was one of the few who had the possibility to pursue post-secondary studies outside the village. When I met him, he was still hoping to pursue his education in order to find employment in Engaresero, in environmental conservation. It was the first time that I met a warrior of the Ilnyangulo generation who was studying, yet already married. As he explained this rather uncommon status, I realized that timing was actually not the main peculiarity about his marriage. His father and mother, before him, had three daughters. The couple was starting to feel a bit desperate about not having a son, and the father had started considering a second wife. Knowing that inheritance went to the son, the couple agreed to first try going to the Oloiboni, the local herbsman and spiritual leader (Goldman, 2011). Part of the traditional knowledge attributed to the Oloiboni is helping women get pregnant. The Oloiboni had agreed to help Roy's parents, but on one condition: their first son would marry his daughter. And this is how Roy found his wife.

Roy presented an interesting mix of ideologies that did not need to be hierarchised or opposed in his narrative. It seemed so fluid for him to move from one conception of marriage to another, which is also what enables him to successfully navigate the flows of people, goods and ideas.

As we kept chatting, he described his experience and perception of the mobile phone and social media when it comes to intimate relationships. According to him,

> "Some [relationships on social media] are good , some are bad. Everything has an advantage and a disadvantage as well. Because when you go through facebook you can destroy the culture of the Maasai. In the Maasai culture the relationships are made with the families who know each other from a long time. Families who know each other - they will know the good and bad characters of the family and person. You will know the character. Through Facebook people can easily lie and say things that are not true."

It was therefore important to apply high knowledge in the usage of Facebook. He shared his impression that nowadays, "marriage was like business." The problem with that though, in his perception, was that women tend to advertise themselves on social media in quite deceiving ways. He mentioned that a few had contacted him to be friends but he knew that all they wanted was to get married. However, according to him, to get married, one had to first get to know the other, fall in love and only then start thinking about getting married. And this is what he hopes to do for his second wife.

Like the Ilmakaa elders, Roy notes that the monetary aspect of marriage was problematic to build a loyal relationship. As Roy was quite active on social media, this was an important piece of knowledge to better navigate his romantic quest, but not a barrier. As he mentioned earlier, "everything has an advantage and a disadvantage."

Typically, getting romantically involved in Engaresero started before marriage. On my first night at the boma, I was introduced to "eusoto." Eusoto was presented to me as a nightly gathering of young men and women who will sing and dance together in a semi or full circle. "Ossongolio" is the singing and dancing in Maa. It is very propitious to romantic encounters. In fact in one of the Eusoto that I attended, the game played that night was for one of the young ladies to go in the middle of the circle, and while everyone danced around and watched her dance in the middle, she'd be asked to point out who she liked. From there, that person knew that if wanted, he could be spending more time with that young lady, in the dark of the night. This shared intimacy between youth was quite a protected and somehow regulated space. Nanyor explained to me that she would normally not be attending as she is the mother of one member of this age-group, the Ilnyangulo generation. She was only taking me there so I could see it. Her attendance would make things awkward for her son, if he was around, and for the rest; she would be there watching them flirting around, although there might have already been marriage arrangements, bookings. One of the young ladies of the boma where I stayed, Marta, loved to attend these social gatherings. As she would be taking care of the household and the children all day, it was one of the few distractions available to her. Marta was already "booked", and had a few more years during which she would be able to go out in the dark to ossongolio, before her official marriage. One day, as we were having tea with warriors I had never met before, Nanyor smiled to me as she pointed one of them out, saying that he was Marta's future husband. He had gazed down towards his tea cup, timid and smiling.

Another young lady who was living nearby and had come home from school break, Nina, had a different opinion on ossongolio. She was a secondary school student, a few years older than Marta, and did not attend these gatherings. In fact she had been told at school and at church that it was a place where girls could get pregnant and therefore going to ossonglio was strongly discouraged. Getting pregnant while going to school in Tanzania is often a fatal blow for the student's academic career and more often than not, it results in the young mother dropping out (Maluli and Bali 2014). One of the few ways for women to continue their education is to pay for a private school, often unaffordable, especially on top of having to care for a newborn and managing family disappointment. Teme told me that the family could request for the father of the child to pay for private school, but that was definitely not a simple solution. What if he himself had another booking? What if he could not afford it? Or what if she had another booking? Would her future husband agree to recognize the child and support her education?

Nina, one day on the way home, pointed out a friend of hers that she saw coming our way and how she dropped out of school when she got married. She also told me about another young lady we both knew who had been keen on schooling but then the "Ilnyangulo warriors mixed up her head" and she also ended up dropping out to get married. Nina would therefore not go to ossongolio. She did like to spend a good amount of time on the phone during her study sessions, although that was also prohibited at school. She explained that at school they were not allowed to have phones so she was using her mother's phone while she was home to get in touch with other friends. She explained that she could easily send and receive messages as her mother could not read them anyways. Sometimes she would arrange to meet some of her friends on the way back, and hang out in the barbershop a bit longer. One of them had joked as we walked all together that he was getting his own form of education in Leparakash as a pastoralist.

During one of the quiet evenings at home, as we were singing some ossongolio songs with the kids for fun, a few young women came by. As I asked them if they were going to eusoto, they refuted and explained that they were on their way to another nightly gathering nearby: choir practice. A few nights later, Nayor and I came back to ossongolio, to the excitement of her three young children who came with us. One of them, who had quite a loud and communicative laugh, could not contain himself while watching me participating in the dance. As I was turning back to find him laughing in the dark, I also noticed what was the choir practice hut just a few metres away. I saw some young silhouettes sneaking into the house and a few moments later some warriors from ossongolio followed and knocked playfully on the closed door. Soon enough I could hear some mixed laughter and yelling while warriors were playfully trying to get the door to open. Nanyor and I left before the end of this encounter. Danny had mentioned to me while describing the local churches' influence, that he had heard some of these young ladies tell their admirers that they would first need to join the church in order to get married. New social circles, whether at school, at the church, on the phone or in the neighbourhood, were also “new intimate spaces” to explore and negotiate (Archambault, 2017: 156).

There are some hybrid systems being actively developed in Engaresero when it comes to romantic trajectories and marriage. Probably it is a continuity of a fluidity shown by young people when it comes to pursuing intimate aspirations by utilizing the different systems and authorities with which they engage. Certainly they have many constraints and obligations to navigate and negotiate in order to find their way, and they will use those to their advantage when the opportunity arises. There is probably nothing new in the fact that youth take innovative approaches to adapt some of the existing models to their aspirations. That is why sustaining different systems and authorities can be a way for them to avoid being subjected to one dominant model. If elders note that “education” or “church” are the reasons for “changes in tradition,” it is the next generations who are actively managing the influences and contingence of these institutions existing within the local social landscape. As discussed, these changes can be both prescriptive and chosen. While some of these young warriors embody “changes in tradition” they are also careful with the local order and considerate of local anxieties as they explore new ways of being. As McIntosh suggests, they are “not as concerned as elders about losing their ethnic identity; instead, they find new ways to deploy it as an important and socially necessary foil for the irreverence of some of the ‘global’ alternatives” (McIntosh, 2010), but also according to their own aspirations. Skillful planning and intergenerational dialogues are ingredients to the harmonization of these systems into viable and desirable paths for the future of Engaresero residents.

Chapter 3

Aesthetics in the Politics of Youth Identity

Emayana and Eunoto 2019 in Engaresero,
Music video remixed by Alailama,

Historically, dress and the bodily surface have been closely examined and exploited by colonial powers. For example, nakedness was often associated with barbarism and primitivism in the colonial imagination. More recently, in the neo-colonialist fashion, discourses focusing on liberating women have focused on the veil and burqa, often directly associated with tyranny, oppression and even terrorism (Abu-Lughod, 2002, Masquelier 2005). In post-independence Tanzania, the newly established government continued to scrutinize bodies in the making of their vision of modernity. For example, in the 1960's, the Tanzanian government, in its vision of modernity, imposed bans on specific items of clothing such as mini-skirts, tight dresses and pants (Hodgson, 2001, Ivaska, 2011). This policy targeted mostly urban centers and youth, under the name "operation vijana", or "operation youth" in Kiswahili . Another example, targeting mostly rural areas, was the "Dress-Up operation" calling the Maasai traditional dress "uncivilised", "outdated" and "an affront to Tanzania's modern development" (Ivaska, 2002).

Bodily surfaces and aesthetics have been said to reflect social order as much as transgression of this same social order, bringing about the politics of embodiment (Ferme, 2001, Masquelier, 2005). This chapter examines some of the bodily aesthetics in Engaresero that reveal the competing cultural repertoires in which the residents engage. The trajectories chosen by individuals could sometimes entail incompatibility when it came to aesthetics, as history has shown, and therefore some kind of transgression towards one of the established systems becomes inevitable and visible. As I got to learn more about some of the local codes and referentials when it came to aesthetics, what became more evident was "the capacity of the body surface to mediate between self and context, to signify processes of identity formation, or to concretely situate political action." (Masquelier, 2005).

Brad Weiss, who conducted ethnographic research in Arusha, the closest main city from Engaresero, examines the tension between following customs and keeping up with the times through the example of hairstyles. He explains the local meanings and interpretations of different hairstyles, influenced by local, national and global trends and the reflexivity involved in choosing such hairstyles. For example, in Arusha, Weiss (2002) describes how dreadlocks or bald-heads, hairstyles that may invoke global hip-hop trends and popular culture, often advertised on barbershops (vinyozi in Kiswahili), are "dangerous," as police may interpret them as threatening. This interpretation resonates with another one of the Engaresero guides that described some of the new hairstyles or shaving styles, inspired from famous actors or musicians as "somehow negative." He explained that it prevented them from being clearly identified as warriors, which have their own specific hairstyle, the Altaika. This sort of materialization of one's position in the world produces local forms of wide-spread imagery and expresses conscious social distancing from specific systems and habits (Weiss, 2002).

The description of Eunoto in this chapter illustrates this potential. This rite of passage to be recognized as senior warriors would be symbolized by a collective shaving ritual, where the long cared-for hairstyle of warriors, Altaika, or any other chosen or imposed hairstyle, would be removed and all Ilnyangulo warriors would start a new stage of their lives at the same time and bald.

Irpapit, Nywele, Hair

Whether among the urban youth, young children or elders, one highly scrutinized attribute has kept coming up during my time on the field: hair (Nywele in Kiswahili, Irpapit in Maa).

A few days after my arrival in the field, I learned that a big ceremony was being prepared: Eunoto. Eunoto is the rite of passage for the current generation of warriors, the Ilnyangulo generation, to become officially considered "*senior warriors*". I was told that this was a very important collective ceremony not to miss. As mentioned earlier, the planning process had started more than a year ago. The exact date was yet to be determined, but it would occur sometime in August 2019.

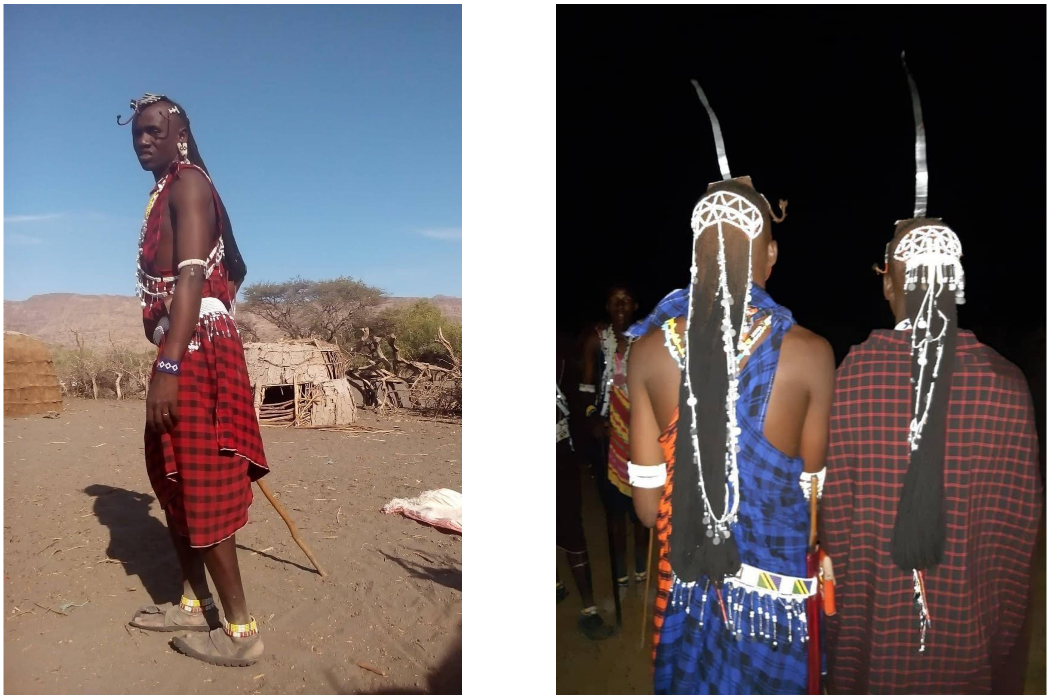
As I moved in with my host family, Nanyor, my hostess and mother of six, quickly got me up to date on these preparations as she was also following them closely. Indeed, her first-born was part of the Ilnyangulo generation and would be partaking in this event. On my second week in the field, she took me to the more formal *ossongolio* called "*Emayana*" (blessing in Maa), mentioned earlier. As some of the guides had explained, it was part of the Eunoto process. At this point, Nanyor's Ilnyangulo son was not in the area yet, but she kindly offered to take me there, guessing that I would be interested to see this, and another yeyo (mother in Maa) of our homestead was going as her Ilnyangulo son was around and would be attending. Nanyor was seemingly also excited for it, judging by how she dressed and accessorized her outfit for the occasion. She had taken out her "*esos*", Maa for the typical large round beaded-necklace worn by women. Its movement makes the smaller necklaces and their little metal pendants clink into each other and add to the music. She had also covered her shaven head with an elegant beaded white hat, everything handmade.

