

TERRITORIALISATION FOR EXTRACTIVE AND ENERGY INDUSTRIES THROUGH EU-FUNDED NATURE CONSERVATION IN KENYA

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ABSTRACT

EU-funded nature conservation projects in Kenya seen as a form of development aid serve many functions of geopolitical and economic importance to the funding bodies such as supporting the negotiation of free trade agreements, or gaining access to new territories for investments necessary for the facilitation of the European Green Deal, i.e. the transition to a carbon-neutral economy while maintaining European economic growth. This thesis was based on the analysis of the agendas of the EU's Green Deal, the UN's Clean Development Mechanism, EU-Kenya Free Trade Agreement 2023, Kenya Vision 2030, David Harvey's theory of 'accumulation by dispossession', critical cartography and extensive fieldwork in Kenya. The study focused on two case studies of nature conservation projects with EU funding and their effects on the local communities: 1) the Northern Rangelands Trust (NRT) and the Papariko mangrove restoration project by Vlinder Climate/Hummingbirds climate funds. My research found that the EU and its member states, through funding the NRT, played a big role in the regional transformations by assisting the process of sedentarisation of the pastoralists in northern Kenya, therefore vacating previously common land for investments. This process fueled conflicts between pastoralist tribes, for example, Turkana and Samburu in Loruko, which propelled the EU-funded militarisation of the region. This in turn supported the future security of the LAPSSSET corridor, which is important for the global circulation of critical raw materials necessary for green transitions and for generating revenue from the clean energy technology production largely based in the EU. Contrary to the objectives of the European Green Deal, the EU and its member states also helped the regional expansion of the fossil fuel corporations ENI and Total Energies through their diplomatic efforts. Furthermore, there was a strong correlation between the EU-funded nature conservation projects by the NRT and Vlinder Climate/Hummingbirds and the extractive industry through the strategic placing of the projects over critical minerals, petroleum reserves and the infrastructure corridors but also through the direct links of the projects to the extractive companies like Total Energies, Tullow Oil or Base Titanium through the personal connections, funding and CSR programmes. The nature conservation projects could grant the involved companies preferential access to local resources through involvement in county-level and national politics. Finally, in both case studies in northern and coastal Kenya nature conservation efforts were denying the local communities subsistence livelihoods, therefore forcibly including them in the global economy and the fiscal system of the country, which contributed to the goal of Kenya Vision 2030 of becoming a middle-income nation through generating revenue from taxes and the growing number of consumers.

FOREWORD

I would like to thank my great supervisors: Burcu Yigit Turan and Dennis Karanja for the interesting conversations, for reading and commenting on my thesis, for recommending relevant reading materials and supporting me during my fieldwork in Kenya. I would also like to thank my fieldwork interpreters Joshua Badula Paul and Abdirahim Noor. Without them, the interviews and access to the villages would not have been possible. I would also like to thank Maria Kylin for initiating the collaboration with JKUAT and giving me the opportunity to learn about Kenya and visit the country twice with funding from SLU Global. Finally, thanks to Markus Christian Hansen for the support, curiosity and commenting on my text.

I chose to write this thesis after my university trip to Kenya in September 2023 and conversations with faculty members from Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology (JKUAT). Then, I also participated in the IFLA (International Federation of Landscape Architects) Global Congress in Nairobi, which I found depoliticised when political understanding was crucial given the topics of urban and landscape planning. My concern was amplified by concurrent discussions I had with drivers in Nairobi who underlined the international, capital-driven aspect of land planning in Kenya epitomised by Chinese mega infrastructure projects cutting through the city. I was struck by the scale of economic inequality which was made visible in land and urban developments. Where I could observe it at its peak was in the very dense Kibera informal settlement adjoining an unpopulated golf course and a fenced-off nature reserve surrounded by impoverished rural settlements of underpaid labourers serving the international tourist business. During that time, I also participated in a course in clean energy landscape planning at the SLU, and a year before that, I had a meeting at an international carbon credit company in Denmark, which left me curious about the global politics of energy transition minerals and offsetting markets. Finally, while writing this thesis, I joined a Danish political organisation, Global Aktion, which assisted Sub-Saharan African activists in resisting present-day resource privatisation in their countries by foreign and local elites. All these experiences amounted to my choice of topic and the angle I took to understand the impact of the EU's decarbonisation on land politics and rural communities in Kenya.

TERRITORIALISATION FOR EXTRACTIVE AND ENERGY INDUSTRIES THROUGH EU-FUNDED NATURE CONSERVATION IN KENYA

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1. INTRODUCTION

One might think that the primary purpose of funding nature conservation projects in Kenya by the European Union (EU) is the protection of biodiversity. However, this is only a part of the story. EU-funded nature conservation projects in Kenya seen as a form of development aid serve many functions of geopolitical and economic importance to the funding bodies such as supporting the negotiation of free trade agreements, or gaining access to new territories for investments necessary for the facilitation of the European Green Deal, i.e. the transition to a carbon-neutral economy while maintaining European economic growth. As a result of the financing coming from the EU, European actors become increasingly involved in shaping Kenya's landscapes, and the livelihoods bound to those landscapes, through nature conservation, clean energy and infrastructure developments as well as the participation in land-use politics of the country, all of them embedded in the colonial history which has marked the European-African relations.

Throughout this dissertation, I will treat the EU-funded nature conservation in Kenya as a form of development aid. As of 2016, the EU was the largest overseas donor using aid to shape international policies in favour of "European economic and political power" (Carmody, 2016, p. 154). This can be observed in the success of the EU in setting up free trade agreements based on 'equal partnership'. However, this is equality only on paper. Scholars have argued that due to the imperial history of its member states, and the concentration of capital and industry on the European territory, the EU has an advantageous position in these trade relations (Carmody, 2016, p. 154). Furthermore, as suggested by Jessen (2020) within the competitive market economy, Western states have an interdependent relationship with their corporations and "corporate strength becomes the most important political goal." Therefore, Western states promote and protect corporate privileges and powers by ratifying international trade agreements. This has most recently been manifested in the 2023 Kenya-EU Free Trade Agreement (EU, 2024), which allows for duty-free import and export of goods between the contracting partners essential for the financial-barrier-free establishment of clean energy projects in both Kenya and the EU often to the benefit of the more industrialised countries where the technologies are produced.

This unequal economic relationship was already noticed by the UN in 2003 while introducing the Clean Development Mechanism, in which the high-income countries ought to support the green, 'sustainable' development of the lower-income countries by sending carbon-offsetting funds to the Global South partners. The UN has seen its framework as potentially

enabling abuse and unequal profit by multinational corporations (UNDP, 2003). This mechanism was also what opened up the possibility of foreign investments in nature conservation in the Global South as a way of reducing emissions. As argued by Fairhead Leach and Scoones (2012) offsetting through nature-based projects could lead to ‘green colonialism’ by taking control over large areas of land overseas and capitalising on them whilst neglecting the local land rights and heritage and often causing dispossessions from ancestral lands. They applied David Harvey’s theory of ‘accumulation by dispossession’ to describe this process of ‘green grabbing’ as operating through 1) privatisation 2) financialisation 3) perpetuating the sense of crises and 4) inviting foreign investment by state policies. As I will try to find out in my thesis, territorialisation through ‘green grabbing’ can also work as an access point for other industries to enter through the political connections established through the initial conservation projects, which function as a part of a larger vision of 'ecological modernisation' in which environmental conservation works hand in hand with economic growth (Fairhead, Leach and Scoones, 2012, p.240 after Mol and Spaargarden, 2000).

The frameworks of Kenya Vision 2030 and the European Green Deal play an important role in the favouritism of private investments in mining, tourism, energy and infrastructure developments (Republic of Kenya, 2022; Almeida et al., 2023). Leech, Fairhead and Scoones (2012) also argue that “new forms of coalition and alliance are emerging between what might once have seemed unlikely bedfellows: businesses and NGOs, conservationists and mining industries, or ecotourism companies and the military” under the renewed global interest in the continent’s mineral resources needed for the energy transition termed by scholars as ‘the new scramble for Africa’. Following this logic I will explore whether the European-funded nature conservation projects in East Africa can function as a gateway to other mining resources and political and economic agendas as they are located alongside the EU-co-funded transportation corridors such as LAPSSET and the Northern Corridor and at the entire coast connecting crucial mineral-rich areas within Kenya and beyond – e.g. in Uganda and the DRC with the international ports in Lamu and Mombasa. (EU, 2022).

I will focus on two case studies of European-funded nature conservation projects in Kwale and Isiolo Counties: Papariko Restoration of Degraded Mangrove Areas in Kenya managed by Vlinder Austria and funded by a French climate fund Hummingbirds, and the Northern Rangelands Trust with funding from Sweden, Denmark, France and the EU itself. I will examine the potential interest of the donors in the mining and petroleum resources in the regions where they invest in nature conservation. I will also research the impact of these projects on marginalised communities. The core of this dissertation consists of fieldwork in local communities in Kwale and Isiolo where a

range of inhabitants were interviewed, as well as interviews with the strategic funders of Pappariko and the Northern Rangelands Trust as well as academics, activists and journalists. I have framed these within the understanding of the European states as working in favour of their corporations. Finally, I will use theories of territorialisation and ‘accumulation by dispossession’ to understand how the new investment territories are accessed, and what is also allowed by the green modernisation efforts of the EU and Kenya as described in the Kenya Vision 2030 and the European Green Deal.

2. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

In my dissertation, I will explore European-funded nature conservation projects’ function as a bridge for the EU’s ‘corporate states’ to access territories for generating revenue from resource extraction in Kenya and from clean energy technology production in the context of the green transition.

I will attempt to answer the following questions:

1. How do EU member states benefit from funding nature conservation projects in Kenya?
2. Is there a correlation between these conservation projects and the mining/petroleum industry?
3. What role do these projects play in regional transformations?
4. How do these projects affect the local communities?

3. METHODOLOGY

I approached the field of landscape architecture and planning as an area of expertise in analysing, designing and managing outdoor spaces, therefore defining how and which people can use those territories as stated in the designs, management plans, policies and ownership structures. This thinking was in line with the writings of Burcu Yigit Turan (2018), Alvaro Sevilla-Buitrago (2017), Tiffany Kaewen Dang (2021), Don Mitchell (2008), George Lipsitz (2007) and Jevgeniy Bluwstein (2021) whose perspectives were united by the understanding of landscape as a political formation and neoliberal asset shaped by a constant power struggle between various local,

national and global stakeholders. These scholars provided practical suggestions for conducting research in such a context. Burcu Yigit Turan (2018) argued that

“Landscape architecture, which is the act of reading and rewriting landscapes, is ultimately a political act. However, the act of reading [of the landscape] should reveal sophisticatedly masked injustices and pluralities of past, present and future.”

These injustices are very present in post-colonial contexts, such as in Kenya, where the landscape has been a crucial formation of power and control. For example, the paintings of African landscapes were used as visualisations for racist, imperial ideologies and as claims of land ownership. The landscape was also perceived through the lens of cartography, with which the settlers delineated and captured the resources (Bluwstein, 2021). Moreover, for Tiffany Kaewen Dang (2021)

“Coloniality is expressed not only through the representation of land but can also be inscribed into the land itself. Landscape architecture has the power to embed colonial metanarratives into physical space.”

Along the same line, Sevilla-Buitrago (2017) argues that landscape architecture can function as an extension of the government's regulatory apparatuses, normalisation of behaviours in public spaces which protect hegemony and the stabilisation of social order through establishing environmental hegemonies. He suggested that to properly analyse the conflicts arising from landscape architecture developments, it is essential to look beyond the issues of physical design and investigate who was behind the spatial design, for whom it was created and “who controlled the social meaning of space, the figuration of nature, and so on.” (Sevilla-Buitrago, 2017).

I agree with the mentioned scholars that to work critically with landscapes, to dismantle past injustices and assert a decolonial perspective, first, a thorough comprehension of the site has to be reached in all its complexity. To perform this task of understanding, to analyse my case studies in as much depth as I managed to achieve in the given framework of time and to grasp the strategies behind the landscape developments, I combined different methodologies. First, I analysed the international and local policies and developments which supported the ‘new scramble for Africa’ by the international ‘corporate states’ in the name of ‘green’ economic growth. Later, I explored the theoretical framework explaining accessing the land in the Global South by ‘green grabbing’, a theory based on Harvey’s ‘accumulation by dispossession’ (Fairhead, Leach and Scoones, 2012). This provided me with a context for my empirical studies based on critical cartography and anthropological fieldwork.

I worked case-oriented, with the appropriate targets found via the database of the most commonly used crediting programme, Verified Carbon Standard (VCS), operated by the non-profit

Verra, through which I identified large-scale greening programmes in Kenya with EU funding. I used critical cartography to understand the spatial interplay of territorial powers and foreign investments from the EU in resource-rich areas of Kenya. Overlaying maps from the companies', donors' and ministries' websites was essential to visually identify the correlations, which I discussed in the text. I further interviewed the companies and funders of the projects and analysed their backgrounds to recognise the potential strategies for their investments in the given locations. To comprehend the relationships of nature conservation projects with mining, energy and petroleum industries, I read the companies' websites, news, research papers and the Kenyan Mining Cadastre. On top of that, I made two field trips to the case study areas in Kwale and Isiolo Counties, where I interviewed the people living on the borders of and inside the conservation projects.