We decided to take the car to the ceremony as the sun was high, and as an older relative had joined us from another village to also share his blessings at the ceremony. I wondered, a posteriori, if he had been one of the single elders since we never went home with him.

As the ceremony was far into the black sands of Engaresero, and since I had gotten stuck in the sand a few days earlier in that area, we left the car at a nearby campsite and walked to the location of the *ossongolio*. Needless to say, the high sun, the black sand and the few acacias made it a beautiful and intensely hot day!

As we arrived at the location, at a semi-permanent boma used only during the dry season, we saw that the celebrations had already started. The older relative hurried to meet his fellow male elders who on this occasion would get a honey-based alcoholic drink, exclusively made for them. Warriors are not allowed to consume alcohol until they retire as elders. As I started to wander around, a Maasai man that I had never seen before, Matayo, came up to me to greet me. He asked me if I had brought material to record the ceremony. I guess it was expected, as a white person coming to watch this event. Rising up to expectations, I told him I did and he excitedly told me that I should "*feel free to take videos and pictures as it is free of charge*". I asked him if he would be interested in filming himself as I had no special talent for this. He very gladly took on the offer and became the cameraman for this event. He then told me how excited he was to be there, although he already was an elder. During his time as a warrior, for this ceremony he had been assigned to the "*kitchen*", or slaughtering and preparation of the cows, goats and sheep that would be served to all during their ceremony. He had therefore missed most of it! This year he had come to support the new generation of warriors, and would be able to enjoy it at last.

At the ceremony, I was impressed by the number of warriors present, all wearing their traditional outfit. During the whole time they stayed together as a rather homogeneous pack, dancing, singing, walking around, eating, receiving their elders' blessings... and more dancing. Many Warriors displayed unique and sophisticated hairstyles, called "altaika" (Maa for the warrior's hairstyle). The altaika would usually look like long hair, sometimes running all the way down their backs, thanks to braided extensions which were carefully decorated with beads or metal pieces. The warriors looked proud and danced hours in the hot sun, in their jumping fashion, with playful head movements, making their hair reach yet further heights on their jumps. Warriors traditionally would not have shaved since circumcision, up to 7 or 8 years ago. They would take great care of their hair, and in such dusty conditions, I couldn't be more dazzled by the refined and polished hairstyles. So far, I had barely been able to keep my own hair from turning into dusty dreadlocks and was becoming highly aware of how practical and hygienic a shaved head, like my host Nanyor's, would be in this context. After the ceremony, as I looked back at the footage recorded by Matayo, a good portion if not most of the film focused on the back of the warrior's heads, moving up and down their long braids and appreciating the beautifully intertwined beadwork and original altaika.

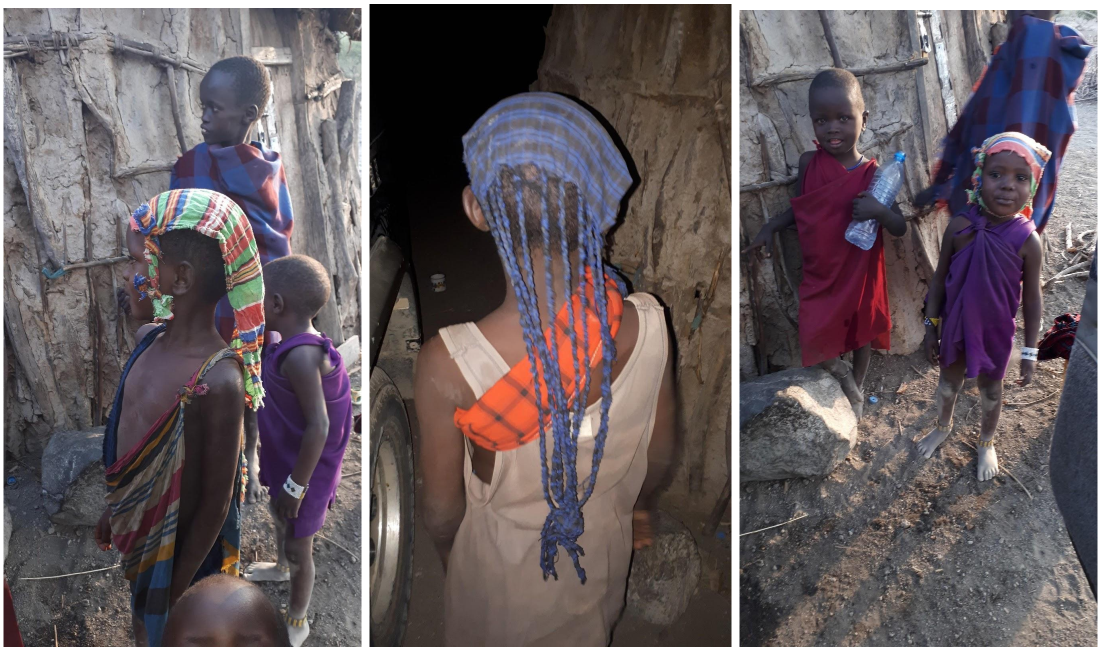


Pictures of "altaika" shared on Whatsapp by laigwanani Taiko.

The few exceptions of warriors with shaven heads were usually younger men. As some explained to me, if you are attending the national school system, the dress code required a shaved head and therefore they had not been able to grow their own altaika.

Warriors dancing and Matayo in the back filming with my camera.

In the neighborhood where I was living I had often seen young boys, or “alayeni,” wearing pieces of fabric on their heads. This fabric would usually cover the head, dropping down in the back and stylized in the shape of braids, with a small piece of wood or other material to add weight at the end of it to accentuate its movement when the head moved. When I asked them what this was, they told me that this was their altaika. Children would then imitate the head movements of the warriors’ dancing and focus on getting their altaika to move as much as possible along with the rhythm.



Pictures of the neighbourhood Children at the homestead, wearing their fake “Altaika”.

I would regularly observe these moments of imitation and imagination of being a warrior. Children were also on point with the type of dancing and singing I had seen at this ceremony or at the nightly eusoto. The warriors would usually shake their head in a certain direction at the end of their jumping performance in the middle of the circle. This subtle and precise headnod made their usually long braided hair follow the movement and whip the air, almost imperceptibly touching the person in the aimed direction, which often would be one of the young women. All of these moments shaped the aspirations of these young boys, imagining becoming a warrior, admired for their Altaika and free to go dancing with their friends and girlfriends at night.

A few weeks later, the village filled with Ilnyangulo warriors returning from schools, jobs and other places, specifically to attend Eunoto. For the Eunoto ceremony, the shaving ritual was described to me as the key element of this rite of passage. Mothers of the Engaresero warriors, would shave their sons' heads to mark their passage from "junior warriors" to "senior warriors". The local Ilnyangulo generation was composed of around 700 warriors. In Engaresero, the whole ceremony happened in the Takano sub-village, about 10 kilometres from where we lived. It would be hosted over two days in one space called the "emanyatta," Maa for boma, which had been chosen a few months earlier. Most of the rituals would be located in the "cow territory" inside the emanyatta, which was delimited by big knotty pieces of dead wood and thorny branches. It is usually where cows are kept during the night and located in the center of the emanyatta, representative of the overall organization of pastoral livelihood: around the animals.

The first day was about gathering, dancing and oiling up the warrior's head with sheep fat mixed with red clay, to facilitate shaving the next day. The beautiful decorative altaika had been removed, leaving only the real hair of the warrior to be shaved. The bunch of red-headed warriors were then easily recognizable from other generations. Some of them - mostly the younger warriors - either still in primary or secondary school or because of particular jobs, a few probably also by choice, had been shaving regularly and their hair was barely grown. In any case, all heads were now covered in red sheep fat.

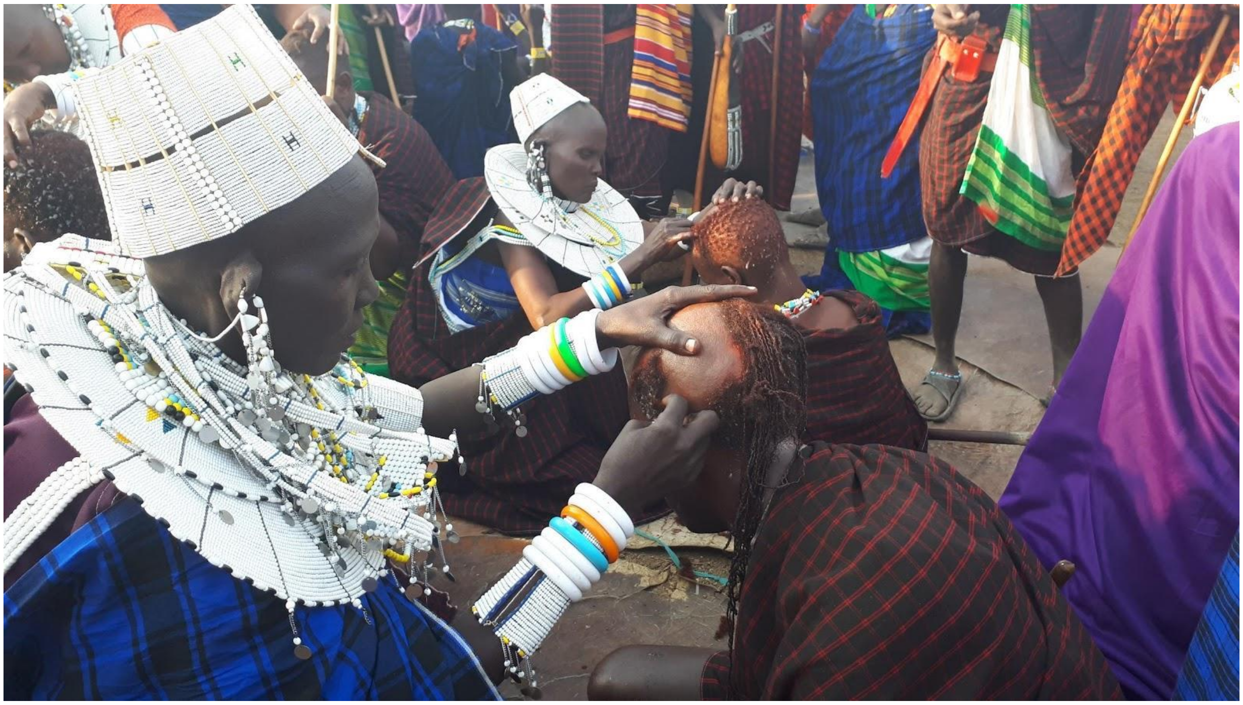
A few members of the Ilnyangulo generation in the neighbouring locality who had gone through the rituals just a few days earlier had come, proudly wearing their red, clean-shaved skulls, to show their support. They brought a few cows and goats to contribute to the feast.