In Isiolo County, I used the investigative method of snowball sampling, in which the interviewees I encountered during my site visits recommended the next locations I could be interested in, local activists I could speak to and translators who were granting me access to the villages. This was after I prepared an initial map of locations on which I overlaid settlements with the borders of the NRT conservancies. I was interested in interviewing people living on the edge or within the conservancies as even 3 kilometres away from the border, the residents were often not aware of the existence of the NRT. I worked with three translators, from Swahili and Somali to English, Borana to Somali to English and Turkana to English. In Isiolo, the Borana and Somali communities were Muslim, which culturally constricted the interactions between men and women. As I was working with male Borana and Somali translators, this limited the number of women we interviewed. That was not the case with the non-Muslim Turkana translator interviewing Turkana men and women. As a white person, I was catching a lot of attention in the villages with the perceptions of white people as tourists, donors or business people. These projections may have distorted the interviews since the donors of the local carbon credit projects were also white Europeans.

In Kwale County, I overlaid a map of the Papariko carbon credit project from Vlinder Climate website over Google Maps map. This way I identified the villages closest to the project of interest, namely Munje, Bodo and Shirazi. In the villages, my Swahili-English translator was interviewing randomly encountered people within the mangroves and in the settlements. We tried to interview equal amounts of women, men and youth, however, sometimes it was not possible. In Isiolo and Kwale counties I also spoke with activists, planners and journalists and read local news stories when there were gaps in academic research on the particular cases I was investigating.

The interviews in Nairobi and Isiolo and Kwale counties were anonymised, however, when quoted with their full name, consent was given. The permissions were explained that the presence in the public discourse as activists, journalists or academics granted people safety because of the visibility. The interviews were recorded in the original languages, as I did not want to interrupt the conversations as a foreign outsider. In the weeks after, the translators transcribed and translated them. After that, I analysed them using coding of the reoccurring themes and placed them in the context of my theoretical, historical and policy research.

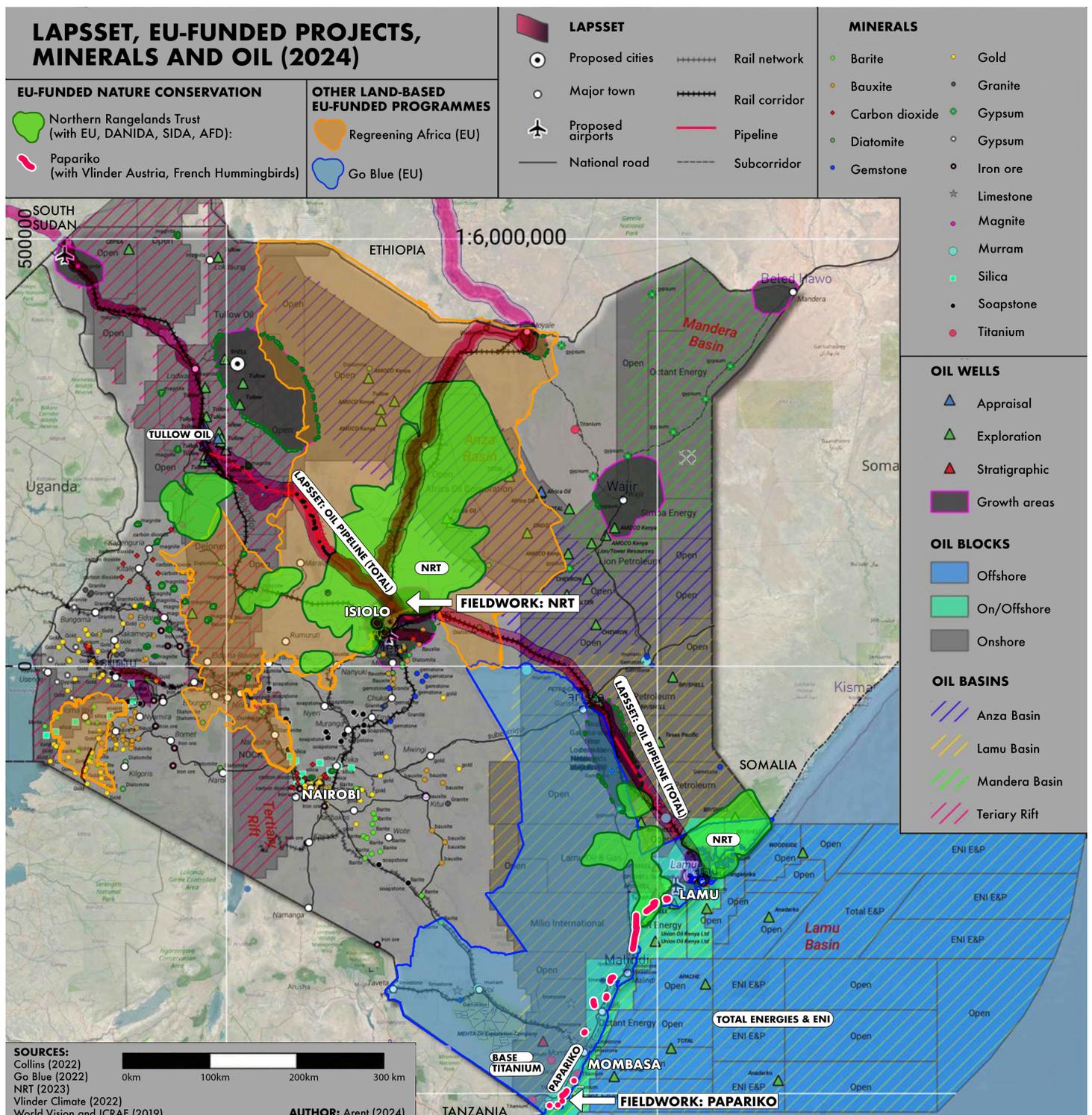


Figure 1. Locations of the fieldwork: the NRT and Pappariko (black text on white rectangles) (Map by the author, 2024)

4. GREEN TRANSITIONS AND THE ISSUE OF LAND IN SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA

The EU's goal of achieving climate neutrality by 2050 under the European Green Deal is based on transitioning to fossil fuel-free energy sources and emissions offsetting following the Paris Agreement, all the while continuing to pursue economic growth. At the same time Kenya under Kenya Vision 2030 seeks to become "a newly industrializing, middle-income country providing a high quality of life to all its citizens by 2030 in a clean and secure environment." (Republic of Kenya, 2022). As we will see the goals of the EU and Kenya can be seen as complementary as while the EU requires critical raw minerals for the energy transition, Kenya strives to develop the mining sector with private investment. While the EU needs to offset the emissions, Kenya seeks to fund its transformation with climate finance. Furthermore, the EU has already been supporting Kenya in the implementation of the Kenya Vision 2030 through the Joint Cooperation Programme:

"Together, the European Union and its Member States are the biggest providers of development assistance to Kenya. In 2018, the European Union, EU member states represented in Kenya and the European Investment Bank launched the Joint Cooperation Strategy 2018-2022 under which €4.5 billion in combined development aid will support the priorities and objectives of the national government, focused on the Big Four agenda (manufacturing, food security, universal health coverage and affordable housing). Based on Kenya's development strategy, the following sectors of concentration have been identified as priorities for European Union funding: accountability and governance, sustainable infrastructure, employment creation, resilience building." (EU, 2021a)

On top of that Kenya and the EU have signed a new free trade agreement in 2023 removing the duty tax from most commodities. Free trade agreements with overseas partners are critical to securing the necessary raw minerals for the European Green Deal. Therefore, in recent years the EU has been negotiating agreements not only with Kenya but also with other countries as in the EU-Mercosur, EU-Indonesia, and EU-Chile free trade agreements (Almedia et al., 2023). The minerals are to support the transition away from fossil fuels to the 'clean', 'renewable' sources, however, studies have shown that these energy sources are in fact not very renewable, and in many cases rely on problematic trade relations with the Global South as underlined by Ajl (2021). He claims that

under capitalism the wealth of the core countries is always paired with the poverty of the periphery, with the raw materials exploited in the South and commodified in the North, in his own words: “For one commodity after another, presented to northern consumers as the necessary trappings of civilization, life and land is lost in the South and profit piles up in the North.” The unequal exchange is fueled by the policies and free trade agreements maintaining no export taxation and cheap labour in the material exporting countries as pushed for by the EU in the economic cooperation with Kenya.

In this part, I will try to understand the relationship between the EU and Kenya when it comes to free trade agreements, offsetting and mining necessary for the green transition and achieving the ‘net zero’ in the EU while maintaining economic growth.

4.1 DEVELOPMENT AID, FREE TRADE AGREEMENTS AND INTERNATIONAL EXPANSION OF CORPORATIONS

Throughout my thesis, I will be understanding nature conservation funded by the EU in Kenya as a form of development aid. As I suggested in the introduction, aid can be used as a way of setting up positive diplomatic relationships to enable access to new territories for investment. According to Almedia et al. (2023), this is crucial in the “global competition for strategic resources” necessary for the green transition and continuation of economic growth. To make my overall argument of nature conservation enabling foreign investments in given regions understandable throughout the text, I will start by explaining where my hypothesis comes from. In my argument, I follow the geographer Pádraig Carmody (2016) who argued that one of the tools of governments to establish favourable conditions abroad for their companies is foreign aid, which helps negotiate free trade agreements, which are essential for the cheap commodity flow between the continents, what was also stated by the EU:

“Resilience for critical raw materials supply will also be achieved by reinforcing the use of the EU trade policy tools (including free trade agreements and enhanced enforcement efforts) and work with international organisations to ensure undistorted trade and investment in raw materials in a manner that supports the EU’s commercial interests.” (EU, 2020, p.15).

Carmody (2016, p.162) however, warns of the free trade agreements between the EU and African states with a reference to an example from South Africa, where

“within the eighteen months approaching the signing of this free trade agreement, two-thirds of the dairy processing sector in South Africa had been bought up by European TNCs such as Danone and Parmalat.”

He also followed suggestions of other scholars and voiced their concerns that the heightened amount of state-relegated development aid projects in Africa is linked to the scramble for the continent's natural resources (Carmody, 2016), which despite the green transition, involves investments in fossil fuels.

This race for natural resources is however performed not by the states but by private companies which bring ‘home’ some of their revenue harvested abroad. As claimed by the intellectual historian Mathias Hein Jessen (2020) by using corporations in overseas operations and relegating them

“to the economic sphere, states can plausibly avoid admitting their own involvement in corporate scandals, in the same way as corporations can defer political decisions and democratic accountability to states. By making a sharp distinction between the state and the corporation we inadvertently conceal the latter’s political constitution.” (Jessen, 2020).

In this logic, humanitarian missions can coexist alongside exploitative mineral extraction with the support of the same funding bodies. This will help us understand some of the reasons behind the funding of nature conservation projects by the international states and private actors in the next sections. Now I will present a range of cases, in which this mechanism has operated.

Some very clear examples of using development aid to benefit the internationalisation of corporations come from the USA and the UK. As of 2002 African oil was of a national strategic interest to the USA according to the Bush administration which wanted to “diversify its oil supplies away from the turbulent Middle East” using USAID as a negotiating tool. As a result in the first decade of the 2000s, the USA was the leading provider of aid to Africa (Carmody, 2006, p.175). A similar correlation was analysed by a British organisation War on Want (2016). According to them

“under the guise of the UK helping Africa in its economic development (a mere continuation of the colonial paternal narrative), \$134 billion has flowed into the continent each year in the form of loans,

foreign investment and aid. However, [at the same time] the British government has aided and abetted the extraction of \$192 billion from Africa mainly in profits by foreign companies, tax dodging and the cost of adapting to climate change.”

War on Want also referred to the UK government's announcement from November 2013 which claimed that British aid was going to be “a new vehicle for enabling access by British companies to African raw materials”. This mechanism was analysed by the economist Tony Norfield (2017) who commented on the value of foreign investments in maintaining the position of London’s banking district the City as the global financial centre. According to him

“the main source of above-average returns on UK foreign investments comes from investments in Asia, Africa (including the Middle East) and Latin America, particularly those in mining, oil and gas, which are dominated by monopolies from the major powers.” (Norfield, 2017)

This strategy is neither new nor reserved for the UK and the USA. Since the mid-20th century, it has been shared by Italian governments which have had a long history of supporting the expansion of the national petroleum company ENI in Africa. The reason for it was to spur economic development in postwar Italy. Urban researcher Giulia Scotto (2022) argued that since the 1950s ENI has been powerful enough to influence both the Italian policies in the country and overseas. Like in the cases of the UK and the USA using development aid to access Africa’s resources

“Italy’s access point to Africa’s postcolonial politics was the notion of ‘development’, a Western-forged notion that, since the late colonial era, became the primary aspiration of independent African states. The importance of fossil fuels to activate—both literally and metaphorically—the engine of development was clear to both African leaders and to ENI.” (Scotto, 2022, p.88)

For the extraction and marketisation of fossil fuels, there was a necessity to introduce the complementary infrastructure, which Italy/ENI also provided through establishing “refineries, pipelines, and gas stations, [which] offered to help break this energy dependence and spur self-reliance” from the colonial era (2022, p.89). The development aid for infrastructure “granted ENI a friendly image and paved its economic penetration with paternalistic good intentions.” To this day Italy and the EU continue to fund both the petroleum extraction and the missing infrastructures in coastal Kenya alongside less controversial investments in the improvement of fisheries and cassava value chains under the Go Blue programme co-funded by the UN-Habitat (Go Blue, 2024)

Another actor both present in Kenya and operating according to the framework of granting its corporations favourable conditions overseas is France also present in the Go Blue development programme amongst many others. Like in the case of ENI, the French petroleum giant Total Energies started as a state-owned Compagnie Française des Pétroles in 1924. Ever since, for over 100 years, French officials have been involved in its operations. Allegedly, “in 2021 alone, the French government paid EUR 8.41 billion in support for fossil fuels” following the information from the OECD (Mehring, 2023). The ties of the French government with Total are however more interwoven than mere financial support. In an investigation on Total Wakim, Mouterde and Khoudi (2024) asserted that there is a stable turnover of former diplomats in the ranks of Total with around 10% of its managers being former senior civil servants. According to a French organisation Aria, “over the last 10 years, more than 50 former state officials have held executive positions at Total Energies”. Furthermore “Some of them go back and forth between the high levels civil service and the company” (Wakim, Mouterde and Khoudi, 2024). To quote the ex-former foreign minister Jean-Yves Le Drian “It would be regrettable if these bridges didn't exist.” when it comes to the exchanges between Total Energies and the foreign ministry. Later Wakim, Mouterde and Khoudi (2024) brought up a statement by Le Drian about the diplomatic staff working overseas to “develop the French exports. This consists of putting our networks, our levers of action and our capacity to influence at the service of companies and of our economic interests”. These were not mere words. In 2022 Le Drian's former adviser Arnaud Suquet became a French ambassador to Kenya. Beforehand “He spent two years in the international public affairs department between 2017 and 2019, during which he travelled to Saudi Arabia with [the Total CEO] Pouyanné and managed the thorny issue of one of Total's gas sites in Yemen”. Wakim, Mouterde and Khoudi (2024) further alleged that “he maintains ties with Total, as evidenced by social media photos depicting his visit to a nature reserve in Africa alongside a Total executive, in December 2023.” In the time when the EU member states want to stand as the pioneers of global efforts to fight climate change, these facts act contradictory to the image they want to maintain, which as we will later see is counterbalanced by the funding of nature conservation. These stories also bring visibility to the corporation and the state working towards common goals.

In some cases when the interests of the corporations overseas were threatened, the state protected them using military forces as if its own territory was in danger. That was the way the French government backed Total Energies in Mozambique. In March 2021 a coastal town Palma experienced a series of attacks from 300 Islamic guerillas which led to the disruption of the “TotalEnergies’ \$20 billion Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) project in Cabo Delgado province”.

(Bond, 2022). What happened following the crisis was the French president's Macron's meeting in May 2021 with the

“Mozambican President Filipe Nyusi in Paris. At month's end, Macron traveled to Kigali, Rwanda and Pretoria, South Africa to lobby Paris' two key regional subimperial gendarmes: Paul Kagame and Cyril Ramaphosa. A few weeks later, both presidents had deployed more than 1000 troops each to protect Total's LNG plant, at a site becoming known for its 'Blood Methane'.” (Bond, 2022)

The French government was also helpful in protecting Total's interests in Uganda. Last year a French court rejected a court case by African and French activists against controversial oil exploration in the Ugandan national reserve Murchison Falls Park, which negatively affected around 100,000 people. The case also involved opposition against the East African Crude Oil Pipeline going from Uganda to Tanzania (Louis, 2023). Since then the works on the pipeline and oil extraction have progressed. The relationship between the French government and Total Energies was also visible when in 2010 the new consulate in Calgary, Canada turned out to function mainly to support the development of the extraction of oil sands (Wakim, Mouterde and Khoudi, 2024). Ironically alongside these investments in fossil fuels, as the political ecologist Patrick Bond (2022) noticed after the Guardian (2022), “in July 2022, Macron announced his desire “to create the legal framework to stop high-sea mining and to not allow new activities putting in danger these ecosystems,” while not mentioning deep-sea oil and gas. This showed how important the maintenance of the 'green' appearance is for the European states despite investing in the industries causing further rising global temperatures.

European investments in fossil fuel corporations and infrastructure have not stopped there. According to the political ecologist Andreas Malm (2021)

“The European Central Bank (ECB) led the efforts to pump oxygen into capital accumulation. Purchasing bonds and other assets, it injected billions of euros into companies – Shell and Total, utilities running coal-fired power plants, auto producers like Volkswagen, Daimler, BMW, Renault ...in late spring [2020], the ECB asset portfolio was [more] biased towards fossil fuels than the market in general. By November, the countries that had chosen to pour the most in billions into such ventures were the US, the UK, Germany and France (with China contributing mere scraps). So much for talk of a green recovery.”

This European Union's contributions to the fossil fuel industry have also made a presence in East Africa, when alongside the French and Italian investments in ENI and Total the EU undertook a commitment to partly sponsor LAPSSET: a network of oil pipelines and motorways connecting Kenya, South Sudan and Ethiopia, which I will discuss separately.

As we could see in this section there are many ways in which the Western governments can cooperate with their corporations overseas. The French example was crucial for the understanding of the rotation of the state officials and Total's senior employees, the power to deploy the military to protect the corporate interests and maintain the 'green' appearance while funding fossil fuel companies and infrastructures. I also provided several examples of the relationship between foreign aid and the expansion of oil companies in Africa, which I will later use to better understand the EU's strategies behind choosing locations for funding nature conservation in Kenya.

4.2 TERRITORIALISATION BY CONSERVATION FOR THE BENEFIT OF RESOURCE EXTRACTION

Central to my argument is the hypothesis that nature conservation in the form of development aid can be to some extent what enables foreign corporations and states to access minerals in Kenya through the process of territorialisation. Fairhead, Leech and Scoones (2012) argue that under climate change and the need for both minerals and space for emission offsetting the competition for land in mineral-rich countries is greater than ever. Therefore,

“new forms of coalition and alliance are emerging between what might once have seemed unlikely bedfellows: businesses and NGOs, conservationists and mining industries, or ecotourism companies and the military.” (Fairhead, Leech and Scoones, 2012)

In some cases, nature conservation can serve as the first step to the introduction of mineral mining or petroleum extraction, as the communities once displaced may stay away from the new capital-generating territories.

According to the geographers Thomas Basset and Denis Gautier (2014),

“Territorialisation refers to specific territorial projects in which various actors deploy territorial strategies (territoriality) to produce bounded and controlled spaces (territory) to achieve certain

effects. A common goal of territorialization is to govern people and resources located within and around the territory.”

Such territories can be created by the combination of development aid, demarcating nature conservation areas and establishing land reforms and in effect control rural livelihoods through new sets of rules and desired behaviour, for example, transforming pastoralist livelihoods into marketable sedentary agriculture with the damages offset through aid, training programmes or 'sustainable development' of village infrastructure in exchange for compliance and adoption of the new way of living in favour of freeing certain territories. Resettlements can work in favour of private companies and can be supported by aid organisations (Bluwstein, 2017). Such an example was brought up in the case of the establishment of the SIDA-funded Land Use Management Program in the 1990s in Tanzania, which led to the formation of a wildlife corridor between Lake Manyara and Tarangire National Park in Tanzania, and the displacement of only partly compensated 60 families (Bluwstein, 2017, p.105) in favour of the private company Chem Chem Safari. This tourism firm ran its NGO LiveWildlife also supported by the French Development Agency, which contributed to further reterritorialisation of “property relations and resource control in the name of community-based conservation” (Bluwstein, 2017, p.109). This was done in collaboration with the local state representative in relation to the policies of the Village Land Act 1999 and Wildlife Management Areas which were reconfiguring land ownership often leading to the displacement of agro-pastoralists and forcing the tourism companies instead of directly paying revenues to the village government, to pay Ministry of Natural Resources and Tourism which then was paying the local Community-Based Organisations (Bluwstein, 2017, p.104). Tourism here served as an example of the mechanism of territorialisation by aid agencies and the state for the benefit of a private company.

Both mining and nature reserves in Sub-Saharan Africa can be spaces where the local landscape and society are shaped by the global market (Vuola, 2022). In the case of mining the relationship to the international market is straightforward as in many instances it is the multinational corporations exploiting the mineral resources. In the instance of conservation, the corporate and national sponsors are often obscured by the veil of perceived altruism of the conservation NGOs. Similarly to the case of conservation, mining territorialisation can be seen as the expansion of state or international control through 'civilising' and formalising new lands (Vuola and Simpson, 2021, p.8) encouraged by reforms encouraging land use optimisation and privatisation as those in Kenya Vision 2030, which I will present in the next parts. It is this process

of territorialisation of land which allows for further investments in the given areas. Following Vandergeest and Peluso (1995) political ecologist Marketta Vuola (2022) describes the “main components of state-led territorialisation: mapping of boundaries, establishing and enforcing new rights, and determining acceptable resource uses.” Through the new policies, the state opens the land for the management by foreign actors, who then are allowed to determine the new use of resources together with state actors such as the Kenya Forest Service or the Kenya Wildlife Service. This occurrence is present in the management plans of carbon credit projects which I will analyse, which prohibit the local use of the resources instead proposing ‘alternative livelihoods’ (Vlinder Austria, 2022). Vuola (2022) also claims that what encourages territorialisation is cheap land and cheap labour. Finally, mining and conservation projects can either collaborate or compete depending on the strictness of the definition of the borders.

The phenomenon of the correlations between mining and conservation has also been explored by the human geographer Christine Noe (2019, p. 383). She considered how the new territorialisation processes in Africa were developed through the emerging frontiers of conservation in a manner of top-down land management. She also noted that since the system was repetitively criticised for working with fortress conservation as a method delegating the use of resources from the local communities, it has seen a transformation into management methods using participatory and community-based approaches. Yet, as she argued following Corson (2011) this new system worked neither to the benefit or empowerment of local communities, nor is state-controlled, but continues the further expansion of international control over “resources within national borders” (Noe, 2019, p.383). She also stated that landscape conservation was a successful tool embedded in economic interests, which can provide powerful “actors access to land and mineral resources, timber, ivory to mention a few”. Through the act of resetting the borders of the territory of conservation the managing actors can have power over resources on a now privately controlled territory inside the state borders outside of governmental and local community control (Noe, 2019, p. 383). Finally, Noe analysed how UNESCO has facilitated access to uranium extraction and expansion of the borders of the Selous World Heritage Site on farming land beyond its former territory. The further expansion of the reserve was granted based on the apparent threat to elephants and rhinos from poaching within the ecosystem missing the question of unequal land ownership in Tanzania, reasons for poaching and who is categorised as a poacher and who as a hunter (Noe, 2009, p.380).

As another example of the overlap of mining and conservation in East Africa Kenyan journalist John Mbaria and carnivore ecologist Mordecai Ogada (2017) took under scrutiny a

conservation NGO the Northern Rangeland Trust (NRT) in Kenya, which I will also focus on in my case studies. They noticed that the land secured by the NRT lay on “the same rock formations with areas where oil, coal, natural gas, and other minerals have been discovered in Kenya.” According to their investigation, the NRT has joined with the US Nature Conservancy, which together with USAID and the UK Department for International Development contributed to NRT's annual budget in 2014 of \$23.529.412 which led the organisation to expand to 33 community conservancies covering 44 000 square kilometres, which covers over 8% of Kenyan land mass. In 2015 the NRT started receiving financial support from British-owned Tullow Oil, which now exploits oil reserves within the territory previously managed by the NRT. Before Tullow Oil completely took over the exploitation, it was shared with Oil Africa and the Danish Maersk, which exploited oil alongside DANIDA funding for nature conservation on the same territory, which I will look into in my case studies. Both the conservation by the NRT and the oil extraction by Tullow Oil led to the dispossessions of communities from their ancestral land (Mbaria and Ogada, 2017).

However, there are also cases in which mining and conservation can coexist on the same territory without leading to displacements and dispossessions. Vuola and Simpson (2021, p.34) used “two flexible, community-based conservation areas in DRC and Madagascar as illustrative examples, [they] have identified three categories of territorialisation on conservation frontiers (core, buffer and flexible conservation zones) and three scales of overlapping mining activities (ASM, semi-industrial and industrial).” They pointed out that whereas core/fortress conservation zones prohibited access by the local villagers, buffer and flexible conservation zones allowed access to resources and did not lead to dispossession. The latter two were also met with less resistance from the local community. In the case of mining Vuola and Simpson (2021) underlined the difference between artisanal scale mining (ASM) being a part of customary land structures and leading to 'accumulation without dispossession' as opposed to the industrial scale mining (ISM) operated by international mining companies in agreement with the governments. They pointed out that whereas the ASM tended to start many informal operations within nature reserves led by local families, semi-industrial mines operated by Chinese actors in DRC were illegally expanding into the conservation zones and finally the industrial mines were being granted access by the government and were easing their way in by offering “conservationist packages, such as in the form of integrated mining and biodiversity projects in an act of adaptation and reconfiguration of its practices” (Vuola and Simpson, 2021. p.35). They quoted a villager from Kitumba, DRC, living in a space between international nature conservation areas sponsored by WWF, SIDA, USAID etc. and semi-industrial Chinese mining sites:

“We are being held hostage because of our wealth! The future in this village is uncertain. On the one hand, the Chinese have evicted us from our fields and mining sites. On the other hand, the reserve is going to forbid us from entering the forest. In the face of this suffering, our authorities are keeping quiet!” (Vuola and Simpson, 2021, p.25)

The authorities were silent in the face of communities’ dispossession as both nature conservation and mining led to capital accumulation for some, either through benefiting from related businesses or corruption.

As shown in the examples of the expansion of uranium mining in the Selous UNESCO World Heritage Site, oil extraction and the relationship with the Northern Rangelands Trust as well as Chinese industrial companies expanding in the nature areas in DRC through offering “integrated mining and biodiversity projects” (Vuola and Simpson, 2021. p.35) nature conservation can serve as a way for the mining companies to ease their way into the sites of extraction through either offering biodiversity protection alongside resource extraction or through making agreements with those controlling the territories for conservation, which can operate outside governmental control as privately managed spaces. These cases served as examples for me to further explore the potential correlations between European-funded nature conservation and mining/oil companies in Kenya.