From there, it became mostly eating, catching up with peers, dancing and singing or ossongolio, until dark. In the late evening I was told that I had to choose between going home with Nanyor or sticking around in the dark. Tired, I drove Nanyor to her daughter's home to get some midnight tea and some sleep.

On the second day of this shaving ritual, around 6am, the crowd of hundreds of warriors had all lined up near the entrance of the "cow territory" and were singing heartily in unison; the exhilaration around this rite of passage was almost palpable. The vibrant atmosphere was filled with songs, guttural sounds, strident shouting and overall excitement for the red-headed Ilnyangulo generation of warriors. Mothers, responsible for shaving the head and any facial hair from the warriors, were also waiting nervously right in front of the entrance. All were holding their rolled up animal skin that they usually sleep on at home and that would serve as the ground-cover for shaving their sons, “olchoni” in Maa. Some had walked more than 5 hours to the emanyatta for the ceremony.

All the ladies had been briefed by elders the day before. Nanyor was eager to ensure all went smoothly for her son’s transition to “senior warrior”. We had spent the previous night together in the house of her daughter and son-in-law, who lived near this emanyatta She had insisted that we wake up very early, around 4AM, to ensure we were on time for the shave. The emanyatta was about 10 minutes away by car and the leaders had summoned everybody for 6AM. As the party had already started the night before, we had gone to sleep after midnight. When we went to bed, I did not think twice when she told me not to worry as she would wake me up. However, an hour later, and then the following, anxious and unable to sleep, she woke me up to ask what time was showing on her phone. Realizing my mistake, I told her I would set an alarm clock. Even then, before 4am, her son came in to ensure we were getting up for the ceremony. By then, I was almost as excited and restless as everyone else for this once-in-a-lifetime occasion!

At the emanyatta, early in the morning, the long line of warriors was waiting. Some were making deep throat sounds marking the beat of the songs. The elders finally decided to launch the process. As soon as they were given the first go ahead, all the mothers crowded into the den, hastily trying to find a good space to lay down their animal skins or olchoni for the ritual, in no particular order. Soon, there was almost no more soil to be seen as the ground was fully covered by overlapping animal skins. Each woman was sitting or standing on top of her olchoni, waiting for her son to join her. There were approximately 700 warriors to be shaved in the next hour and in that limited space. Sons were then allowed in. As they entered still singing, their mothers called out their names to guide them towards their spot. It became very noisy while the laigwanani were still shouting directions in their loud-speakers, helping some mothers call out for their sons lost in the sea of warriors. Once sons found and joined their mothers on the family animal skin, they sat down and had to keep still. The mothers poured milk mixed with water on their heads from a calabash to start the shaving process. During these minutes of shaving, both would be quite focused on the delicate task at hand. Mothers, amidst such commotion, had to remove themselves from the general agitation and ensure their tiny razor blades would only be removing the hair and eyebrows. For the warriors, it was also not easy to sit still in this turning point in their warrior lives as they give up their much-cared-for hair and move on to be considered senior warriors' by their society. High and mixed emotions occupied the space as warriors were entering this new period of their lives and leaving behind a part of who they had become for the last few years.



Maasai Yeyo in her beaded hat shaving her son's hair during Eunoto

At the end of the shaving ritual, everyone was called to leave the ceremonial territory, which was left empty with only piles of hair on the floor. A few moments later, warriors would be called back in for the blessing and words of wisdom that would be dispensed by the elders on that same ground.

Mixing Mila

For a few days after Eunoto, the recently celebrated senior warriors were all proudly sporting their shaven skulls, still red-orange from the clay mixed with sheep fat. They were all quite easy to spot! As I was fetching water that evening after coming back from Eunoto, I crossed one of them in my neighbourhood. I stopped to congratulate him, we got talking about Eunoto and he expressed how important this moment had been for him. He was a secondary school student, first of his class, and according to him, this moment had taught him important aspects of being Maasai such as songs, dancing and the process of this rite of passage for Maasai warriors. He realized, as he put it to me, "how important it was to know my culture and how kids who know their culture know their way." He added that for the future he did not know yet if he wanted to be a doctor or engineer and in any case he wanted to come back to Engaresero to give back to his community.

This moment of togetherness accompanied by elders' blessings and advice has an effect on plans and visions of the future for new generations.

The red scalps made quite noticeable who had gone to the event or not over the next few days. As previously mentioned, hair was a very visible signifier of inclusion or exclusion from the local traditions. As I encountered a few exceptions who had skipped the ceremony, I became curious to understand their reasons. What I would like to observe below is how tensions arise as some structures strive to gain more authority over another through dogmatic claims. As hierarchies between institutions are imposed, it removes some of the fluidity required to navigate social geographies while preserving harmonious relationships. At this moment, the struggles to establish one's own creative trajectory uncover the risk of structural and individual violence and further marginalization that these choices may entail. Diplomacy and pragmatism are not always part of the discourse or strategy adopted by institutions and individuals.

On another walk the next day, I crossed an Ilnyangulo warrior I had met earlier, during the making of the promotional video for tourists staying in the "traditional Maasai boma or homestead" mentioned above. One of the leaders of the local tourism office had requested to use my filming equipment to help him promote staying at his home as a tourism activity. During the making of this video, he had invited some local warriors to perform their traditional dancing and singing - as something that tourists would encounter while staying in his boma. This man was one of the local warriors, however I was surprised to see that he still had his hair! As we greeted each other, I asked him if he had missed Eunoto, to which he replied that he chose not to go as he was Christian. Their church advised them against partaking in these traditional events. Furthermore, he explained that he had been busy making a gospel video with his church on that day. Evangelist churches were growing their audience quite fast in Engaresero. Nanyor would call their followers wakanisani, "church people" in Kiswahili. Since the 1950's, Catholic Spiritans missionaries began "systemic evangelization of Maasai in Tanzania" (Hodgson, 2005:

68). An Ilking'onde elder had estimated the start of the church in Engaresero to 1994. He explained that since then, "there is now a Lutheran, Catholic and 3 pentecost churches". I also heard from Teme that the first mosque was being built while I was there. The elder thought that "traditions are disappearing slowly, the Christians don't want them [Christian warriors] to go to Eunoto because they consider Eunoto to be a "witch doctor tradition" - which is against the christian belief." If these warriors did attend traditional events, they would be considered "unstable Christians" since they would be mixing Mila and Christianity. As his son was one of them, he also mentioned how he had learned to accept it and referred to the constitution: "the government says that every individual is free to believe what their heart tells them. So the constitution guides them to do what they believe."

A few weeks before this ritual, Danny had also shared with me some of his insights on the influence of religious institutions in the community. He had brought up a recent case that had stirred opinions recently. As they were preparing for the Eunoto ceremony, warriors of the Ilinyangulo generation had met a few times. After one of those meetings, some of these warriors came across others that had skipped the meeting and intended not to attend the Eunoto ceremony anyways. The other warriors had beaten them for choosing not to fulfill what they believed to be their duty as warriors. The beaten warriors had then gone to the police. They explained to the police that someone from their church, also Maasai, according to Danny, had told them that they should not partake in Eunoto. This Maasai priest had told them that to follow their tradition would be as if they worshiped more than one god, and therefore would be against the church principles. He had also mentioned that if they came across any troubles because of their choice not to attend Eunoto, he would support them. In front of this case, the police called village leaders and Maasai elders to discuss the issue. In the end they decided that these young ones should be able to decide their own ways and that beatings are not justified to force someone into following traditions. Danny thought that "The church is trying to lie to them, saying that following their traditions is not good and trying to get the guys to quit their culture." He explained how the church would convince them that by following traditions, people also inherit the family curses but that in church, God forgives and cleans them off these curses. Danny was quite suspicious of this logic. "They are not preaching the bible but they are preaching against tradition", he explained. According to him, "the guy from the church needs to get education about preaching the bible. Not against traditions. Our constitution gives the freedom to each individual to choose their own religion and traditions." Indeed, an important feature of Ujamaa specific to Nyerere's vision was a commitment to "the elimination of ethnic and religious divisiveness" (Askew, 2006). Contrarily to many other socialist models, Nyerere embraced religious beliefs openly and advocated for freedom of faith and "choice in matters of religion" (Tanzanian Constitution, article 19, 1977). To embody these thoughts of religious tolerance, President Nyerere, although a known devout Christian, could be seen sometimes wearing a symbolic "kofia", a hat usually worn by Muslim men (Pitcher & Askew, 2006, Chachage & Cassam, 2010). Principles of tolerance in social relations were integrated in the Tanzanian constitution and in its nationalist discourse. This is considered to have contributed to a sustained "supralocal collective identification" that still lasts today (Pitcher & Askew, 2006), as is also apparent in this paper.

In quite a few of these discussions, the prevailing argument was around the individual freedom to choose. Conflict would arise when one authority tried to undermine the other, rather than letting individuals flow from one structure of power to another. I started to wonder if this critique of dogmatism, at least in discourse, was not also part of the pre-colonial, colonial and postcolonial legacy that generations of Maasais have experienced. It could make sense that after having suffered a number of imposed policies and practices, that changed over time as the structure of power dominating the landscape would be replaced. One may have taken away that "there are no such things as lasting epistemological foundations on which we can rest" (Fabian, 2012). An important statement to ponder on as an aspiring anthropologist, calling yet again for the appreciation of fluidity and historical considerations.

A bit further along my walk, I spotted another Ilnyangulo warrior with long hair, hanging out with his colleagues from the CBO. He told me that he had missed out because he had been guiding a group of tourists on the days of Eunoto and would have to catch up by organizing his own private ceremony.

Keeping up with the Times

In Engaresero hair was an example of the "potential of the bodily surface to signify inclusion in the community as well as separation or deviation from it" (Masquelier, 2005: 5). As I described, short or long hair could reflect a variety of engagements in the world and some of the choices made by individuals in the construction of their future. The aesthetics of hair were therefore an indication of a warrior's social engagements, but these multiple engagements could not be reduced to just a hairstyle either. From the above accounts, hair was a "marker of socialization", and indicated social order or disruption, depending on the context (Ferme, 2001: p. 57-59). Discourses around these choices underline some of the existing tensions and the different strategies displayed in managing and affirming multiple identities. After Eunoto, all who displayed a shaven and reddish skull would be identified as members of this homogeneously coiffed Ilnyangulo generation, announcing their new social status in the local age-set system. Whether one had been able to grow an altaika or not did not matter anymore in terms of local standards of aesthetics. Attending this ritual was a collective reification of the local customs, or Mila, for those who attended, no matter their current level of engagement in the wider world.

From the discourses heard in Engaresero, "the sociopolitical conditions that allow people to engage in practices that reify cultural differences are also deployed in the strategic management of multiple identities" (Ferme, 2001 p. 219). These strategies and modes of relatedness "produce familiarity and belonging in the face of continuous encounters with the alien, and individuals use them to extricate themselves from the terrain of potentially dangerous forces, which are in turn concealed behind the apparently familiar" (Ferme, 2001 p. 219). In Engaresero, as hairstyles suggest, the mixing of familiar and alien is embodied and inextricable, and timing matters when it comes to these encounters between the familiar and alien. Like in Dar Es Salaam in the 60s and 70s, young Tanzanians embody "identifications with very different visions of global youth aesthetics and style that challenged a would-be official monopoly on youth" (Ivaska, 2011:41). The idea of a monopoly is quite contested, relative and timely through the different hairstyles displayed which show the competing epistemologies and ontologies that are being navigated within Engaresero.

This logic can also be applied to the anthropological perspective, "strife and struggle, affirmation and negation, are of the essence not only of what we study – that seems to be widely agreed on – but also of the production of anthropological knowledge in all of its aspects and stages" (Fabian, 2012). I recognize, guided by Fabian, that our fieldwork enterprise based on personal encounters "makes it above all pragmatic" (Fabian, 2012). I also need to navigate discourses and theories that support me in making sense of the context. Evidently, as I am also shaped by my own views, relationships, experiences and political beliefs, my interpretation of ethnographic material and theories has its own tints. It is the plurality of sources and interpretations that lead me to be more pragmatic and help me keep in mind that my writing is contingent on my own history and positionality. Hairstyle or theoretical choices are not made to reduce possibilities, but rather augment self-reflexivity and expression, and also reflect the historical contingency of such choices. This paper is therefore also an attempt to show the irreconcilability ”between experience and episteme” (Jackson, 2013: 7), especially if what is in between experience and episteme could be the pragmatic agency of field participants, and also my own. For example, depicting Eunoto in an anthropological essay is a political choice, which I will expand on in the next sections. The boundary work I do is choosing the strategic theoretical lens to try to articulate my perspective convincingly. My attempt to interpret this field experience through the anthropological episteme is merely what brings me closer to my aspirations of becoming an anthropologist.