4.3 CLEAN DEVELOPMENT MECHANISM AS A WAY OF ACCESSING TERRITORIES IN THE GLOBAL SOUTH

As I showed in the previous section nature conservation can function as a way of territorialising land which can eventually support resource extraction. What has historically enabled the countries from the Global North to develop large-scale nature and carbon-sequestration projects in the Global South is the UN’s Clean Development Mechanism, in which the ‘developed’ countries are supposed to mobilise finance and lead projects in emission offsetting in the ‘developing’ countries. In this mechanism, the emission offsetting and nature conservation by the European states and companies in Kenya can be treated as a form of development aid which provides the climate finance necessary for Kenya to meet the Nationally Determined Contributions in respect to the Paris Agreement. As of 2022, Kenya required \$3 trillion for climate adaptation, with the need for financing for over \$100 billion per year (Republic of Kenya, 2022, p.1). To achieve that

“It is expected that, in the new collective quantified goal, developed countries should commit to jointly mobilise significant finances with a balance between mitigation and adaptation being a paramount feature while taking into account the needs and priorities of developing countries and in particular, special circumstances of Africa.” (Republic of Kenya, 2022, p.1).

This statement follows the guidelines from the UN’s Clean Development Mechanism which I will explain below.

Complementary to that nature conservation overseas is one of the possible ways of emission offsetting to which the EU is bound by the European Climate Law in which the

“removals of greenhouse gases will be needed to compensate for remaining greenhouse gases from sectors where decarbonisation is the most challenging. The natural sink of forests, soils, agricultural lands and wetlands should be maintained and further increased and carbon removal technologies, such as carbon capture and storage and carbon capture and utilisation, should be made cost-effective and deployed.” (EC, 2020, p.7)

The offsetting efforts can be done both in Europe and internationally, however, with the lower land prices in the Global South, it tends to be performed there. As noticed by the UN in the guide to the mechanism already in 2003 there was a concern about Western multinational corporations abusing the framework to create private sequestration reserves (UN, 2003). Yet, before I describe the various ways in which the mechanism has been misused I will introduce the reader to the history of its establishment.

The first crucial international document suggesting reducing the global emissions by nature sinks was the Kyoto Protocol to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change from 1997. In the Protocol, it was also the first time that the Clean Development Mechanism was defined. The agreement was binding the countries from the Global North listed in Annex B, to join the collective effort to reduce the emissions of greenhouse gases by 5% until 2012 (UN, 1997, Article 3,§1). By signing the document, the Global North’s countries have agreed to transparently report their emissions and removals by carbon sinks through land use changes like afforestation and reforestation (Article 3,§3). The protocol also allowed for the transferring of emission reduction units between different Parties resulting in adding emissions units to one Party and subtracting from the other (Article 3,§10). In Article 12 Clean Development Mechanism was defined, which was crucial for understanding the context of my thesis. There the 'developed' countries were invited to

lead the projects of emissions reduction in the 'developing' countries. Through the projects, the Global South was to benefit from the inflow of finance for achieving sustainable development, while the Parties from the Global North could exchange their emission reduction projects in the 'developing' countries for credits they could subtract from the count of the emissions on their land. The projects and transactions could involve both private and public actors (UN, 1997), which is also crucial to understand as it enabled a new way of privatisation of resources through nature conservation overseas which will be clear in my case studies.

Following the agreements from the Kyoto Protocol, in 2003 the EU established a scheme for greenhouse gas emission allowance trading. In the Directive 2003/87/EC the Member States of the European Union committed to reduce their emissions by 8% until 2012 compared to 1990 (Point 4). The efforts were set to be accompanied by “an efficient European market in greenhouse gas emission allowances, with the least possible diminution of economic development and employment” (Point 5) to make it easier to meet the commitments of the Parties to assigned volume of units following the Kyoto Protocol, also allowing the Member States to trade emissions with the signatories of the Kyoto Protocol, hence extending the emission market to the majority of the Global North (Point 17) and operating under the Clean Development Mechanism, therefore implementing projects in the Global South (Point 19). In Article 16 the Member States were urged to introduce penalties for industries exceeding the emission allowances with penalties of 100 EUR per excessive tonne of carbon dioxide. The greenhouse gas-producing activities in focus included: energy activities, production and processing of ferrous metals, mineral industries and pulp and paper production (EU, 2003).

In the CDM user's guide from 2003 the UN underlined that this system would be most effective in directing the flow of capital from industrialised countries to 'developing' countries if the “transaction costs and other barriers can be minimized” (UN, 2003) which resonates with the free trade agreements between the EU and Kenya which have established a complete trade liberalisation. The guide mentioned that carbon trading under the Clean Development Mechanism may be subject to unequal negotiation with the advantage lying on the side of the large multinational corporations with greater experience in “project finance, commodity and derivative transactions”. Further, they disclose that the local sellers of the emissions credits may also be large multinationals, hence “community groups and even NGOs may end up as counterparties” (UN, 2003, p.7), which as predicted is present in my case studies in Kenya. Furthermore, the process was designed to be market driven with an expected majority of the participants coming from the private sector (UN, 2003, p.12) and the success rate of the CDM transactions would depend on the potential of

attracting investors to the projects dependent on the guarantee of “clearly defined sustainable development priorities by host countries” (UN, 2003, p.13). Furthermore,

“UNDP’s experience from the country level informs us that while a high internal rate of return is necessary, it is not a sufficient condition for attracting private sector investment. Even though a number of projects analyzed by UNDP in cooperation with host countries had a significantly high internal rate of return, they did not attract investors. Non-economic project barriers – including inadequate human capacity, policies, institutions, legal frameworks, and a lack of innovative, development-oriented financial institutions – were major constraints to attracting foreign investment.” (UN, 2003, p.13)

However, what has changed since 2003 is that the framework for climate finance has been introduced in Kenya for example in the Climate Change (Amendment) Act 2023 (Republic of Kenya, 2023) and the country is currently experiencing a boom in offsetting programmes from a long list of international actors largely with private companies running their own carbon trading schemes with supposed benefits for the local communities.

Under the headline “Sovereignty issues” the document talked about the potential dangers of forest conservation under the CDM. Such activities were undertaken since the 1990s and at the time of the publication of the CDM (2003), the concern about the creation of private reserves for carbon sequestration purposes by Western multinationals arose. The threat was coming from the Western actors purchasing land in the Global South for cheap and making it inaccessible to the local communities. For this reason “avoided deforestation” or emission offsetting through land use change was excluded from the Clean Development Mechanism (UN, 2003). However, despite the threat of land privatisation and the prohibition of its use to the local communities by the foreign offsetters a new programme was quickly implemented. This time it was completely focusing on carbon offsetting through avoiding deforestation neglecting the previous concerns.

The new framework addressing Reducing Emissions from Deforestation in Developing Countries (REDD) was introduced during the Conference of the Parties in Montreal in 2005. Then the governments of Papua New Guinea and Costa Rica

“on behalf of many supportive Nations, [called] upon the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and to the Kyoto Protocol (KP) to take note of present rates of deforestation within developing nations, acknowledge the resulting carbon emissions, and consequently dialogue to develop scientific, technical, policy and capacity responses to address such emissions resulting from tropical deforestation.” (UN, 2005, p.2)

According to the International Panel's for Climate Change (IPCC) estimation referred to in the document land use change emissions accounted for 10-25% of global human-induced emissions (UN, 2005, p.3). Apart from generating greenhouse gases deforestation was also linked to the depletion of the tropical soils with detrimental consequences for the economy and health of the local populations to name a few negative effects. During the Conference of the Parties (COP) in 2005 Papua New Guinea and Costa Rica called for the inclusion of avoided deforestation in the Clean Development Mechanism to foster the protection of forests through the monetisation of natural resources and capitalisation of sustainable development in exchange for Certified Emission Reductions (UN, 2005), which then was established formally as REDD, which in 2007 morphed into REDD+. REDD+ was enriched by guidelines for "the conservation and sustainable management of forests and enhancement of forest carbon stocks" (REDD Research and Development Center Forestry and Forest Products Research Institute, 2012). These have sparked a boom in REDD+ and carbon offsetting projects through nature conservation in the Global South, many of them financially backed by the EU member states.

It is crucial to understand the framework of the Clean Development Mechanism and the later inclusion of REDD+ as they are what have historically enabled the Global North's countries to develop nature conservation and forestry projects in the Global South with the purpose of emission offsetting. Yet, as predicted by the UN in 2003, the private sector was quickly going to see it as a new source of revenue, in which they could not only continue to emit while planting trees, but also they could capitalise on the emissions on the global carbon markets alongside benefitting from the governance of the new territories.

4.4 VOLUNTARY CARBON CREDIT MARKETS, 'GREEN GRABBING' AND LAND REFORMS IN KENYA

Offsetting emissions through nature-based projects like in the REDD+ mechanism functions currently only on the voluntary carbon markets which are unregulated by the states. They are dominated by the international private sector, which in turn gets access to large-scale offsetting territories in the Global South. The offsetters can use this voluntarily and the offsets purchased this way do not contribute to meeting the agreements from the Kyoto Protocol's caps for each country's emissions. The buyers of the carbon credits from nature-based projects in the Global South are

private companies and individuals, who participate in the system as a marketing strategy. Carbon credits on the voluntary market are tradeable and are subject to speculation as the prices fluctuate. Kenya uses the carbon credits system to mitigate and adapt to environmental threats posed by climate change and “leverage on carbon financing through advocacy through partnerships” (Republic of Kenya, 2022, p. 11) often with the private sector which is the main clientele and developer of the carbon credits. According to the journalist Josh Gabbatiss (2023) from the Carbon Brief as of 2023 “The top users of carbon credits – units each representing one tonne of CO₂ avoided, reduced or removed – were Shell (9.9m units), Volkswagen (9.6m) and Chevron (6.0m).” Other major companies were the US media conglomerate Comcast (3.2m), Microsoft (1,16m), BMW (0.871m), Total Energies (0.868m) and the French Bank BNP Paribas (0.554m). The main offsetters through the voluntary carbon credits market in Kenya were Shell (0.907m), Apple (0.24m), Volkswagen (0.019m), BNP Paribas (0.006m), Allianz (0.001m), Total Energies (<0.001m) and JP Morgan Chase (0.001m) (Gabbatiss, 2023). This shows that the main users of the voluntary carbon markets in Kenya and globally were petroleum, car, media, IT and finance-related corporations which are also the biggest drivers of climate change.

The carbon credit projects can lead to what has been described as ‘green grabbing’ (Fairhead, Leach and Scoones, 2012). This term has been coined due to the mechanism in which the offsetting companies establish power over the carbon-sequestering landscapes, often negatively affecting and shifting the ancestral livelihoods, which were present there before the projects. ‘Green grabbing’ was explained by Fairhead, Leach and Scoones (2012) by referencing David Harvey’s theory of ‘accumulation by dispossession’, “which leads to further concentration of capital in the hands of those who already hold capital.” (Harvey, 2003, 2005, 2006). It relies on

“a complex interplay of four main processes: ‘privatisation’, ‘financialisation’, ‘the management and manipulation of crises’, and ‘state redistributions’, whereby the neo-liberal state favours capitalist business interests over others, for example through the tax system.” (Fairhead, Leach and Scoones, 2012, p.243)

An example of 1) privatisation relevant to this dissertation is the selling of common pastoral land to conservation, ecotourism companies and mining companies (Fairhead, Leach and Scoones, 2012, p.243). The process of 2) financialisation is embedded in making nature tradeable, which is a starting point for the offsetting markets ever since the evolution of the payment for ecosystem services from the 1980s, capitalisation of carbon sequestration and ecotourism (2012, p.244).

'Green grabbing' is also fueled by 3) perpetuating the sense of crises under 'disaster capitalism', when some entities like states become vulnerable and are forced into privatisation by stronger actors as during the financial crisis which led to structural adjustments in Africa from the 1980s (2012, p.246), which in turn forced the privatisation and inflow of foreign control over resources. Harvey's fourth process highlights 4) the state's changing role in redistributing wealth, favouring investors over the poor. In such cases fiscal policies prioritise private investment, benefiting those with capital, while policies encourage the leasing of land and the commodification of natural resources like water and biodiversity. This is especially true for states with limited fiscal resources, particularly in the developing world. International financial institutions, such as the World Bank and the International Finance Corporation, promote market-friendly policies and provide financial support to facilitate these investment-focused redistributions. This is also the case in the World Bank supported Kenya Vision 2030, which establishes a series of new land reforms favouring the private sector over the rural communities, which I will explore later in the text. The phenomenon of 'accumulation by dispossession' is also encouraged by the Clean Development Mechanism by the financialisation of nature through selling carbon sequestered in the soil. The perpetuating sense of crises is often presented by the carbon credit companies when they argue in the management plans that the introduction of the new offsetting projects in the given areas is essential as the local communities are continuously degrading the forests, overgrazing etc. (Vlinder Austria, 2022) as I will present in the case studies.