Chapter 4

The Functions of Transmission & Recording of Culture

Gospel video in Maa shared with me through bluetooth
Singer: Mary Paulo Lemburis
Song: Supat Enkai
Rohi Records

Does this Phone have Memory?

As I was going back to town for a few days, I asked Nanyor if she needed anything. She asked me for a new phone, as hers was falling apart. While I was going through the selection of phones available in town, I focused on getting a solid one with a strong battery as I knew Nanyor did not have electricity at home. Excited to bring back this small gift, I quickly realized I had made a false assumption in my selection criteria when the first question she asked after receiving the phone was: “Esimu iyata memory?” : “Does this phone have memory?”

How could I not have thought about this? I suddenly saw clearly some of the clues in the first weeks of my stay. Every morning and every evening, Nanyor would treat us to tea (Chaï in Kiswahili, pronounced Shaï in Maa). Tea is made early, is mostly composed of freshly collected milk while the animals are still in the Boma, and is boiled with a fistful of tea herbs. Quite a few spoonfuls of sugar can be added, to the joy of the younger children who will sometimes get some directly on their hands to savor for a while.

On my first days, I was surprised when some roaming warriors I had not met yet came into our home in the evenings or early mornings, and sat down with us as if it was the most normal thing to do. Everyday was its own lot, in terms of who and how many would be joining us for the drink. Overtime, I grew quite fond of these very convivial moments. Nanyor would usually insist I wait for tea before heading out to carry out my research activities, my roaming. As we would sit around, drink tea, and exchange updates, if some of our visitors had their phones charged, they would sometimes play songs. Only a few warriors had phones equipped to show video clips of these songs. These would be an immediate attention-grabber for others around, myself included. As I showed interest in some of these video-clips, one of the warriors offered to transfer a few of these songs and videos to my phone through bluetooth connection which, to my surprise, worked remarkably well. This would be the main mode of transmission of this relatively heavy content, as the network was not strong enough or would require too much data. Physical proximity was therefore still a prerequisite to share these fun pieces from one phone to the other.

A few days after my clumsy phone gift, Nanyor's firstborn, the warrior Saitoti, came to Engaresero for the Eunoto ceremony. He was working full-time in a campsite in the closest small town, Mto Wa Mbu, about four bumpy and dusty hours away by car. Tea time lasted longer than usual. Saitoti and the two or three friends that accompanied him all squeezed around the remaining ashes with Nanyor and I to enjoy our warm drinks. Saitoti showed Nanyor and all of us the pictures from his smartphone: his workplace, his friends and shots of attractive ladies in provocative clothing and poses or funny animal pictures, such as a giant cow or goats up in a tree. This gave us all a good laugh around our evening tea. Phone memory was becoming integrated into the daily social lives of residents of Engaresero, adding new forms of entertainment to animate the rare moments of idleness, adding some rhythm to the repetitive household chores and fostering the conviviality of teatime.

Tea Conviviality

Masquelier (2013) defines teatime in Niger as a "medium of conviviality" where young men in Niger would take the time to make tea to be enjoyed as a pair or a group, and through that regular significant ritual, alleviate the boredom and restlessness of jobless youth. Tea time sustains a form of sociality that supports these young men in their "struggle to make life purposeful" (Masquelier, 2013). In the case of Engaresero, tea was mostly prepared by the women, milking their animals at dawn to make a tea as fresh as possible, for their family and for the warriors nearby once they were back from or on their way to herding the cattle. It was customary that warriors could not eat or drink alone, always with another fellow warrior, and also customary to leave some leftover tea for the younger generation. Unlike Masquelier's example, after morning tea the young men would normally head out to their responsibility of taking care of livestock for the day, leaving the women and young children in the homestead. After the evening tea, they would sometimes head to eusoto or to hang out with their friends. Teatime was more of a moment to rest, replenish and socialize. My host and some of her neighbours were quite homebound by the children and household tasks, and more dependent on the movements of the warriors, or the "Maasai messenger", as Tom would call it, to carry information. There were a few exceptions such as the weekly market day that Nanyor would never miss. The market would be another opportunity for convivial gossip and catching up, as even neighbouring villagers would come from 10 kilometres away, sometimes including one of Nanyor's daughters.

Conviviality has been described as "an alternative to 'autonomy': it points towards considering individuals through the meanings of their interrelatedness" (Nowicka & Vertovec., 2014). In Engaresero, conviviality seemed to be an important part of the reliable pastoral routine. The clear interrelatedness might be found in part in the setup of the local age-set and gender system attributing roles to each person and therefore a certain standard of codependency.

I loved starting and ending the day with teatime. The daily ritual created a propitious space to share stories and news updates. If it was not necessarily a way out of boredom, it definitely served as a moment of "furthering détente and intimacy", as information and forms of entertainment were also shared: "tea untied tongues" (Masquelier, 2013).

Memory Work

Assman and Czaplicka (1995) have called some of these practices "communicative memory," which "includes those varieties of collective memory that are based exclusively on everyday communications." I find it interesting to bring up their idea that these practices are also what "constitute the field of oral history" (Assman & Czaplicka, 1995). Indeed, as I will show in some of the following examples, orality and literacy, including digital literacy, come together in different forms of memory work.

One popular type of content shared on the phone memory was gospel music videos, mostly filmed by groups in Kenya. Rapidly, more and more content was being made in Tanzania as well, and, as I would find on Facebook, even in Engaresero. The gospel songs from Tanzania or Kenya found on the phone memory were shared across homesteads over teatime and would be appreciated both by Nanyor who did not attend church and differentiated herself from the Wakanisani and other women who did attend church. The spiritual choice seemed to be a secondary issue. One of the main attractions of these songs was that they were sung in Maa, often

showing women and men dressed in the customary Maasai shuka. The one difference that Nanyor pointed out is that some of these women did not shave their heads. The singers and dancers would be moving their heads and shoulders in a similar fashion as I had seen some do in Engaresero and were decorated with the typical handcrafted beadwork, “ushanga” in Kiswahili.
In this case, these convivial moments that may foster sharing knowledge and oral history, are also a place for the phone memory to come in handy, bringing in another medium of memory (Erll, 2011), and its own content. I would therefore like to explore the idea from Fabian (1999) that “memory can be significant as an epistemological concept.” Indeed as people choose to point out, or elude, specific aspects of their experiences or knowledge shape what they are transmitting to their peers and to the next generations. They are recognizing events or attributes in a certain light subjected to their own political lens, and they convey these “perceptions that are transformed into memory” (Fabian, 1999). With this approach, the structures of knowledge and power present in Engaresero become more evident, as well as how they are used and transgressed.

Danny, as a user of a Smartphone, had also expressed his appreciation of these gospel videos. In a conversation we had, he first shared some of his concerns about the rising influence of evangelical churches in Engaresero: “church is destroying totally the culture.” For example, they were recommending against attending any cultural events or other forms of Mila, as mentioned in the previous chapter. However, according to Danny, the gospel videos showed something different: “What is nice about the gospel is that they may teach you Maasai, the language. Some videos are also showing Maasai clothes or ushanga which can inspire the girls to make for their own ushanga or dressing style. Some Maasai songs are preaching the bibles but not against traditions, otherwise they would not wear Maasai clothes and ushanga.”
He added that this was all very new, as smartphone users were still so scarce in Engaresero. For now, most of these videos are from Kenya, where the network was best, but also where “compared to Tanzania, a lot of Maasai sing gospel”. Therefore, according to Danny, as the content displayed still valued aspects of the local Mila, it was not an issue for these videos and songs to circulate. It was actually according to him a good mix of Mila and Christianity. This fluidity would be different from the influence of evangelical pastors who preach and sometimes try to control people’s behaviours and choices which was more problematic and conflictual.

Whether the consumers and producers of these videos were looking for spiritual messages, cultural references, aesthetic inspiration, or something else, these videos were a new medium of knowledge circulating and stored on the phone memory, also attached to the idea of modernity and in line with the urban lifestyle that Danny had adopted. He explained that in the future, he would be showing the recordings of Eunoto that he had done to his children so they could see what it was like. He thought that "on the side of preserving, it's a good thing. Previously the elders had no technology and the transmission of the culture was through verbal interactions, but then it depends on what they remember. With the videos we can show them and people can learn from that and they can do it."

Danny trusted the recordings as a way to share knowledge and transmit "the culture". Taiko had explained to me, however, how the whole ceremony had been organized based on elders from Kisongo passing down their knowledge to the laigwanani in charge and giving them clear verbal instructions in order to reproduce the event properly. They actually enacted the event with the laigwanani who were shaved first in the form of a masterclass. The laigwanani would then be the ones reproducing this at home, with the support of the other laigwanani from previous generations who could remember their own experiences and lessons learned. Therefore the recordings on the phone would be a reproduction of what was already passed down from laigwanani's memories. In any case it mattered to enable cultural reproduction through transmission. Different epistemologies would converge around the idea of memory, from Daudi's comment and Taiko's account, "orality and literacy have in common that they depend on memory; they mobilize remembering in different media" (Fabian, 2007: 138). To which Berliner would add also the concept of forgetting, as it is both memory and forgetting that help "to prolong the anthropological project of understanding continuity" (Berliner, 2005), an idea that I will explore below.

Local Ethnographies

As mentioned in chapter 3, I came across one of the Ilnyangulo warriors who had not gone to Eunoto and had asked him a few questions. I had helped his friend in the making of a promotional video for tourists, promoting a "homestay," where tourists could sleep in his Boma, to meet the family and witness the ceremonial dancing of warriors. This man was one of the warriors who had sung and danced for the video. That weekend however, as a church member, he had decided to follow the pastor's recommendation "not to follow traditions" (kufwata Mila, in Kiswahili). Instead of attending Eunoto, he had decided to stay in church and they had created their own gospel video. Thinking about how Danny and other smartphone users were circulating content and also considering content, it might be productive to think about the anthropological approach to memory as a way to "understand the way people remember and forget their past" (Berliner, 2005). Indeed, the potential fluidity of modes of relatedness and structures of belonging also entail different and fluid epistemologies, which could overlap and converge around memory work. It is part of the work which requires sustaining local practices and authorities in order to preserve the fluidity of transmission and avoid one dominant medium.

Expanding this idea into memory work, Fabian (2012) invites us to consider epistemological foundations in a similar light as the constantly moving cultural practices we study as anthropologists, along with the context. This might have been understood quite early on in indigenous contexts as they experienced a variety of assimilation processes and therefore observed the temporariness of these epistemological foundations once a dominant power would take over another. In Engaresero a variety of modes of knowledge sharing exist. When Danny starts hierarchizing video recordings over oral transmission, he is doing boundary work which outlines the converging and competing influences that exist locally. Elders also explained that they don't mind the gospel videos, if it keeps their wives at home rather than at church where they could be making new friends and adopting other practices.

As I found that different types of epistemologies converged in Engaresero, in these next examples I will attempt to discuss "the vanishing boundaries between orality and literacy that characterize contemporary African memory work" (Fabian, 2007).

After I arrived in the field, I quickly discovered that Tom was also one of the founders of the local museum. He told me that having heard about my arrival and interest in learning more about the language and the culture, he had worked on getting everything written down in a notebook. However he had left it on a table in a common area in a campsite and it had disappeared in a moment of absence. He assumed a tourist or a company guide must have taken interest and taken it. He was quite disappointed that I could not see his hard work but he did not give up. As we discussed his experience with the museum, he mentioned that he felt some information was missing with the existing posters and that in any case they should be made by people from

Engaresero as every locality has their own ways. I agreed to support him in the creation of these complementary posters. He worked with Danny, the recognized scholar, on writing down what aspects of their local culture they thought were missing in the existing posters. My job was then to make the information clear and concise, easily digestible for foreigners such as myself, poorly versed in the complexities of Maasai cultural practices. We had decided to focus on explaining the different stages that each generation went through overtime, the role of the warrior, the role of the Olaiboni and the age-set system. Once we had printed a first draft at the CBO office, the tourism office leaders, Tom, Teme and Danny the scholar sat around a table to review it together as a few local guides came and went. As I asked for clarity on elements that remained unclear to my amateur eyes, debates started on the best way to represent and name aspects of the culture. One of the main discussions, for example, was whether warriors after their Eunoto ceremony became "senior warriors," or "junior elders." As I was wondering how we could resolve this and the implications of putting one option on paper, it became rather clear that as much as the Maasai culture had a very clear social organization, it was also a culture based on oral transmission. Room for interpretation and expression of one's own understanding of the culture blurred some boundaries and created fluidity, even more when it had to be translated in another language. As they settled for "senior warrior," it was still quite obvious that it could be one or the other, but it did not seem to matter too much in this context. Once we finished clarifying the content and had a final draft to be transformed into posters, each person in the room claimed their copies to take home. A few days later, Tom would tell me about a recent trip he had taken as a guide for some tourists. He had brought his copies of the content for the museum posters and showed them our work in order to explain some of the cultural practices. He said that the tourists had offered to buy these copies from him, but he had refused and preferred to keep them with him.

It was almost a stereotypical example of the monetary Western-type value attributed to the literary text, as opposed to the orality of the knowledge shared by the Maasai elder. In the end Tom decided to hold on to the text as a way to conserve epistemic power.

As I was looking into the anthropological use of memory, I appreciate how Berliner invites us to be "as critical of 'memory,' a problematic but indispensable concept for them [anthropologists], as we have learned to be of 'culture' or 'identity'" (2005). In the case of my observations, this led me to wonder how to consider "memory" in Engaresero. Furthermore, I partook in some of this memory work and contributed to the creation of poster-bounded ethnographic representations of local cultural practices, such as the role of the Maasai warrior, definitely evoking a certain timelessness. While we were creating these posters, it was also just as clear that the reality was more complicated. The warrior's awareness and their understanding of porous boundaries was embodied. Warriors who engaged in this poster-creation process were themselves engaged in schooling or other responsibilities that transformed their role in their community. It was difficult to capture the complex realities into one standardized version of their everyday balancing act, and definitely not the point. If requested, the local guides showing these posters in the museum could elaborate on their own experiences orally. The real value of these posters is for them to be presented and shared in their context and by their authors. Like Tom hanging on to text, whether illiterate or not, understanding different systems of value and knowledge is what allows one to gain and preserve authorship. For a while I wondered how I should be discussing these posters for this master's thesis in a way that is true to my experience yet also respectful of the ontological quests imminent in the process (Jackson, 1998). It seemed judicious not to annex these posters to my work, just like Tom did not share the notes with his clients. Fabian (2012) builds on Geertz to bring ethnographic research to look at another type of question: "what we know about how they know what they know." In Engaresero, I found examples of structures of knowledge which I describe through the materiality of memory: as storage space on the phone, or as posters made for the local museum. The material used in context highlights the different modes of memory work, through orality and literacy that exist and cohabit in Engaresero, and reveal some of the intersections between forms of knowledge, epistemologies and intersubjectivity. As Jackson (1998) explains: "the field of intersubjectivity includes persons, ancestors, spirits, collective representations, and material things" (p. 9). In Engaresero, participation in tourism, cultural events and even national politics was part of the quests for ontological security to be a part of this wider world, thus requiring "the ability to work and coexist with others in a practically efficacious way" (Jackson, 1998: 12). Pragmatism while navigating different epistemologies and authorities seemed a part of the warriors' skillset as they juggle epistemologies.

I would like to think that Berliner (2005) is right to say that as anthropologists, we tend to fuse culture and memory as it "helps us to think through the continuity and persistence of representations, practices, emotions, and institutions, an idea fundamental to anthropologists." I found that the very contemporary productions and consumption of various mediums of memory in Engaresero highlighted that anthropologists are not the only ones fusing memory and culture to think through some of these questions of representation. Therefore, maybe we just have a coeval (mis)understanding of this murky notion of memory and we all require some fluidity to allow us to explore these terms further in their different meanings. What we must keep tracking is the context that leads towards one interpretation over another.

Chapter 5

Neoliberal Politics on Maasailand and Identity

At the beginning of my research, I was directed towards the CBO (Community-Based Organization) and the Museum. As a foreigner in the area it was important to inform them, and the governmental authorities of my whereabouts. The CBO seemed to be the local authority when it came to tourist management therefore they would need to know that I was not a tourist. It was also a strategic destination since the CBO represented a local cluster of smartphone users.

This chapter explores the neo-liberal landscape in which the CBO was initiated. The CBO is an entity which manages local tourism, and through cultural activities commercializes ethnicity locally, a business strategy that I will explore through the lens of the Comaroff & Comaroff (2009) theory of the commodification of ethnicity, or what they call "Ethnicity Inc." The marketing of the Maasai identity, whether through live demonstrations, videos, or posters, is one of the many creative ways that the local residents have been able to become actors in the wider world, to include themselves in the tourism economy and also to defend their livelihoods. This chapter addresses some of the ongoing concerns in Engaresero, since it is important, as Archambault (2017) reminds us, not to be "glossing over the deeper politics of necessity" (p. 41). The pastoral lifestyle of the Maasai is increasingly strained by their "rapidly diminishing access" to grazing ranges in Tanzania (Homewood, Kristjanson, and Trench, 2009). Despite decades of vehement advocacy to preserve this access, it is still quite precarious and history has shown that state policies tend to result in many Maasai being "increasingly excluded from resources central to livelihoods" (Homewood, Kristjanson, and Trench, 2009). For example, grazing quotas have been imposed, disregarding and limiting pastoral knowledge and practices as well as resulting in land alienation and economic exclusion (Goldman, 2011). After decades of advocacy, it has become evident that "There is no social contract that protects from being displaced by more powerful interests" (Igoe, 2007). In the end, Maasai communities "have little choice but to work within the discursive context of neoliberalism" as a "way to assert their rights and defend their land" and also to survive on an everyday basis (Gardner, 2016: 7). In Engaresero, for those who have opted for new ventures such as guiding, it is also important to note that the tourism economy is also seasonal and, for most, not reliable and productive enough to be a full-time activity. In this context, "Population growth, land loss and social transition among the Maasai are overwhelming the capacity of their herds to support their families" (Homewood, Kristjanson, and Trench, 2009). Responding to Jim Igoe's (2017) call for research that will not keep reproducing "types of narratives that keep the question of human rights out of focus," it is important to consider these underlying politics that have affected Maasai warriors and their families for decades.

Once I've described the ecosystem and recent history, this chapter will look at how the new generations of warriors acting as "traditional guides" adapt to the evolving context and relate to their land. The commodification of ethnicity is one of these more recent strategies, where one of the local tourist attractions is a cultural encounter with the Maasai communities. Gardner builds on Geschiere's idea that "a predominant effect of economic globalization is the increased reliance on local forms of belonging in order for marginalized groups to claim their stake in the market-driven division of resources," also described as "strategic essentialism" (Gardner, 2016: 115). As the Comaroffs underline, the instrumentalization of ethnicity for commercial aims hides bigger concerns that the community is facing. As I will discuss further along, practices of oppression and resistance are ongoing in Engaresero as the residents strive to preserve their slice of the cake of the tourism industry on their land, because it is intertwined with long-standing conflicts over "long-term control and authority over land and natural resources" (Gardner, 2016: 161). Historically, the claims for indigenous rights, advocacy for pastoralist livelihoods and the more recent commodification of culture are reflective of the continuous oppressions that pastoralists have been fighting against, as well as the marginalization from local, national and global resources even as their images and stories continue to be exploited. McIntosh (2009) underlines that "while ethnicity is always historically contingent and often contested, it is nevertheless the case that certain social and political formations, as well as certain religious and linguistic practices, encourage folk essentialisms that reinforce ethnic boundaries" (p. 10). These boundaries are more about access to natural and economic resources and political power than the actual framing of ethnicity as an exclusive group, since the reality is more fluid. Marginalization is rarely a desired state of being as shown by the youthful behaviours and the agility used to preserve harmonious relationships, described in above chapters. As I hope to demonstrate in this chapter, it would be shortsighted to critique this seemingly essentialist and capitalist approach to culture, as the goal is more about claiming ownership over their livelihoods and adapting to the overall economic pressures that they inevitably face in this contemporary landscape of rising inequalities.

The neo-liberal ecosystem

The neo-liberal economic transition in the 1990's accelerated large-scale investments in Tanzania and land alienation, notably in the Maasailand of Simanjiro, Mkomazi and Loliondo (Hodgson, 2011). As Tanzania opened up to the global economy, it continued to bet on tourism as one of its main attractions. This time, foreign investment and state elites replaced the parastatals and continued appropriating Maasailand for the national and private tourism economy (Hodgson, 2011). Culturally, a new (or renewed from colonial times) perspective on the "Maasai culture" emerged, as their "authenticity" attracted tourists, also referred to as "primitivist tourism" (Comaroff & Comaroff, 2009, Meiu, 2015). Young Maasai men in their typical outfits were now perceived as "formidable and noble" (Ivaska, 2011). In tourism, Maasai leaders also started encouraging direct foreign investment on their lands through "market-based community conservation arrangements" (Gardner, 2016). These arrangements competed with the state efforts to control tourism on village lands through the Wildlife Management Area policy (WMA) implemented nation-wide in 2002 which I will get back to below. Maasai leaders continued to develop private partnerships and promote cultural tourism on the land they inhabit in order to resist state-control over land and livelihoods. Ironically, after the failed villagization of Ujamaa, the rural villages on Maasailand did become a "legitimate site of community belonging and rights" (Gardner, 2016: 7), resisting dominance through self-reliant economic practices. This allowed Maasai leaders to control the commodification of their land and culture for tourism and also to achieve direct representation in front of the state and foreign investors. What may seem to be a "contradictory practice of challenging some market ideologies while embracing others is an increasingly common practice of marginalized social groups and movements around the world" (Gardner, 2016: 8). As described in previous chapters, however, fluidity in the navigation of different ideologies is a skill acquired throughout history, necessary for generations of Maasai to shape their own future in harmony with their worldviews. The following sections will describe some of the power dynamics observed on site and the different ways that residents of Engaresero navigate them to maintain a minimum of control over local natural resources and, interrelatedly, over their ways of life.

The main local actor in tourism was the CBO working to supervise and control tourist activities in Engaresero. The CBO was officially established in 2012 as the Engaresero Eramatare Community Development Initiative (EECDI), legally registered as a CBO at the District level, which is a not-for-profit status. This more recent formalization and legal registration was prompted by the implementation of the WMA policy in Lake Natron (Mori, 2016). Before that, and since the early 2000's, an informal group of local residents had been managing the growing number of tourists on their land and organizing themselves to act as guides and to collect fees for visiting the area of Engaresero.

The emergence of the EECDI, an initiative first led by the community of Engaresero, evolved in collaboration with the FAO (Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations). The FAO provided funding to promote conservation, officialize and reinforce the existence of the group of local residents managing local tourism. This was part of a more global initiative to recognize GIAHS: Globally Important Agricultural Heritage Systems. According to the FAO: GIAHS are "a living, evolving system of human communities in an intricate relationship with their territory, cultural or agricultural landscape or biophysical and wider social environment." The main aim of this global initiative is to "protect and encourage customary use of biological resources in accordance with traditional cultural practices that are compatible with conservation or sustainable use requirements" (FAO, website). The Action Plan created by the Community of Engaresero, FAO and other stakeholders stated the following objectives regarding the development of tourism as part of this Conservation initiative:

Goal: To promote Engaresero village as a special "pastoral heritage" destination, which is managed and "owned" by the local community

1. Sub-committee for tourism under CBO
2. Adjusting admission fees and revenue flow to the community
3. Professionalizing tour guiding (training and quality control by CBO)
4. Providing security/safety services to mountaineers
5. Museum & botanical garden, arts and crafts shop (also information

and logistics hub)
6. Improving information and signage to tourists
7. Providing new activities, scenic walks, herding walks, cultural performances
8. By-laws on investment in tourism
9. Behavior standards for tourists and community members (begging, prostitution, cultural respect)
10.Fund for community investment and maintenance of infrastructure

I went there on my first days, with my letters and the explanation of my project. The CBO office is divided into two buildings: the administrative office and the museum. Both structures are round and covered in cow dung, following the customary building style and material for Maasai homesteads, except for the metal roof panels ("bahati" in Kiswahili). Bahati is a more recently introduced material contrasting with the typical thatch. One of the campsite owners from Europe, would point out to me a few weeks later how she found this roofing to ruin the landscape and had been trying to convince the CBO to at least cover it with thatch for the sake of esthetics and cultural consistency. In the village however, the shiny bahati on top of a roof would be pointed out to me admiringly as a sign of wealth.