The territorialisation and enclosing of the resources are supported by the voluntary carbon crediting methodologies, in which the prohibition of people from using the plants within the offsetting projects is necessary to prevent 'leakage', which happens when less carbon is sequestered due to the lower volume of plants than predicted during the calculations (Vlinder Austria, 2022). This leakage is often what in the world of carbon trading makes the projects unreliable when more carbon credits are sold than sequestered. However, it is this prohibition of the people from the usage of their ancestral landscapes that invites the phenomenon of 'green grabbing' of community lands without registered title deeds. Mkutu and Mdee (2020) point out that land grabbing of communally owned land is often fuelled by foreign capital and facilitated by the state for the purposes of 'development' and 'public good'. They argue following Woddis (1967) that neo-colonialism operates through "an alliance between external imperialism and sections of the local bourgeoisie and petty bourgeoisie.", who to their mutual benefit dispossess the pastoralists and peasants in Kenya, who are not protected as the international law is indifferent to other land ownership than

permanent settlement, therefore opening the door to the colonisation of the land perceived as nobody's.

The dispossessions from land are also stimulated by the dominant methodology used for nature conservation through carbon credits today called the 'landscape approach', in which the "nature-society relations (...) can be objectively determined through a positivist methodology of field-based observations, geospatial analytics, modelling and quantification." (Bluwstein 2021), which invite the experts to work with the top-down approach as they supposedly understand how the landscape should be operating. Although the landscape approach to conservation promises a holistic comprehension of the landscape through surveying different stakeholders, Bluwstein criticises this pseudo-objective approach for its 1) depoliticising the nature-society relations by reducing them to technical problems, 2) simplifying the "nature-society relations through positivist epistemologies" 3) promoting "exclusion through representation, a colonial logic of a landscape way of seeing which is applied to improve those relations" (Bluwstein, 2021, page 906). Here the question of who gets to be represented and included in the process comes to mind, whose vision of the landscape gets pushed through, which is a problem faced by post-colonial societies (Bluwstein, 2021, p.907). It is commonly the case of expert voices of scientists and planners working with a top-down conservation approach while excluding marginalised subjects, leading to dispossession from the rural land of people who are seen as of lesser monetary value than the resources preserved. And here the value can be added not only from carbon credits and mining but also from eco-tourism.

Since it is the experts who are supposed to use the land in an optimal manner various measures of mapping the resources and implementing spatial plans are proposed in the Kenya Vision 2030. They include

3.4.1 "National registration and issuance of title deeds" to "To guarantee security of land tenure and land rights" (Republic of Kenya, 2022a, p.70),

- "fast-tracking the preparation of leases and approval of land development applications such as subdivisions, change of user, extension of leases, extension of user to realise issuance of ownership documents;
- fast-tracking the planning, surveying and issuance of title deeds for public schools; and titling programme for public institutions and counties, urban and market centres.
- regularisation of informal settlements and colonial villages;
- fast-tracking of the ascertainment of rights and interest on lands by finalising the declared adjudication sections and establishment of settlement schemes;

- settling squatters and the landless and regularisation of land ownership claims in urban centres through the issuance of letters of allotment, renewal and extension of leases for leased public land, recovery of irregularly allocated public land, and documentation of public land.”.

This point can lead to the dispossessions of people from the land where someone with higher capital seeks investments. It will also lead to the privatisation of the ancestral land currently managed by the communities without issued title deeds. The Vision 2030 also proposes

3.4.3 “Implementation of the national spatial plan” to “enhance balanced growth and development of the country through optimal land use planning and management”. “The Plan addresses uncoordinated human settlements, urban and rural development, disjointed and conflicting sectoral policies, economic development disparities, unsustainable use of natural resources, and inefficient transport and infrastructure framework.” (Republic of Kenya, 2022, p.71).

3.4.4. “National land value index to provide a framework for a credible valuation database for use in investments and land compensation decisions” (Republic of Kenya, 2022, p.71).

3.4.5 “Settlement of landless” “entails regularisation of squatter schemes and purchase of farms through settlement fund trusts to settle squatters, displaced persons, and forest evictees. This will guarantee the security of tenure, land rights and improved livelihood of landless households/squatters.”. Furthermore,

3.4.6 “Development of natural resources inventory and database” “involves mapping and development of an inventory of natural resources culminating in an atlas of the country’s natural capital. Further, it entails the development of an interactive theme-based geo-portal to aid in updating the database.” (Republic of Kenya, 2022, p.72).

3.4.8 “Compulsory land acquisition” “permits the State to acquire property for public use or in the public interest in exchange for prompt and full payment of just compensation”, which as we will see in the case studies, might be very contradictory to the “security of tenure” underlined in “National registration and issuance of title deeds”. (Republic of Kenya, 2022 p.72).

These points shift the thinking about the land as an asset which is supposed to bring back returns in capital through the processes of valuation or the optimisation of resource use. The most dangerous one to the community land is the “compulsory land acquisition”, which can lead to ‘accumulation by dispossession’ without clearly defined reasons and can be subject to corruption. All the reforms open the door to ‘green grabbing’, as often the carbon credit projects propose themselves as

solutions to the issues of resources ‘misused’ by the communities and underdevelopment. The point about the settlement of the displaced people and forest evictees is a solution to the dispossessions caused by other proposed land reforms.

By now we should see how relevant is the theory of ‘green grabbing’ and ‘accumulation by dispossession’ to understanding the power dynamics in land management in Kenya driven by the Kenya Vision 2030 and encouraged by the Clean Development Mechanism. Both of them invite the actors with higher capital to manage undercapitalised land in Kenya to bring supposed prosperity to the nation. However, as will be obvious in my case studies, only a handful of people will be the beneficiaries, while the rest will face dispossessions and prohibitions of the resource use that their livelihoods were previously dependent on.

4.5 THE SCRAMBLE FOR AFRICA, THEN AND NOW

The land reforms proposed in the Kenya Vision 2030 also enable the change of land use to mining, which the country sees as one of the ways of becoming a middle-income nation. In my thesis, I suggest that taking over land for the nature-based offsetting projects can enable other investments such as mining since Sub-Saharan Africa is supposed to be “home to roughly 30% of the world's mineral reserves, making it a hugely important, and relatively under-explored, target for mining firms.” (Prichard, 2009, p.240). The current times of higher global demand for energy transition minerals in Africa require political and economic strategies for accessing the resources. This race for resources is colloquially termed ‘the new scramble for Africa’ as it recalls the history of colonialism and competition for land by European empires since the Berlin Conference of 1885. The exploitation of African resources by the Western colonial powers in the 19th and 20th centuries was accompanied by the building of railway networks to key resource sites, which is now mirrored by mega-infrastructure projects such as China’s Belt and Road Initiative or the EU’s Global Gateway.

In the post-independence period there was however a political tendency to nationalise the management of natural resources, such that by 1989, 41,5% of natural resources in sub-Saharan Africa were managed by the state, 40,5% by joint ventures of state and private sector and 18% was run by the private companies (Prichard, 2009, p. 242). According to the World Bank (1992) between 1970 and 1987 the share of global production of developing country minerals fell from 31,5% to 10%. This marked a time of economic decline in Africa. As Prichard points out, the 1980s

were also a period of “more general decline and crisis on the continent. Factors that likely exacerbated the problems of the mining sector included: severely depressed prices; the onset of a broader fiscal crisis in many African states; and the fact that this period represented a low point in the quality of overall governance and political stability on the continent.” (Prichard, 2009, p. 242). The mainstream economic view was that state governance was to blame for the financial crisis in the mining sector, with the result that major reforms were made towards its liberalization, which included a greater openness to foreign investment. The process was influenced by the World Bank and International Monetary Fund and led to the “privatisation of state firms or the selling down of public sector shares in mining operations” (Prichard, 2009, p.243). This mirrors Harvey’s ‘accumulation by dispossession’ propelled by the manipulation of crises and policies in favour of the international private sector. Even though these policies led to a rise in prices of mineral commodities in 1988-1997 and greater investment and explorations, critics observed that they also opened the door to the return of colonial patterns, where Kenyan natural resources were controlled by private companies and dependency on foreign investment, drainage of the profits abroad and little concern for environmental destruction and local economic development (Prichard, 2009, p. 243), which can be observed in the case studies of Tullow Oil and Base Titanium and the cases of community displacements and lack of royalty payments to the counties.

The current international interest in African minerals is strong and the international competition requires diversified strategies to access the minerals crucial for the energy transitions. This is reflected in the European Green Deal:

"Access to resources is a strategic security question for Europe's ambition to deliver the Green Deal. The new industrial strategy for Europe proposes to reinforce Europe's open strategic autonomy, warning that Europe's transition to climate neutrality could replace today's reliance on fossil fuels with one on raw materials, many of which it sources from abroad and for which global competition is becoming more fierce. The EU's open strategic autonomy in these sectors will therefore need to continue to be anchored in diversified and undistorted access to global markets for raw materials" (EU, 2020, p. 1).

Later in the document, it is stated that

“the EU is between 75% and 100% reliant on imports for most metals” (EU, 2020, p.5)

Moreover, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) forecasts that

"the global material use will more than double from 79 billion tons in 2011 to 167 billion tons in 2060 (+110%), of which the demand for metals will grow from 8-20 billion tones by 2060" (+150%) (EU, 2020, p.5).

This will put even greater pressure on the Sub-Saharan land. It is important to point out that these predictions and demands are based on the calculations within the framework of continuous economic growth despite the need for lowering global emissions. Within this ideology, the demand for metals will grow by 150% and this is what now fuels the competition for resources in the mineral-rich countries between the global empires such as the EU, the USA, China and Russia. Despite the post-Kyoto Protocol agreements the EU is paradoxically still pursuing the establishment of new sites of oil exploitation. As the foreign policy analyst John Feffer and the sociologist Edgardo Lander (2024, p. 136) underlined, the EU is funnelling "billions of dollars into fossil fuel subsidies and expanding fossil fuel infrastructure within Europe and in Africa in the wake of Russia's invasion of Ukraine" and military conflicts in the Middle East. Fossil fuels are also to enable further mineral extraction and transportation to produce clean energy systems. Yet, due to global inequality, the industry for clean technology lies outside of Africa, therefore the green transition also requires fossil fuel-run global infrastructure to bring the minerals to green technology-producing countries such as Germany, Denmark or China to then be sold back to African countries in the large scale foreign funded energy projects like the Wind Power Lake Turkana in Kenya.

Complementarily to that Kenya is currently conducting a range of mining explorations and infrastructure developments (Republic of Kenya, 2022) which can lead to it being a more attractive exporter of minerals as the country has a significant amount of titanium, graphite, copper, coltan and rare earth minerals essential for the green transition, as well as oil, by which the global economy is still fuelled. Currently, Kenya supplies to the EU mainly zirconium found in titanium, but the new mineral explorations may diversify the exports (EC, 2023, p. 106). Notably, Kenya Vision 2030 proposes a long list of mining developments. Without going into further specifics, we can list the following:

4.7.1 "Exploration and commercialisation of the oil and gas discoveries" at the Sedimentary Basins in Kenya,

4.7.2 "Early Oil Pilot Scheme Project" at Tertiary Rift Basin in South Lokichar,

4.7.4 “Construction of Lokichar-Lamu Crude Oil Pipeline” in Turkana, Samburu, Isiolo, Meru, Garissa and Lamu Counties,

4.7.11 “Geological surveys” nationwide,

4.7.14 “Enhancing mining for development” nationwide,

4.7.15 “Capacity building of artisanal and small-scale miners location” nationwide to formalise artisanal mining in Kenya, which already got formalised in Migori, Kitui, Kwale, Kakamega, Taita Taveta and Siaya Counties (Republic of Kenya, 2022).

These developments will open the country to more international investments, which can lead to the ‘resource curse’ as is the case in the war-ridden, mineral-rich DRC, further displacements from land and siphoning the profits overseas as the Kenyan government seeks to finance these projects through:

- a) “collaboration with private entities to fund and manage public projects or services”,
- b) seeking “grants and funding from international organisations, foundations, or bilateral/multilateral agencies to support specific projects or initiatives” and
- g) exploring “innovative financing models such as social impact bonds, green bonds, or results-based financing to attract investment for specific social or environmental initiatives” (Republic of Kenya, 2022, p. 39).

In relation to that Kenyan sociologists Abuya and Odongo (2020) note that

“imports of capital, the introduction of new techniques of production and organisation based on the technical know-how of the industrial centres, and the creation of external economies through the construction of roads, installation of ports, railroads and urban public services facilitated the expansion and concentration of foreign economic power in the mineral sector at the expense of the development of the national economy”.

Moreover, they underline that these tendencies are impacted by the lack of transparency, corruption and the power that mining companies can have over fragile states and the regions where they operate (Abuya and Odongo, 2020) to the disadvantage of the local communities.

International mining companies have Kenya on their radar as the country is currently completely covered with delineated land and offshore blocks for mineral and oil exploration by private companies both from Kenya and internationally from Europe, China, South Africa, Australia, and Canada. Many of the companies are of untraceable origin (State Department for Mining, 2024). Despite many companies being registered in countries outside of the EU, they still participate in the same circulation of minerals. The global flow of critical raw materials is ensured through international partnerships, for example, the EU operates within international partnerships such as the EU-US-Japan Trilateral on Critical Raw Materials, the UN, the WTO, the OECD, and the G20 and “has bilateral raw material dialogues with a range of countries, including China” (EU, 2020, p.15). Moreover,

“Such strategic partnerships covering extraction, processing and refining are particularly relevant for resource-rich developing countries and regions such as Africa. The EU can help our partner countries to develop their mineral resources sustainably through supporting improved local governance and dissemination of responsible mining practices, creating in turn value added in the mining sector and drivers for economic and social development.” (EU, 2020, p.16).

This is reflected in many development aid programmes of the EU in Kenya focusing on enhanced security and improved value chains. Further, in my case studies, I will explore how economic and social development often looks in practice under the companies’ CSR programmes, which tend to translate to environmental activities.