The CBO, during the daytime and high season, would be filled with tourist guides, all local residents, usually posted in front of the museum building, sitting, chatting and playing some games. They would actually be waiting for the next tourist car to potentially drive them away once activities and fees have been settled inside the administrative building. Tourists sitting in the car, while their safari guide finalizes payments, might decide to venture out and stretch their legs in the museum. If around, the English-speaking guides would voluntarily show them around, waking up - or not - whoever is taking a nap on the cow skin showcased inside the museum. During high season (June to September) the traffic is busy, with safari cars coming in and out sometimes incessantly, and guides being dropped off or picked up to accompany the next adventures. Motorbikes, bringing in guides or the administrators from the village center or taking them back home, were also constantly roaring in and out, teasing those who will eventually walk home, or be convinced to take the ride instead and finish early.

Everyday is a gamble for the guides: will one be picked up? For how many days and which activity? Will they need to climb the imposing volcano Ol Doinyo Lengaï? When will they be back and with how much tip on top of their daily wages? The general mood was high and optimistic around the office at this time of year, as there is a good chance that one will get a client. As my interpreters Tom and Teme were both experienced guides, I had to be flexible and adapt to whatever opportunity came their way. Since both were great English speakers, they ended up being in quite high demand. On some of these busy days when they would tell me "nimepata wagenis" ("I got visitors" in Kiswahili), I would usually stay back and enjoy the stable and comforting routine at home ("aang" in Maa) or roam around the village, being hailed here and there to practice my salutations in Maa.

The CBO has been such a welcoming, easy-going and supportive group throughout my stay. One of the CBO employees, their admin-accountant, Maiko, was actually the guide with whom I had climbed Ol Doinyo Lengaï a few years back, and with whom I had reconnected a few times during past visits. We were happy to meet again but didn't have much time to catch up as he was also responsible for payments and receipts for the tourist groups coming in. The main coordinator of the CBO, Lazzaro, was new to me. He mentioned his higher education and contributions to other research projects and seemed eager to help. They welcomed me to use their space, WI-FI and to interview the guides working there since they are often sitting and waiting for tourists. Lazzaro said that usually research in the area has been about volcanic activity and geology or archeology, and that it was the first time someone was inquiring about the internet ("intaneti' in Kiswahili).

This first discussion, and any of the following ones taking place in the CBO office, would see various participants join and leave, as guides would come in and out of the office and if interested, contribute their ideas as well, mirroring the open-door policy and conviviality that I found back at home in Ndalalani during teatime. As much as it would render obsolete part of my ethics process it usually created very dynamic conversations. Most discussions would be in a mix of Kiswahili and English, sometimes switching to Maa for vernacular or cultural details to be hashed out. One of their main recommendations was to conduct some of my research in their own office and with the guides, since a lot of them are users of internet technologies and smartphones. Maiko explained that "Those people who have a smartphone are very few - mostly guides, unless you are from a rich family.” Lazzaro and the other guides who joined in the discussion that day also mentioned that the internet is an important tool for them, working in tourism, as it allows for promotion of their location, attracting tourists, and preferably establishing “direct connections” with potential visitors. The CBO guides would eventually be the majority of my interviewees while on the field. Luckily, I started this research in the right place.

Engaresero Museum with the Guides in their blue Shukas

The CBO - an ethno-preneurial hub

Ethnicity, Inc., a book written by Jean and John Comaroff (2009), explores in depth the implications behind this type of business activity in the region, cultural tourism, often demarcated by ethnic identity. The Comaroffs nuance the different components, arguments and analysis around ethno-enterprises, and how they come to exist. I find some of Ethnicity Inc. theories productive to uncover the complexity of the politics of identity and indigeneity involved in the CBO of Engaresero, and at the same time to relate to the context where economic pressures and inequalities are on the rise. I will therefore consider the CBO through the “ethno-preneurial” or “ethno-business” framework proposed by the Comaroffs, to explore the boundary work made by the local residents of Engaresero in the economic context of tourism and the underlying struggle over land control.

Ethnicity is a multi-faceted concept coined as "a projection of the entrepreneurial subject of neoliberalism onto the plane of collective existence" (Comaroff & Comaroff, 2009, pg. 140). It emerged as a new turn stemming from the politics of identity that have risen and surged in the post-colonial context, familiar debates for the Maasai. Ethnicity, Inc. is a dialectical process between the incorporation of identity: "the rendering of ethnicized populations into corporations of one kind or another". The CBO office was incorporated for tourism purposes and the commodification of culture: commercializing cultural products and practices (ibid pg. 21). Trying to put it simply, Ethnicity, Inc. is about how culture and ethnic identity come to be materialized and used as a business strategy and the implications for the people that embody these strategic components.

The Comaroffs situate the emergence of Ethnicity, Inc. in the wider context of "a global regime of nongovernmental organizations that, though diverse in scope, ideology, and motivation, bore with them the mantras of late liberalism: structural adjustment, privatization, human rights, intellectual property." (Ibid. pg. 30). This context strikingly resembles the framework in which the CBO was formulated, if we refer back to the 10 objectives of the Tourism Plan established with the FAO in 2011, cited above.

Looking at the enterprise today, in 2019, and its museum, the CBO is managing cultural tourism in the area of Engaresero and provides (mandatory) local guides to accompany tourists in all the activities. Tourists arriving there will need to pay a fee to visit these local attractions, and that will also cover the CBO guiding fees. Part of this amount collected from visitors is pulled into the community fund that supports various development projects for the Engaresero community. The CBO office, however, was not alone in managing the growth of tourism in Engaresero. In fact, when I arrived there, I first had to stop at the recently established WMA (Wildlife Management Area) checkpoint, standing on the main road, before arriving at the CBO at the gate of Engaresero.

WMA is a concept that was drafted in 1998 with the intention to "give local communities the "full mandate of managing and benefiting from their conservation efforts" (MNRT 1998: 31), which would "improve the quality of the life of the people in Tanzania," while also "promot[ing] conservation of biological diversity" (Mori, 2016) through a "framework for communities to gain rights to benefit from wildlife tourism and hunting" (Gardner 2012). The framework proposes that once the WMA has its official status, through the creation of a locally managed CBO, the economic returns from tourism operations are split in a 65:35 percent division among the WMA (the local CBO) and the state, respectively" (Mori, 2016). In 2002, when the WMA launched its implementation in 15 different locations, it failed only in one: "Loliondo was able to actively resist adopting a WMA for several years, becoming a major thorn in the side of the Ministry of Tourism and Natural Resources." (Gardner, 2012). Loliondo is the administrative headquarters for the Ngorongoro district within which lies Engaresero. The Loliondo area was contentious, as a place where local Maasai NGOs and activists had been active overtime (Gardner 2012, Hodgson 2011) and as there has been a growing number of conflicts with a United Arab Emirates (UAE) hunting company present in the area: the OBC (Ortello Business Corporation). To summarize, a plot of around 1500 square kilometres had been set aside by the Tanzanian government for them to conduct their seasonal hunting activity. During negotiations for this plot, the OBC demonstrated convincing arguments to the Tanzanian government, such as "donations of vehicles to the Wildlife Division and planes to the military" (Gardner, 2012). After a few years, however, it became a story of deception for the local Maasai communities who did not harvest much benefit from it and it was estimated that other tourism partnerships would allow for higher profits (IWGIA, 2016). They eventually started disregarding the land set aside for foreign hunting and resettling on this land that was originally theirs, tired of empty promises, which created a conflict with the hunters (Gardner, 2012). When the Tanzanian government came up with the proposal of a WMA around this time, it was immediately perceived as yet another strategy to regain control over the land and maintain the business relationship with the OBC. The Loliondo community refused and "chose to fight against establishing a WMA and for the right to negotiate directly with investors" and saw that "this new governance structure would immediately diminish their village land rights" (Gardner, 2012). Faced with this refusal, in 2007, the government came up with new regulations requiring tourism companies to pay any land fees directly to the central government. That same year, the Loliondo Maasai leaders thought twice before renewing the contract with the OBC. The new contract and payments between the OBC and the Loliondo village leaders was accepted with a local understanding that this agreement between them and the OBC would leave some flexibility for spontaneous negotiations since land use was nowadays controlled at the state level, therefore the contract was not legally-binding. In

2009 however, as some villagers had continued living on what was considered hunting grounds since they expected to discuss any claims directly with the OBC, the Tanzanian government stepped in and acted forcefully evict about 3000 Maasais, burning 150 homesteads and cattle camps and physically abusing community members (Gardner 2012, IWGIA 2016). This was widely denounced by the international indigenous movements, causing the state to change strategy. In 2010, the state came back yet again with a proposal to create a new demarcation between land used by pastoralists in the area and about 1,500 square kilometers that would be kept as a corridor for conservation and hunting. The Loliondo village representatives again opposed this new initiative, as they had understood that "village based conservation was less a strategic attempt to determine future land use and more one of the few viable options to claim resources in an environment in which market driven relationships were remaking the Tanzanian landscape" (Gardner 2012).

When I arrived, I witnessed that the WMA had been active in Lake Natron as it now had its own gate, separate from the CBO office in Engaresero, and apparently since 2018. This potentially confirms the validity of local concerns that "establishing WMAs may not involve transferring the decision-making powers or benefits to communities that was promised" (Mori, 2016).

While I was there in 2019, representatives of the government were building their local office in the village, next to the village administrative office, and by the end of 2019, they were enforcing a new payment system. This system is reliant on access to the internet and modeled on the Tanzanian National Park payment system (centralized by specific offices found in the big cities). Now tourists could be turned away at the first checkpoint, the gate managed by WMA, if they had not followed procedures. Once they do pass this gate, about one hundred meters further, the visitors will have to make a second stop at the CBO. They will pay another fee to access local activities and be accompanied by a local guide.

As Mori (2016) pertinently quotes from Ribot, Agrawal & Larson (2006), this case of "recentralization while decentralizing", becomes quite clear in Engaresero when the implementation of the WMA ends up partially removing the local community's control over their natural resources. The nation-state is therefore meddling in the growing tourism in the area and appropriating its own share of the financial benefits, which stemmed in part from the cultural attractions and activities that the Maasai residents had set up.

Becoming conservationists

Here, I aim to give more historical context to the activism and politics of representation that have been experienced in the area as well as the strategic discursive adjustments in front of the evolving national and global context. Going back to the idea of historical contingency, this brief overview of the long-lasting activism in Maasailand might reveal the wider pressures that have existed in the area for decades, limiting local pastoral and tourism activities and sovereignty over land and lifestyle. It also helps understand their experience and capacity in creatively mobilizing any resource available that supports claims of ownership and access to resources.

In 1989, M. Parkipuny, a Maasai activist for Indigenous Rights recognition in Africa, made a speech at the Sixth Session of the United Nations Working Group on lndigenous Populations. He sums up the historical plight of the Maasais in this statement: “The process of alienation of our land and its resources was launched by European colonial authorities at the beginning of this century and has been carried on, to date, after the attainment of national independence. Our cultures and ways of life are viewed as outmoded, inimical to national pride and a hindrance to progress.” (Parkipuny, 1989). Indeed post-colonial politics, fearing separationism and “ethnicism”, have preferred to argue for the idea that “we are all indigenous in Africa” (Hodgson, 2011: pg. 27). For African governments fearful of ethno-nationalism, endorsing the existence of indigenous peoples within their borders would therefore be tantamount to supporting their right to secede from their existing states and form new states” (Hodgson, 2009). Overtime, this made the Indigenous Rights activism quite confrontational at the national level, not always productive and often sterile.