Under the current ‘new scramble for Africa’ fuelled by the global green energy transitions Kenya Vision 2030 reopens up the country’s land for mineral and petroleum explorations and extractions run by international private companies. Many of those entities extract the minerals mainly for export to supply economic growth, energy transitions and the production of clean energy technologies which are sold back to African countries. What allows for the undisturbed import of critical minerals to highly industrialised regions like the EU, are the strategic free trade agreements and bilateral and trilateral dialogues with countries like Japan, the US or China and the international infrastructure which supports the movement of the commodities, which I will explore in the next section.

4.6 INFRASTRUCTURE: GLOBAL GATEWAY AND LAPSSET

As the last part to later contextualise my case studies, I will discuss the new infrastructure developments in Kenya as they are what territorially connects mining and petroleum extraction sites with the European-funded nature conservation areas as I will present on the map (Figure 2) after this section. The renewed interest in extractivism in Africa from both international and Kenyan parties is reliant on infrastructure developments as they are what makes the export of materials possible. As a result, it is supposed to generate domestic and foreign economic growth, which once again leads to further infrastructure development and extraction. This is a key part of the modernisation project for Kenya, often at the expense of traditional livelihoods and the exclusion of Kenyans living in poverty and outside this particular vision of progress (Mkutu and Mdee, 2020). Infrastructural developments have also embedded in them the promise of independence alongside economic growth, yet are often “entangled with colonial ways of doing, knowing, and being” (Cupers, 2021) supported by the experience imported from foreign nations. The EU is one of the funders supporting the Kenyan government in the development of the new motorways and oil pipelines within the Northern Corridor and the LAPSSET development corridor between the Kenyan port of Lamu, South Sudan and Ethiopia as a part of the EU’s Global Gateway programme and Kenya Vision 2030.

The EU started the Global Gateway funding scheme in 2021 to invest EUR 300 billion by 2027 in “infrastructure, digital and climate projects around the world to strengthen Europe’s supply chains, boost EU trade and help fight climate change” (Euractiv, 2021) and “enable African countries to integrate their raw materials and resources into sustainable global value chains” (EU, 2022). Contrary to lending loans by the Chinese government to fund infrastructural development through the Belt and Road Initiative, the EU’s Global Gateway is sponsored by grants which give the EU a friendlier diplomatic position. (Euractiv, 2021). Kenya is seen as a “symbol for the EU’s Global Gateway’s impact and struggles” as it operates as one of the key export ports to Europe from East and Central Africa. The current goal is to scale up the Kenyan ports in Mombasa and Lamu to export “50% of the produce from Kenya via sea by 2030” (Pugnet, 2023). In the EU-Africa Global Gateway Investment Package, we get acquainted with the Strategic Corridors developments. The plan envisages a network of transport corridors co-sponsored by the EU connecting West Africa to East and North Africa and a separate network in the southern part of the continent. Kenya is a key port in the Mombasa-Kisumu transport corridor connecting Kenya, Uganda, Rwanda and the DRC. “There is also the Team Europe Initiative led by France and Germany in collaboration with

the European Investment Bank including EUR44 million of an EU grant. It includes the mentioned Mombasa-Kisangani (DRC) Strategic Corridor: EUR25,95 million project involving the French Development Agency (AFD), the African Development Bank and a EUR91 million EU contribution”. Another project is Dar es Salaam - Nairobi - Addis Ababa - Bujumbura - Djibouti covering the territories of Tanzania, Kenya, Ethiopia, Somalia, and Djibouti. The EU provided a total of EUR 275 million to the development of the Northern Corridor within Kenya (EU, 2022).

The European investments in African infrastructure are nothing new as I discussed earlier in the case of the Italian government funding pipelines and refineries alongside expanding its petroleum corporation ENI. They remind also of the projects of the British colonial administration like the Kenya-Uganda railway built to support draining the continent out of resources at the time of the scramble for Africa initiated by the Berlin Conference in 1885. The Global Gateway also mirrors the post-independence project of the Trans-African Highway coordinated by the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa in the 1970s. Within the postnational Pan-African vision the road project also known as the “unity highway” was to serve as a means to “integration and development, moving the continent’s people and economies from past to future” (Cupers and Meier, 2020, p.63). This infrastructural megaproject was a tool to support inter-African trade but also to “foster a new, disciplined citizenry ready for a newly liberated Africa” (Cupers and Meier, 2020, p.65). According to the architectural historians Kenny Cupers and Prita Meier (2020) the African governments for long have believed that “public infrastructure and economic development should be spearheaded by technical experts, with little or no input from the local communities they served” and, in contradiction to the official visions of decolonial independence, many of the experts were invited from Belgium, France and Germany reproducing corporate, colonial norms alongside European oil and car companies establishing their presence on the continent as was the case with ENI.

Kenya played a symbolic role in the Trans-African Highway as the inaugurating country of the first section, namely the Nairobi-Mombassa corridor. Alongside building the highway, the coast experienced new developments in the form of oil refineries near the expanding harbour in Mombasa in 1964 with “two deep-water berths and an oil tanker jetty. The jetty [had] a pipeline to the new oil refinery at Chagamwe, through which tankers from the Persian Gulf discharge crude oil for refining” as advertised in “Kenya: A New Era” brochure from around 1963 (Cupers and Meier, 2020, p.74-75). The refinery brought with it to Kenya not only freedom from imported refined oil but also further infrastructure substrate of “enough bitumen to build five miles of tarmac road every

day” (Cupers and Meier, 2020, p.76). Moreover, what was co-advertised by the oil industry was the new modern lifestyle with technologies and consumption bringing individual liberties but also growing oil dependence of the postcolonial societies.

Oil infrastructure has been historically embedded in the narratives of modernity and development. It is also central to the Kenya Vision 2030 and its flagship project LAPSSET currently co-funded by the EU to support crude oil exports from Kenya, Uganda and South Sudan with the involvement of the French petroleum giant Total Energies. The EU is also co-sponsoring LAPSSET with a gap of USD 21170 million to be financed. The projects cover geographically Kenya, Rwanda, Uganda, Tanzania and Burundi and include an oil pipeline, oil refinery and transport infrastructure between those countries (EU, 2023). In the Economic Partnership Agreement between the EU and the East African Community from 2023 the signing parties “commit resources from their financing mechanisms on a timely and predictable basis to support regional integration and the EPA-related development strategies and projects as contained in the EPA Development Matrix from September 2015” (EU and Kenya, 2023, p. 117). The projects in the mentioned matrix (EU, 2023) bind the EU to the funding of the development of oil pipelines, rail, air and car transport infrastructure and ports across the East African Community. They include:

pipelines linking Lamu Port to South Sudan and Ethiopia within the “Development of new transport corridor from Lamu to Ethiopia and South Sudan” (USD 21170 mln),

“Construction of parallel pipeline from Nairobi to Eldoret to increase the pumping capacity” (USD 194,74 mln),

“Extension of Kenya-Uganda Petroleum Pipeline” (USD 144,94 mln)

and considered project of oil pipeline construction between Kigali and Bujumbura.

These petroleum projects are developed with the EU’s support in Kenya contrary to the EU Green Deal’s official narrative of shifting away from fossil fuels to lower global emissions. However, the new infrastructural developments grant access to resources essential for the green transition sourced from ever more distant locations and they also shape the boundaries of movement around the continent. As before the investments in infrastructure are strongly related to resource exploitation and export. What is more, as Cupers (2021) points out, now “European infrastructure and development aid for Africa increasingly aspires to counter the movements of “undesired” migrant

populations without touching the global extraction industries and economies”, which is also reflected in aiding the militarisation of the same regions as we will see in the case studies.

As I presented in this part, infrastructure projects have been essential for resource extraction in East Africa ever since the rise of British colonialism in Kenya. In the post-independence years, European countries supported the creation of the Trans-African Highway alongside introducing their own petroleum and car companies like ENI. The development of petroleum and mining has been also crucial for the modernisation of the continent and was ideologically rooted in the colonial perception that infrastructure is linked to economic independence and growth. Currently, following the previous colonial and postcolonial projects, the EU is once again co-funding major infrastructures for oil and the movement of cars and cargo across the continent to support the flow of the commodities and its own green energy transition and economic growth.

Now, before moving on to the case studies, I will summarise what has been written so far to remind the reader about the context in which I place the following cases. Kenya Vision 2030 as well as the European Green Deal both rely on the development of mineral mining in Kenya. In the case of the first one, mineral extraction is supposed to bring revenue to the country to support modernisation efforts and lift the nation to the status of a middle-income country. The EU is reliant on the region’s resources to fuel the green energy transition’s technologies. The infrastructure projects like LAPSSSET on which the EU collaborates with the Kenyan government will enable the undisturbed flow of commodities and allow for investments in more remote areas of the country and the whole continent. It is also important to remember that this is happening within the context of the ‘new scramble for Africa’ in which global empires such as the EU, the US, China and Russia compete for preferential access to the resources, for which various diplomatic strategies are used. One of the EU’s tools of negotiation is supplying the country with development aid to set friendly conditions for the expansion of the European companies’ investments. Crucially, new investments in mining and energy require new territories. I suggest that the new territories can be accessed through nature conservation and emission-offsetting efforts linked to the UN’s REDD+ mechanism, in which the actors from the Global North sequester carbon in the soil of the Global South. As I discussed, however, this is often linked to ‘accumulation by dispossession’ to the benefit of international, private companies, for which the land reforms from the Kenya Vision 2030 allow.

LAPSSET, EU-FUNDED PROJECTS, MINERALS AND OIL (2024)

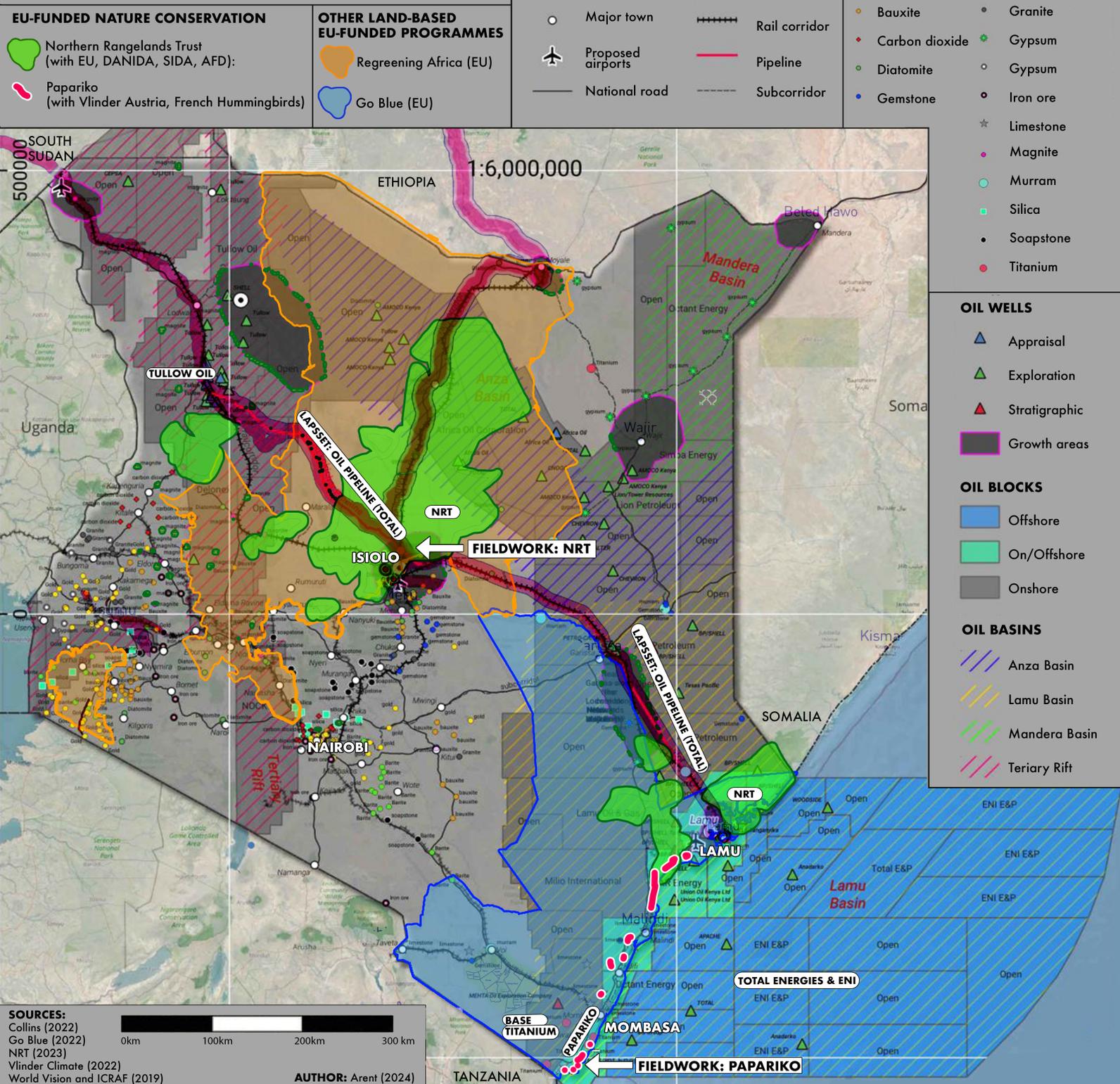


Figure 2. This map shows the spatial correlations of the EU-funded environmental and infrastructural projects in relation to mineral and fossil fuel resources. The crucial parts of the map are:

- 1) the LAPSSET corridor (pink) between the port of Lamu on the border with Somalia and South Sudan and Ethiopia;
- 2) the coast of Kenya, where the Papariko mangrove conservation project is located (dark pink shapes with white outlines) territorialising the same areas as the EU-funded Go Blue (blue shape with dark blue outline);
- 3) the Northern Rangelands Trust in northern Kenya (green shape with dark green outline) covering the same regions as another EU-funded project, Regreening Africa (orange shape with orange outline).

(Map by the author, 2024)

5. CASE STUDIES

In this section, I will analyse the selected cases of European-funded carbon credit projects in Kenya in relation to the infrastructure, mining and other land developments in their regions. As I explained before, the carbon offsetting projects are situated in the larger phenomenon of modernisation processes from Kenya Vision 2030, higher demand for Kenya's minerals and infrastructure propelled by the green energy transitions including the European Green Deal. The map above (Figure 2) will serve as a visual reference with an emphasis on the location of the greening projects in relation to the development corridors and mining projects.

I will analyse two case studies: the Papariko mangrove restoration project with initial funding from a French climate fund Hummingbirds stretching at the whole coast of Kenya near the sites of the Northern Corridor (Mombasa-Nairobi) and offshore oil exploration blocks also in the geographical context of the EU-funded GO Blue project and the Northern Rangelands Trust (NRT) funded by SIDA, DANIDA, AFD and the EU amongst others located alongside the LAPSSET infrastructure corridor and mineral rich areas. I will strive to analyse the economic and political aspects of these projects as well as how they affect the local rural communities.

5.1 NORTHERN KENYA

5.1.1 REGIONAL CONTEXT: LAPSSET, DEVELOPMENT, LAND COMPETITION AND CONSERVANCIES

One of the main developments affecting northern Kenya's physical, political and economic landscapes is the LAPSSET infrastructure corridor of new highways, pipelines and airports co-funded by the EU (Figure 2), which will connect the new port in Lamu on the Kenyan-Somali border with less financialised parts of northern Kenya, South Sudan and Ethiopia. It carries the promises of economic growth and invites land speculation and the expansion of other industries such as mining, tourism and energy. It also heightens the demand for petroleum which is in the interest of the EU member states such as France and Italy with their oil corporations Total Energies and ENI as the new roads give them new territories for generating further revenue as was pointed out by Scotto (2022). Another factor enabling landscape investments in northern Kenya is its harsh, arid climate of scarce rainfall, low soil productivity and, therefore, bad conditions for agriculture.

International donors and investors often formulate their projects around the unfavourable conditions of the East African drylands, where they intervene with environmental programmes tackling water scarcity, low agricultural productivity and conflicts for grasslands between pastoralists and wildlife within the worsening climatic conditions (FAO, 2019). Nature conservancies from the Northern Rangelands Trust get established amid these processes and livelihoods and take under their management the regional savannahs and grasslands historically shaped by the numerous herbivores, and predators but predominantly by the pastoralists with their flocks of cattle, sheep and goats and the use and preservation of certain species of plants for medicinal and cultural purposes. The conservancies also govern small multi-tribal pastoral villages with houses constructed from wood, corrugated steel, clay and concrete. They get created with the support of European donor agencies, where the new mineral extractions and investments are enabled by the growing infrastructure in the context of the ‘new scramble for Africa’, Kenya Vision 2030 and the new alliances between the mining companies with biodiversity NGOs (Fairhead, Leech and Scoones, 2012).

Since the announcement of LAPSSSET in 2009, the plan for and construction of this infrastructure project has been affecting people anticipating its appearance on the map of Kenya. The promised economic growth alongside the establishment of the development corridor invited land speculators coming from the local elites, middle class, Nairobi as well as from abroad to purchase or grab land which will supposedly rise in value. Chome (2020, p.312) underlined the colonial framing of the areas that LAPSSSET will go through as “empty (of civilized people and modernity)”, but full (of resources, especially land and minerals), appears to be legitimating the



Figure 3. Kenya National Highways Authority documentary promoting LAPSSSET (Government Delivery Services, 2017)

appropriation of 'underutilized' land, while "casting the state and its elites as heroes who will make these regions anew". This is an ideological framework present since colonial times, in which only the regions with technological 'progress' and capitalised resources can be treated as modern, while other regions have to 'develop' to reach that state. It is the ideology which invites Harvey's 'accumulation through dispossession' if the dwellers of the regions are perceived as 'wasting' the resources which can be financialised. The terrains of northern Kenya are undergoing multiple processes of development such as large-scale internationally-funded energy projects like Wind Power Lake Turkana but also building infrastructures for more efficient meat production and export, not to mention the extraction of oil in Lokichar, which stimulated the establishment of LAPSSET. These are some of the processes which make the land rise in monetary value and subject it to speculative purchases and competition of who gets to control the resources.

I will here explain how the conservancies get established within the context of LAPSSET. Historian Ngala Chome (2020) following Mosley and Watson argued that in Lamu, which marks the beginning of LAPSSET and along the proposed infrastructure corridor towards South Sudan and Ethiopia, conservancies have been established as a response to the perceived threats and opportunities posed by these developments. Many public land allocations, had been issued to ranches that were turned into 'community conservancies' with the support of global funding streams. These new conservation efforts, encouraging communities to protect rather than hunt animals, have led to conflicts within and between ethnic communities, as well as with government departments like forestry, police, and land authorities, due to restricted movement across conservancy borders and disputes over the definition of local communities. One such example around Lamu was Amu Ranch Conservancy of 63,000 acres of land assisted by David Sheldrick Wildlife Trust, which in accordance with the global philanthropy trend of sending funding to protecting 'indigenous knowledge' set as its goal the empowerment of local communities in managing their natural resources. Despite that opinions in the neighbouring village Pangani stated that the conservancy ranch "invaded our land", "really bothered us", "my uncle has been arrested a number of times", "sent police to beat us" also asking questions like "where did these ranches come from, why are there ranches everywhere, where will we live?" (Chome, 2020, 319). The conservancies have been introduced alongside other land enclosures related to LAPSSET and Kenya Vision 2030, which are currently shifting the patterns of land use by the rural communities in the name of resource use optimisation be it for wildlife protection or other investments for example relating to the global green transitions. It is therefore important to understand the bigger picture of the processes occurring alongside LAPSSET and other developments in northern Kenya before I

focus strictly on the Northern Rangelands Trust conservancies funded by the European development aid agencies.

We now turn to Isiolo, a town in northern Kenya which will become a junction in the new highways and pipelines connecting Ethiopia and South Sudan to the Kenyan port of Lamu, which was also the site of my fieldwork. Furthermore, Isiolo County is where many of the NRT conservancies funded by European donors are located. With the developments of LAPSSET, the competition for land has also increased here, which in recent years has been reframed as a “new frontier for economic growth” with investors financing new urban projects and an international airport. Following the findings of the anthropologist Hannah Elliott (2024), the “economy of anticipation” in Isiolo is also putting growing pressure on land ownership, which is currently classified as “community land”. The threat comes from the fact that the delays in putting the Community Land Bill into force make the land vulnerable to privatisation by actors with connections to the national government, whose plans for development run counter to the wishes of local people to have secure access to land. The Northern Rangelands Trust is one of the main actors participating in enclosing and getting control over the land and the European donors put it in an advantageous position. Elliott (2024) underlines that it is largely the local people of Isiolo who are involved in property speculation, with many areas changing from poor villages into middle-class settlements. Local residents are also forming groups within their ethnicities to rush to collectively purchase land in Isiolo saying “Isiolo will be Nairobi”. Similarly to the situation in Lamu people also link different land allocations to the tribal connections of the Borana-dominated county council. In the coastal Lamu, this process was related to conflicts about ethnic territories when claiming rights to the land through title deeds and treating some dwellers as 'hosts' or 'indigenous' and others as 'guests' (Chome, 2020, p.312). Not surprisingly, it is also tightly linked to who governs the county in the given period, making land purchases more accessible to allies, tribes and family members. For example, controversies sparked during Governor Issa Timamy's Lamu administration after irregular land allocations emerged to public awareness.

“The names of the individuals that had been allocated deeds to the sand dunes were published by the NLC, and it included people who had served in the defunct Lamu county council, local bureaucrats and politicians, including Fahim Twaha, T.S.S, and Omar Twalib, a co-founder of the Amu Ranch Conservancy and Twaha’s immediate predecessor in the Lamu West parliamentary seat” (Chome, 2020, p.322).

Both in Isiolo and in Lamu the connections to those in power are an advantage when purchasing or developing the prime land. The presence of the European aid agencies in the regions also provides the foreign states access to the local political processes and, therefore, the necessary connections to successfully participate in the landrace in northern Kenya.

Alongside the competition to claim the land around the promised centres of prosperity, the process is also accompanied by sedentarisation and intensification of land use due to the conversion of communally owned land to privatised, enclosed ownership (Chome, 2020, p.313). However, it is not a new process. Since the 1950s the customary tenure land had been under conversion to private land. Historically, the most fertile 'white highlands' were in the hands of colonialists and after the independence with the World Bank-funded Million-Acre Settlement Scheme, some of the land was sold by the leaving settlers to the forming Kenyan elites (Mbaria and Ogada, 2015). As a result, land ownership has been very concentrated. For example in Laikipia - 40% of the land is owned by 48 individuals including Saudi arms dealers, French art dealers, Kenyan conservationists, former Kenyan president Moi etc. Allegedly, the estate prices have seen a 100% increase annually leading to further land divisions. Laikipia is also home to 8 NRT conservancies, which have historically started on a British settler ranch in Lewa and expanded from there (Mbaria and Ogada, 2015).

The land conversions to more formalised management have continued until now. According to land rights advocate Jaron Vogelsang (2019), as of the time of the introduction of the new Community Land Act in 2016 which ought to protect the communal land in Kenya 67% of the country's land mass had been governed under such ownership, yet facing severe challenges in registration of the title deeds, and progressively losing it to the private owners as the process of land registration takes a very long time, is expensive and some of the applications are neglected. However, in 2020 II Ngwesi and Musul communities in Laikipia successfully managed to register their land titles (Murimi, 2020). Unfortunately, not all communities manage to register their title deeds before the land gets its ownership transformed into for example land of "public interest", which is subject to "compulsory land acquisition" under new land reforms proposed in the Kenya Vision 2030 (Republic of Kenya, 2022 p.72). The community land in Kenya is fragile as more capital-generating forms of land use are prioritised.

The processes of northern Kenya's land formalisation, modernisation and sedentarisation were analysed by Lind, Okenwa and Scoones (2020) in the wider context of the East African Drylands. They noted that Dryland Eastern Africa is "home to the largest population in the world still active in pastoralism-estimated at 12 to 22 million people" (p.3-4) As in Lamu and Isiolo the developments are related to the 'high modernist' Kenya Vision 2030 of joined efforts of the state and



Figure 4. Fences enclosing pastoral community land in Garba Tula, Isiolo, June, 2024

private capital, which invite the investments in pipelines, roads, wind farms and plantations in which the EU member states participate. The authors question who wins and who loses in such developments, as they are usually positioned within the narrative of poverty reduction. However, as in other areas of LAPSSET like Lamu and Isiolo, the interweaving of national elites, international corporations and a wide range of local actors are involved in the privatisation of land, its resources and the forced change of livelihoods embedded in the regional 'modernisation'. The authors make a point that the investments do not come from a single country but from multiple international actors through “a complex mix of finance flows, including private companies, finance capital funds, public-private partnerships and development finance”, of which much is non-transparent (Lind, Okenwa and Scoones, 2020, p.3) and what I will analyse further in the text. With these investments, land gets privatised and compartmentalised forcing the pastoral communities to settle, pay for fenced-off grazing areas and access to water as well as commercialise their activities (Lind, Okenwa and Scoones, 2020, p.7). Pastoral livelihoods change in different ways, some 'move up' through successfully commercialising their livestock, and some 'hang in', where there is good access to resources allowing for the continuation of customary practices. When there is a lack of access to resources some households 'drop out' and quit pastoralism and others 'move out' and make use of good market access without directly engaging in pastoralism. Furthermore, they later argue that the sedentarisation of agriculture also allows the state to transform regions into being profitable for transforming the 'people living outside mainstream society' into traceable taxpayers through the

inclusion in the fiscal system (Lind, Okenwa and Scoones, 2020, p.16). After Ferry and Limbert (2008) the authors note that resource making is a process in which the material and immaterial resources are incorporated into the global economy, a process in which the actors previously unincorporated in the system become incorporated in the web of global dependencies. After Lund (2018) they also underline that all the actors involved in the territorialisation of the East African Drylands, be it humanitarian agencies, green energy, mining, agricultural actors etc. “have the capabilities to define resources, as well as order and control land”. (Lind, Okenwa and Scoones, 2020, p.19-20). They point out that it is not only about control but also about having influence over who gets to control the resources. This is crucial to understanding the wider territorialisation processes in which as I will show nature conservation is helpful as under the veil of altruism it grants the organisations, states and companies access to large-scale lands as required by the protected wildlife according to scientific calculations.

The authors summarise the findings from various chapters of their book through a list of impacts of new resource and infrastructure investments in the East African Drylands. They include:

- “Restricting rights to land, water, other resources and passage”,
- “Delays, uncertainties and lack of accountability in implementation”,
- “Land speculation”,
- “Generating immigration”,
- “Creating employment and contracts, which may privilege one group over another”,
- “Initiating compensation mechanisms over which people then fight” and
- “Establishing new security arrangements involving increased state security/ policing presence and/or contracts with private firms and local militants” (Lind, Okenwa and Scoones, 2020, p.30).