Since then, the Maasai discourse evolved from talking about indigeneity to “pastoralist livelihood.” Indeed, as power dynamics evolve, Maasai activists adjust their strategic positions and repositioning, set within complex, shifting fields of power within and beyond, but always including the nation-state.” (Hodgson, 2011, pg. 216). Even then, the Tanzanian state still encouraged “pastoralists to replace transhumant pastoralism with more “productive” and less “environmentally harmful” modes of livestock “farming” (Hogdson, 2011, pg. 183). No matter the arguments, the stigmatization of pastoral livelihood continued. The new president, Mr. Magufuli (elected in 2015), has made tourism a national priority to improve the economy, also recommended by the World Bank, putting national parks and control over wildlife areas on the forefront of their agenda. Magufuli announced in 2017: “Tanzania is not a grazing ground for

Kenya” to justify reinforcing border controls and preventing Kenyan pastoralists in the Serengeti area; these pastoralists were mostly from the Maasai ethno-linguistic group. These movements of people and livestock following dry or rainy seasons had been happening long before the establishment of Tanzania’s national parks or even the border limitation between Kenya and Tanzania. Indeed, the semi-nomadic way of life for the Maasai is shaped by their reliance on the natural resources around them and they have roamed in the great Serengeti plains since pre-colonial times. As pastoralists, their livestock is their most important belonging and wealth; accessing enough grazing ranges and water throughout the year for their animals is essential. In Engaresero, it is necessary for many to move for about half the year to greener pastures. Men are roaming far with their cattle to access food and water, sometimes for weeks, when resources become scarce in nearby areas. I had noticed that these grazing areas in Engaresero are often also shared with wildlife, looking for the same meals. Dietwise, the Maasai do not eat wild animals and are even perceived as custodians of wildlife. Mori quotes an African Wildlife Foundation employee’s observation: “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” (Mori, 2016). Tanzania’s famous and most-visited National Parks, Serengeti and Ngorongoro, used to be Maasailand (Ndaskoi, 2005), from which the Maasais have already been alienated over time. The rationale for exclusions and even expulsions has been based on a (neo)-colonialist discourse on conversation, or fortress conservation, “which called for the separation of people and wildlife” (Gardner, 2016: 5). Some have coined it green colonialism or “colonialisme vert” as dominant groups are imposing their idea of wilderness over others and again, based on a foreign worldview of conservation (Blanc, 2020). The Maasais have seen their access to land, inseparable from their culture as pastoralists, increasingly limited and bounded by external forces (Ndaskoi 2005, Hodgson 2001).

More recently in Lake Natron, in 2006, a controversial agreement between the Tanzanian government and an international corporation put at risk the Engaresero ecosystem with the project of constructing a soda ash factory to exploit minerals found in the lake, a 450 million dollars investment. Lazzaro gave me a booklet. He had a whole pile of them, documenting the lengthy advocacy process and the arguments used to reject this agreement in the name of conservation and community rights. It had been orchestrated by a group of environmental activists together with the local community and other environmental international stakeholders that endeavoured to defeat this plan, successfully. Describing their advocacy strategy, the group mentions how "the voice of the local community is like the voice of god" and were instrumental in convincing the general public against this project (Birdlife International, 2012). Pastoralists argue that their livelihoods depend on their access to land and natural resources. In a place like Tanzania where the land is owned by the nation-state, if it is transformed into a conservation area as has happened to much of Maasailand - rich in wildlife - it becomes then controlled and bounded by the nation-state as well as neoliberal business partnerships. As demonstrated in this case, this control enables the state to enter into other types of agreements, such as industrial development on the land, even if it might modify the landscape and environment and disrupt the local ecosystem. Conservationist arguments may then appear as yet another excuse to gain control over land and benefit from its exploitation - whether in tourism, or any other business opportunity that may arise.

Local communities are therefore mobilizing around their lifestyle, their ethnicity, their history and even their citizenship to contribute arguments around their legitimacy and rights to control their land and its natural resources. Culture becomes part of the arsenal to advocate for more decision power over land and the exploitation of the natural resources present on that land, and as members of the local ethnic-group position themselves and are described as rightful advocates of the environment, as seen in this booklet and its distribution. It seems legitimate indeed to remind ourselves that the local communities are probably those depending most on this land for their survival, whether economic or cultural. As experienced advocates, reinforcing cultural belonging as an argument for ownership and becoming actors in conservation and tourism may be also directly fueled by the repeated breaches of their sovereignty over the land they inhabit.

This leads us to another debate around commodifying ethnicity and cultural tourism explored by the Comaroffs: "who owns native culture"? One side argues that the reduction of culture "to the commodity form would not merely be exclusionary and inequitable, alienating it from those, anyone, potentially - who might enjoy it, inhabit it. It would make it something else entirely: Culture, not culture." (Comaroff & Comaroff, 2009: pg. 31). On the other side, indigenous peoples' movements have been advocating for "the absolute and exclusive rights of those 'natives' to their history, knowledge, and creative works" (Ibid, 2009, pg. 30). However, agreeing with the Comaroffs that there is more to add to answer this question, let's focus on this term "inhabiting" culture, since for pastoralists like the Maasais the land is usually a strong part of the "local flavor" that spices up the debate of owning Culture. (Ibid, 2009, pg. 31).

Their discourse is strategically using neoliberal arguments claiming ownership over their culture and its commodification through tourism and more recently advertising their role as a "voice of god" for environmental conservation to halt very real projects, like the soda ash factory, from modifying the local landscape. The materialization of ethnic consciousness has existed through political discourse for a long time and only evolved with the context from human and indigenous rights towards rights to livelihood, conservation and new forms of commodification such as cultural tourism, recognizing that the political is more than ever indissociable from the economic when it comes to "ethno-futures". (Comaroff & Comaroff, 2009: 45). This fluidity and creativity in discourse is also a necessity in the face of the competing expectations and financial needs that individuals are facing and for collectivities pressured by a dominant structure of power.

Traditional Maasai guides

Going back to the services of the CBO as an ethno-preneurial enterprise, this section explores the implications of such a commercial strategy in terms of politics of identity and representation for individuals and their collectivity.

The developments of cultural tourism initiatives on the global scale ignited quite a few debates. Some argue that this commercialization of identity and culture is a way to cheapen it and give in to capitalist hegemony. In opposition, it has also been heard from concerned ethnic group leaders, that "mass circulation reaffirms ethnicity - in general and in all its particularity - and, with it, the status of the embodied ethnic subject as a source and means of identity." (Comaroff & Comaroff, 2009, pg. 20). One leader of the Tswana ethnic group in South Africa, Tswagare Namane observed: "the commercialization of identity does not necessarily cheapen it or reduce it to a brute commodity. Quite the opposite: marketing what is "authentically Tswana" is also a mode of reflection, of self-construction, of producing and feeling Tswana-ness." (ibid: pg. 9).

In Engaresero, the team of guides is composed of a majority of men from the current Ilnyangulo generation of warriors. There are some exceptions made by a handful of elders, like Tom, who spoke quite good English because of past development work or even exceptional international travel experiences. There were also a few women, including one who was not born Maasai but had followed her Maasai husband to Engaresero thirteen years ago.

Ali is one of the CBO guides who was on his break from studying at the time and working during the months of high season to fund his upcoming semester. He described how he thought too much time outside their village and even on social media may cause losing the “Maa pronunciation” because they are using English and Kiswahili all the time. In his case, he described that when staying “too long in school [outside Engaresero], I lose my capacity of pronunciation of Maa. My family says I will stay with ormeek”, a term he described as “people out of Maasai tribe”. Meiu (2009), in his description of the Ormorani, (spelled “Ilmurani” in his article), makes this contrast between the “traditional” and the “modern” through the local distinctions made with the terms “Bush Ilmurran” and “Plastic Ilmurran.” For him, this is also related to the term “Ormeek.” Hodgson (2001) defines “ormeek” as “derogatorily attached by Maasai elders to those Maasai men who attended school and worked for cash.” She also explains how Ormeek could be perceived as “a lack of community and attachments” (Hodgson, 2001: 252). Later on, the definition evolved towards a more positive connotation since education was more and more valued as a useful skill to deal with the bureaucracy, government, (Meiu, 2009, Hodgson 2001) and in our case tourism as well, the growing local economic activity. Importantly, Hodgson explains how these notions have evolved not to be exclusive.

Among the younger generation of Ilnyangulo warriors, like Ali, who had gone to study outside Engaresero, some expressed feeling uneasy about reintegrating their society where sometimes their family members “don’t even speak kiswahili” after having been exposed to urban life. Another Ilnyangulo guide also described his experience going back to his family homestead as: “Sometimes also they take me as a westernized person that doesn’t know any more what’s going on”. Another warrior had concluded: “if people don’t follow their customs, they may be rejected from the culture.” Anxieties were on all sides when it came to belonging and the preservation of Maasai culture.

The Comaroffs highlight this ambiguity of the process of stepping outside one’s culture, whether through education or through partaking in an activity that is typically “ormeek”. In Engaresero, being a guide, especially climbing the volcano, is open to any warrior that wishes to try it in the community. However, as much as everyone would normally get a chance to guide once, and as much as the office works on ensuring a fair distribution, those who are “learned" have a competitive advantage and would get picked more often, as I would experience first-hand with my interpreters. Either they would be recommended, have “direct contact” or be the favorite pick and friend of more regular safari guides. For the “learned”, it is the opportunity to activate and maintain the skills they have gained, while staying in their local setting. Being Ormeek turned into a competitive advantage. Even if this might result in a lifestyle highly dependent on the influx of external actors, there is a certain self-realization in this new line of work, as they are able to activate their urban experience and formal education; staying connected with the “outside world” that they have been exposed to, and still be of service to their community, recreating a sense of belonging. Triggered by the demand of external consumers, the “traditional Maasai guides" as they would call themselves at times, become (re)producers of their own culture. It is a process where “the producers of culture are also its consumers, seeing and sensing and listening to themselves enact their identity—and, in the process, objectifying their own subjectivity, thus to (re)cognize its existence, to grasp it, to domesticate it, to act on and with it”, (Comaroff & Comaroff, 2009: pg. 26). As the coordinator of the CBO mentioned, the promotion of cultural tourism in Engaresero contributes to the “restoration of culture.” Ormeek or not, residents of Engaresero had the opportunity to perform their acquired language and pedagogical skills as well as their ethnicity, locally. Cultural tourism may be a way to indigenize some of the local guides’ personal trajectory, no matter how remote and disconnected from the pastoral lifestyle they may have been throughout their journey. It is an opportunity for them to reintegrate their locality in a way that values their acquired skills and knowledge and to reclaim their place on this land, as warriors and guides for cultural tourism. As Tswagare Namane described, ethno-enterprise can also be a contemporary mode of reflection and self-construction (Comaroff & Comaroff, 2009).

Niche Marketing

Listening to the “traditional Maasai guides" and smartphone users, I examine further their narrative to promote cultural tourism. In the setup described above, between the different levels of legal authorities and competing tour operators, many different stakeholders want their piece of the financial benefits of tourism in Engaresero. Once the tourists have passed the WMA gate, it is then up to the local community to make the most of their image and skills, products and services in order to convince visitors to spend more of their budget. Marketing is a priority for the CBO but also for the larger community. Indeed, tourism brought enough money for the office to fund significant community initiatives, such as housing for teachers and sponsorships of local students to attend higher education. It was therefore important for many in Engaresero to maintain and preferably grow the funds coming in from this social and cultural enterprise. “Cultures, like brands, must essentialise...successful and sustainable cultures are those which brand best.” (Chanock, quoted by Comaroff & Comaroff, 2009: pg. 18).

In their locality and collectivity, on these pastoral lands interrupted mainly by tourism, the Maasai guides hold their indissoluble legitimacy over cultural tourism, the “authenticity” being produced by the local guides embodying and performing their ethnicity. As this becomes more visible, it is hard for external actors to match the competitive ethno-preneurial strategy that makes Engaresero a remarkable destination. The CBO is indirectly preserving its ownership over cultural tourism in Lake Natron, by affirming their sense of belonging, and striving to curve more safari itineraries towards Engaresero. The experience they offer has convinced visitors of this unique cultural opportunity and triggers the powerful word-of-mouth that exponentially increases the flow of tourists. Smartphones and access to the internet are strategic tools for these “ethno-preneurs”. In my interviews, the use of smartphones and social media mentioned by the majority of these guides was either to “keep in touch… hear from the outside”, whether with tourists or classmates, or “promotion of tour activity.” The main coordinator of the CBO Office said that he found smartphones and social media useful for the “promotion of business through social media and our website [...]. Some of our guides through WhatsApp can find groups to promote and chat directly with the client.” Most had bought their smartphones with their own funds, which is quite a significant investment, especially in an environment with highly unreliable access to the internet. The CBO office is well equipped, but has limited access to the network as the signal is quite weak. Their WI-FI installation is only occasionally strong enough to access social media and more sparingly to download emails, in fact never able to do so. Ironically, parked behind the CBO office, fenced and guarded by the CBO team, stands an impressive satellite dish that has constant high-speed satellite internet access installed for research and that has enough power to send live information regarding local geological activity back to a team of researchers, in Tanzania and in North America.

During my stay, Lazzaro and Maiko mentioned that they wanted to create promotional videos for their tourism activity to advertise on social media and maybe a short documentary to talk about the Maasai culture, for which my equipment could come handy. We decided to organize these recordings over my next visit, as I could potentially bring someone more skilled than myself. In the CBO's promotional videos that were eventually made, the guides position themselves as "traditional tour guides" and talk about "cultural tourism" and "Maasai culture" as local attractions. They display the cultural specificities that can be found there, such as singing, dancing and visiting or even sleeping in a local boma. This marketing of their culture, whether on an individual or collective level creates visibility for Lake Natron and Engaresero as a site of tourism to be shared with the public in order to attract more tourists, with a focus on its cultural authenticity. Their ambition with this marketing was also to reduce their dependence on external safari companies or travel agencies and facilitate "direct contact" with potential clients and once again be the direct negotiators for the services and products that they have to offer. Each of them had a personal story to share about some clients contacting them directly to travel in Natron. A local guide had recalled how "A client found a picture of mine on Facebook on Lengai - and he contacted me directly - I shared my WhatsApp number and that client ended up coming to Natron." Lazzaro also mentioned how thanks to their social media page "They [the tourists] got in touch through Facebook and planned everything with Maiko without going through the tour operator." Seemingly they were sparse but appreciated opportunities. "Direct contact" was valued throughout as a way to avoid intermediaries that tend to reduce their final share of the benefits and reclaim ownership over the touristic consumption of their land.

This context makes it essential for the CBO to cultivate its own brand, promote the cultural aspects of tourism in their area and their expertise, positioning themselves as the legitimate owners of the local indigenous knowledge and also as the redistributors of the profits to the local community. More than marketing or commodifying, this may be just another step of the deep "allegiance to culture" (Chanock, quoted by Comaroff & Comaroff, 2009: pg. 18) demonstrated overtime in the ongoing historical struggles of the Maasais for their collective cultural preservation or "cultural restoration" as Lazzaro described, and their ecosystem. In this neoliberal context the inhabitants of Engaresero are building new types of fluid and contemporary arguments to assert their lifestyle, identity and territory. With their business venture, the CBO is (re)negotiating its sovereignty and ownership over the economic gains made from their cultural identity and their place in the evolving tourism landscape that is Lake Natron. The CBO and its agents show the inseparability of the concept of ethnicity with the evolution of context and politics, based on the idea that cultural identity and practices is “both ascriptive and instrumental” (Comaroff & Comaroff, 2009: pg. 40). The need to underline the cultural and ethnic aspect of tourism in Engaresero has been accentuated by the reinforcement of the state monopoly over natural resources. The perspectives of ethno-futures in tourism align with the “remotely global” reality of some of the warriors of Engaresero (Piot, 1999). It is also relevant to note that while these developments reinforce the desired interconnectivity between Engaresero residents and the wider world and justifies investing in technology allowing for “direct contact”, it also increases their dependency on the global market. This will become painfully evident during the COVID-19 crisis. In our case, tourism and pastoralism reciprocally contribute to each other’s survival, and serve as arguments for control over land and natural resources. As the Maasai guides from Engaresero are reaffirming their cultural identity, compiling their “ormeek” backgrounds and their entrepreneurialism in tourism, they are also safeguarding and negotiating their individual and collective existence.

Conclusion

The different generations, as I tried to relay, have in mind the preservation of societal and familial bonds in the midst of these changes while indigenizing modern visions of success. Juggling between the national curriculum with its own rhythms and milestones such as national exams, passing from one grade to another, pursuing romantic encounters and navigating cultural and familial expectations could be complex. Skillful planning and intergenerational dialogues are key ingredients to the harmonization of these systems into viable and desirable paths for the future of Engaresero residents. As they experiment with different trajectories, they also acquire new skills and a capacity to move from one social geography to another. Since social geographies have differing hierarchies, epistemologies and structures of power, residents of Engaresero have also developed the capacity to navigate and negotiate their way in and out, in part by sustaining these competing authorities. Sustaining authorities and epistemologies almost seems like a necessary part of the process to preserve harmonious relationships while working towards individual aspirations. New technology and knowledge come into Engaresero and support this fluidity. These new possibilities also pass through the local and intergenerational dialogues in Engaresero and are reformulated accordingly. These intergenerational exchanges contribute to the indigenization of modernity, and add an intergenerational flow of ideas to the circular migration of people and goods.

With strategic discourses, harmonious relationships and technology they are able to recenter their position and expand boundaries so as to be neither at the edge of modernity nor the edge of the Mila. They are removing themselves from one dominant and unilinear model and building their own future, as youth have been known to do. In today's Maasailand, with good planning, it may be possible to be an accomplished warrior and scholar.

Demands of modernity in contemporary Engaresero are intertwined in struggles of sovereignty and self-determination. Engaresero could be considered at the margin, but since very few want to actually feel marginalized, generations have been working hard to be part of the wider world and reverse center and periphery. The idea of boundary work done by new generations in Engaresero is a way to make sense of these landscapes and help to create alternative paths to stay connected and map out opportunities while moving from one social geography to another. Certainly it is not a straightforward process and these boundaries are more or less flexible, porous enough to allow individuals to circumvent rigid codes and hierarchies when necessary. In fact multiple boundaries enable more discreet trespassing. This same boundary work needs to also be recognized as a continuity of structures that dominant and colonial powers have imposed overtime. This includes academic work, which has essentialized indigenous groups enough to leave a lasting mark on collective imagination. Therefore, the idea of a "Maasai culture" or ethnicity can not be entirely discredited, as it is also historically contingent. The question that taunts me is how to deconstruct this if the ones who were once categorized as "others" are now finally harvesting some of the benefits of being seen as an authentic and homogeneous group? As the last chapter underlines, the displayed particularity of being Maasai is a relatively recent factor in increased flows of resources, people and ideas that are passing through Engaresero. After years of being silenced and marginalized through colonization and the nationalist spirit of the postcolony, being Maasai is now valued as a commercial interest in the post-postcolony (De Boeck & Honwana, 2004). Claiming ownership on the gains made since "being Maasai" has become a capitalized asset is also a struggle for sovereignty over their livelihoods and existence. I argue here that the type of "high knowledge" demonstrated by my interlocutors' navigations might also be part of the ongoing resistance, a historically contingent ideology attached to being a member of the Maasai society. Professor Kauanui is a member of the Kãnaka Maoli diaspora, indigenous people from Hawaï and has worked tirelessly on the politics of indigeneity and sovereignty. Kauanui who has done a lot of research on the plights of indigenous groups, mainly in North America, explains in an interview that indigenizing is about resisting domination, and adopting processes of self-determination (Kauanui interviewed by the Collectif, 2019). For this, essentializing notions also perceived as risks of nationalist or separatist discourse, are necessary for people who are still fighting neocolonial domination. In another talk[8], Kauanui discusses the political and epistemic project to refuse "the assumption that Western European modes of thinking are, in fact, universal ones, or that Western ways are the best. [...] this is about enduring indigeneity." (Kauanui, 2019 at Brown University). It is therefore important for me, to consider the question of indigeneity in a homogeneous sense while I highlight the multiple trajectories and influences that exist locally. Kauanui outlines how adaptation to modern life has been used as an argument to refute land rights to indigenous peoples (Kauanui, 2019). An indigenous activist in Tnzania also said that "Being indigenous doesn't exclude being a Tanzanian, a pastoralist, a Maasai and so forth" (Hodgson, 2011: 125). Seeing the strategic fluidity of boundaries and terms of belonging, it makes sense to apply a similar approach with theoretical frameworks.

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[8] Available online: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1EmPrs6AuAQ&ab_channel=BrownUniversity

While anthropology has discredited bounded categories since the reality is much more fluid, this paper shows how homogenization and essentialization may be a way to preserve that same fluidity for local residents and, more importantly, agency and access to resources in a world with growing inequalities. Fluidity also allows me to talk about my observations and the accounts of participants in the field and keep alternatives open in my critical unveiling in order to avoid a dominant academic theoretical framework when it comes to interpreting or avoiding and remembering or forgetting certain concepts such as ethnicity, identity, culture or memory. As I depict Eunoto, I realize the potential pitfall of romanticizing and describing what seems to be a timeless cultural practice and an extractivist approach. I do strive to illustrate the nuances that underlie the contemporaneity of what was described to me as traditional practice. On the other hand, I wonder if only focusing on the changes and nuances might cover up the eagerness to preserve cultural practices in front of some of the pressures found in Engaresero. Especially since some participants do mention that some of these pressures are "destroying Maasai culture". Professor Kauanui mentions in an interview how the Kãnaka Maoli are facing constant aggressions against their Hawaiian territory and sovereignty. Because of this, they strive more and more to revive and reinforce Hawaiian cultural practices (Kauanui interviewed by the Collectif, 2019). Concepts such as "Maasai culture" in relation to ethnicity and indigeneity can offend some anthropological theories, but also state powers. State powers see it as a form of nationalism that threatens their sovereignty and its current guarded boundaries, which are far more rigid than any others. The critique of using ethnicity and culture as an argument or a commercial asset might undermine the struggle of indigenous groups to claim ownership over their ways of life and over the land they inhabit, as a quest for autonomy and freedom from colonial domination (Kauanui, 2019). So how do we as anthropologist relay this quest without undermining local discourse on "culture", "identity" and even "memory?" What I hope to highlight in this paper, is that the local meanings of these terms, sometimes even used in English, is based on historical contingency, the political and economic context and just how and when material objects integrate people's lives. Residents of Engaresero are well aware of the complexities relating to ethnicity, identity and the concept of culture. In fact, one of my interlocutors shared his new pursuit: starting an associative project that would help reconcile “education with culture.” This association targets students from Engaresero who have been exposed to other lifestyles and come back home where they might feel out of place or ormeek. One of the activities would simply be to “organize a special day to perform their tradition and congratulate the students on their exam results.” The founder of this initiative shared his rationale: “we go to school but we must remember our culture, we don’t want to lose it. We need to ensure that pastoral students once back from school are not just roaming around and developing bad behaviour. We want to keep them busy so they can perform.” This enterprise is a demonstration that boundary work is a way to address some of the structural challenges they are experiencing. As Salhins has said, it is both “a culture of resistance” and a “resistance of culture” (Salhins, 1999) that proposes models that are different from the dominant state power and ideals of modernity, or academic canons.

During my stay in Engaresero I witnessed a strong commitment to the Mila and the value it has, not only as a commercial asset but more importantly as a way to belong, to relate, to transmit knowledge and to inhabit land. As one of the Ilnyangulo warriors put it: “when you know your culture, you know your way.” It might make sense that if the territory allocated to pastoralism is bounded, whether by state power, commercial interests or conservationist principles, the concept of “Maasai Culture” would reflect that boundedness as well. In a similar vein to the WMA strategy, all of the cultural specificities that were presented to me were specific to Engaresero, as Tom disclaimed while we were making the posters. Maasailand is still under high pressure and competing authorities are hustling for its control. As anthropologists would we not be contributing to erasing the idea of Maasailand when we dismiss the idea of a “Maasai Culture”? Is being too rigid about the usage of some terms a form of hierarchizing epistemologies? This may sound too dramatic; I will therefore refer to Professor Kauanui, who suggests the need to appreciate the resistance of certain indigenous cultural practices from pre-colonial times up until now, as a decolonial effort towards self-determination (Kauanui, 2019). As I like to remind myself and mentioned repeatedly in this paper, cultural reproduction in Engaresero is also an everyday struggle and resistance to hegemonic systems of oppression.

Annex

Maasai Generations

NDIYOGI/ILNDIYOGI	1787	1794
ILKISARUNI	1801	1808
ILMERISHARI	1815	1822
ILKIRISHARI	1829	1836
ILTWATI/ILKIDOTU	1843	1850
ILNYANGUSI I	1857	1864
ILAIMER	1871	1878
ILTALAL	1885	1892
ILTWATI	1899	1906
ILTARETO	1913	1920
ILTERITO/ILKISALIE	1927	1934
ILNYANGUSI/	1941	1948
ILSEURI/ILCHOLOLIK	1955	1962
ILKISHIMU/ILMAKAA	1969	1976
ILKIDOTU/ILKING’ONDE	1983	1990
ILKORIANGA/LAMEJOK	1997	2004
ILNYANGULO	2011	2018

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