These are also phenomena occurring in the following case study, in which the creation of the conservancy land operates at the expense of pastoralist livelihoods. This section also earlier showed the relationship between the developments of infrastructure, sedentarisation of pastoralists, capitalising on the resources and including communities, which were before ‘remote’ into the wider fiscal system, which is supposed to follow the Kenya Vision 2030 to make the country a middle-income nation within the next decade.

The LAPSSET infrastructure corridor, advancing in northern Kenya has been a catalyst of various social, political and economic processes such as investments, competition and displacements aided by external funding including from the European donors. The project has been a part of the wider modernisation and land formalisation processes with the emergence of new ways

of governing the land and its resources, such as the wildlife conservancies. The conservation areas described as efforts to protect wildlife can be viewed as part of broader trends of land enclosures and privatization leading to intertribal conflicts. All these are part of what has now become a more extensive ‘new scramble for Africa’ where the local and national elites work with international companies to grab land for prime investments and speculation to exploit land resources under the guise of modernisation and development. Pastoralist communities which have been dependent on the communal tenure land are largely losing access to the grazing areas as a result of these processes which bring more inequality and exclusivity in land ownership accomplished through the assimilation of that region to the global economy in which the previously remote areas, become weaved into the international financial flows and the national fiscal system.

5.1.2 THE NORTHERN RANGELANDS TRUST (THE NRT)

Before we continue to the findings from the fieldwork conducted in Isiolo, I will briefly describe the nature conservation actor in focus. The Northern Rangelands Trust (NRT) is a wildlife NGO operating ‘community conservancies’ in 10 Kenyan counties” (Marsabit, Laikipia, Isiolo, Meru, Baringo, Samburu, Garissa, Tana River, Lamu and West Pokot counties) and Uganda” (NRT, 2024; Figure 5). The organisation manages over 42.000 square kilometres, which is around 8% of Kenya’s landmass, through 45 so-called community conservancy boards. The expansion of the NRT is supported by a long list of international donors like the European Union (EU), the Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA), the Danish International Development Agency (DANIDA) and the French Development Agency (AFD). The growth of this organisation was also previously aided by Tullow Oil, which I will explore later. Moreover, The NRT collaborates with the Kenyan Wildlife Service (KWS) and Kenyan Forest Service (KFS) - both in favour of the commercialisation of nature. KWS is a state-owned corporation tasked with the management and conservation of wildlife in Kenya and KFS is a state agency which owns, manages and protects all state forests. Members of the KWS and KFS sit on the board of the NRT and profit from its operations (Mittal and Moloo, 2021, p.26).

The NRT establishes the new wildlife protection areas by making agreements with primarily pastoralist communities to set aside parts of their community land for wildlife conservation in exchange for ‘development’ and benefits, including the possibility of generating income through the production of carbon credits for the international voluntary carbon credit markets as well as through

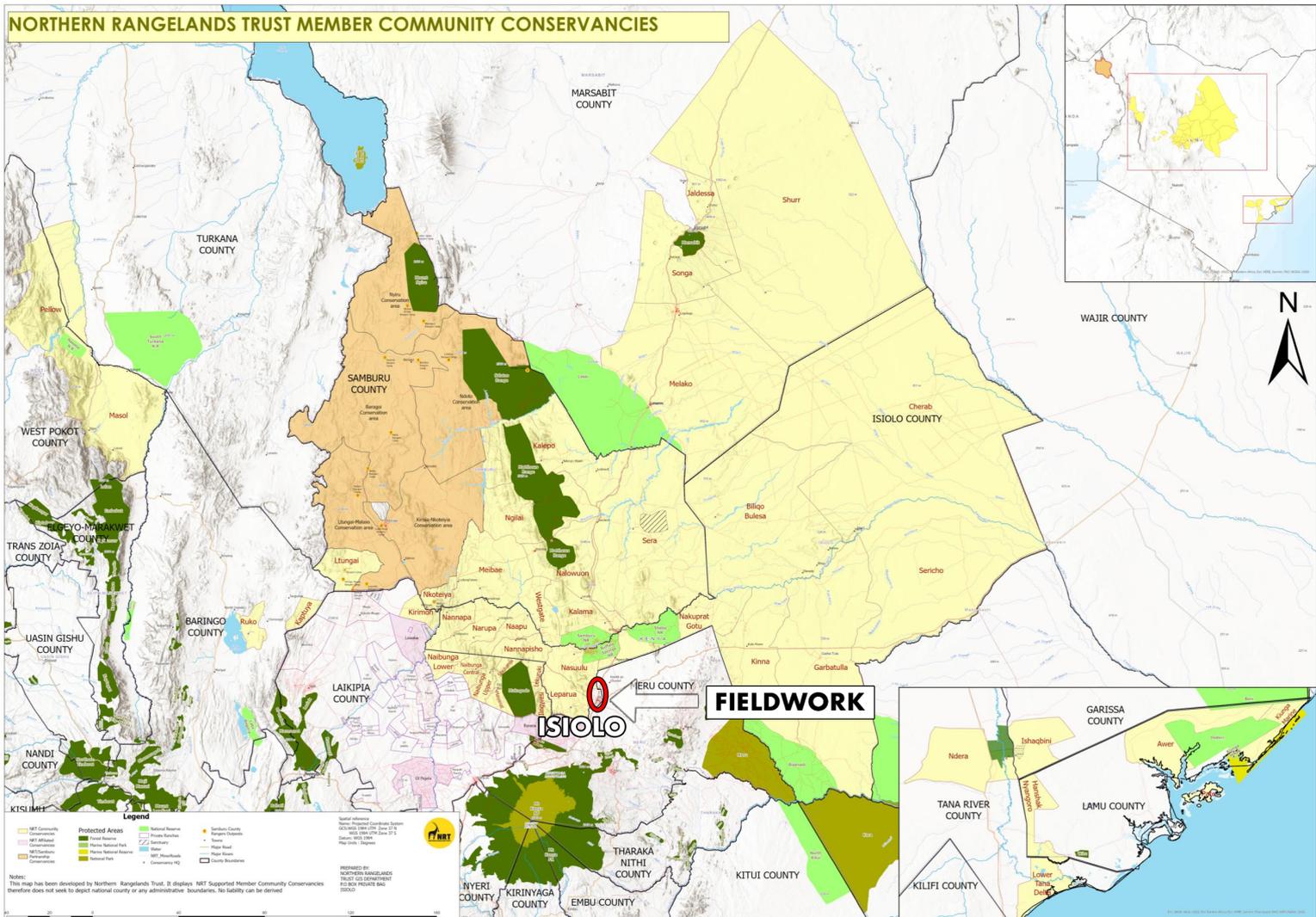


Figure 5. Map of the NRT conservancies (marked in yellow, pink and beige) and fieldwork (Source: The NRT, 2023)

receiving parts of the revenue generated from the eco-lodges present in the conservancies. The conservancies mainly profit from the tourism industry and the Northern Kenya Grassland Carbon Project (NKGCP). The goal of the ‘community conservancies’ is to promote better livelihoods in a resilient environment inclusive of wildlife. However, ever since its creation the NRT has been involved in land-related controversies and dispossessions in Kenya. As I discussed earlier, the ‘community conservancy’ model has emerged in response to the critique of the previous ‘fortress conservation’ model, yet according to Noe (2019) after Corson (2011) it is neither state-controlled nor empowering to the local communities. Instead, it continues to grant private, often international actors like the EU control over “resources within national borders” (Noe, 2019, p.383).

Finally, the conservancies are protected by over 800 private militarised rangers called 9-1 hired by the organisation. According to a report by human rights advocate Anuradha Mittal and journalist Zahra Moloo (2021) the NRT rangers receive paramilitary and intelligence training through the KWS Law Enforcement Academy and 51 Degrees, a private security firm led by Batian Craig, son of Ian Craig, who is the founder of the NRT. 51 Degrees specializes in weapons

handling, combat operations, and advanced first aid training. The rangers have also undergone training with security firms Kinetic Six and Mars Omega LLP, the latter founded by a former Director of the British Army's Intelligence Corps. These rangers hold Kenya Police Reserve (KPR) status, granting them the authority to carry police-issued firearms while on duty.

As I described above and what is visible in Figure 5, the NRT alongside its partners govern extensive territories covering around 8% of Kenya's landmass. These territories get established and expanded through the support of the international funding web, also coming from extractive companies like Tullow Oil. The expansion is made possible through the agreements with pastoralist communities in exchange for the benefits from the NKGCP, which I will verify in this case study. Finally, the territories under the NRT's governance are protected by over 800 weaponised rangers, which as we will see is also aided by the EU.

5.1.2.1 FUNDING FROM THE EU MEMBER STATES TO THE NRT: AID FOR TRADE

Now, after we understood the wider regional context and the overview of the NRT I will focus on one of my research questions, namely, how do the EU member states benefit from funding of nature conservation in Kenya? To comprehend that we have to remember the context of diversification of the EU's foreign strategies under the 'new scramble for Africa' to secure the minerals necessary for achieving clean transition goals from the EU's Green Deal as well as accessing territories for further investments of the EU's member corporate states in the ideology of continued economic growth.

The involvement of European Union (EU) member states in funding conservation efforts in Kenya, particularly through the NRT, reflects broader geopolitical and economic strategies. These initiatives, driven by foreign aid, align with national interests stated in the Kenya Vision 2030, facilitating both environmental conservation and economic expansion. 'Accumulation by dispossession' by the NRT is supported by the EU-member states, whose funding enables further growth and protection of the NRT's territory, which is increasing in size at the expense of pastoral commons. Territorialisation supported by aid agencies is not a new phenomenon. Bluwstein (2017) described this in terms of vacating parcels of land for investment through sedentarisation, often assisted by aid agencies. The territorialisation of land and enclosing it away from the pastoralists by the NRT is not the only EU-funded project with similar goals in the region. Another one covering the same counties is Regreening Africa, which guides communities in northern Kenya in how to

enclose land away from pastoralists to produce cash crops (Muriuki, Wanjira and Ojuok, 2022). In trying to establish the interests of the EU's funding of the NRT it is therefore important to look at all the regional developments and their role in enclosing the land for agriculture but also shifting the nomadic cattle keeping into breeding it in sedentary ranches. This way, through stopping the movement of the pastoralists privatisation of land is encouraged which opens the door to land speculation as well as further investments from which European companies can benefit as was the case with the Wind Power Lake Turkana where the dispossession of pastoralists was followed by investments in 365 wind turbines with technologies from companies such as the Swedish ABB, Danish Vestas and German Siemens (World Bank, 2011).

The funding of the specific regions reflects the strategies of the European ministries of foreign affairs about how and where to direct the aid. For example, the Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA) has been guided by the government's strategy of Aid for Trade, which is supposed to use grants to help 'developing' countries integrate into the global economy for example through enhancing countries' capacity to engage in regional and global value chains and trade by promoting trade facilitation, reducing trade barriers, developing trade-related sustainable infrastructure, and fostering private sector growth (UNIDO, 2024).

Aid agencies' operations include public-private partnerships. In SIDA's case, it is the Public Private Development Partnership (PPDP), in which the agency collaborated for example with



Figure 6. Wind turbines from a Danish company Vestas in Wind Power Lake Turkana (Pilling, 2018)

Volvo, the energy and the mining and infrastructure equipment company Epiroc in boosting ‘industrial sustainable development’ in the Democratic Republic of Congo (SMT, 2023). Similarly, in Kenya, Swedish companies are promoted through the development agency. According to the First Secretary/Senior Programme Manager at the Embassy of Sweden in Nairobi, SIDA has

“new initiatives coming up where we can see how we can increase the focus and trying to promote aid and promote Swedish companies.” (Interview, Nairobi, 2024).

Sweden is a major supporter of the NRT which was given significant financing through the “Imara Sustainable Natural Resource Management for Climate Resilience” programme, which has been running since 2018 and has been extended to 2026 with committed donations summing up to over EUR 24.7 mln out of which nearly EUR 2.3 million went directly to the NRT. The programme aims at “diversifying livelihoods and improved natural resource management and use in the ASAL Counties of Isiolo, Laikipia, Marsabit and Samburu by 2021.” The programme outcomes include secure livelihoods and strengthened market systems amongst others. (openaid.se, 2018). The second phase of the project extended its scope to the counties of Isiolo, Laikipia, Marsabit, Samburu, Narok, West Pokot, Elgeyo Marakwet and Turkana. The project coverage is territorially large and grants Sweden a stronger ‘humanitarian’ presence in the mentioned counties, with potential new contracts for Swedish companies.

Foreign companies are welcome in Northern Kenya as claimed by the governor of Isiolo County:

“Isiolo continues to receive interest as an investment destination and is the ideal springboard for investors looking to expand their operations across, the Northern Kenya Region, Kenya and the African continent.” (County Government of Isiolo, n.d.).

Isiolo County is furthermore looking for investors interested in solar and wind energy projects, with the potential of the areas of Oldonyiro, Cherab and Sericho highlighted (County Government of Isiolo, n.d.). This is where the NRT operates or proposes the expansion of its Northern Kenya Grassland Carbon Project (NRT, 2023) with funding from the EU member states’ aid agencies, which could give their companies preferential access to energy partnerships.

During my fieldwork, I encountered an opinion from an ex-worker of the Wind Power Lake Turkana, that the territories of the NRT with years will be transformed into large-scale clean energy

projects with wildlife grazing underneath and communities displaced outside its borders (Interview, Nairobi, 2024). This was also suggested in an NRT-issued document

“The area [of the NRT conservancies] is a target for energy and tourism development by the recently elected Kenyan government.” (Soils for the Future, LLC, The Nature Conservancy and the Northern Rangelands Trust, 2019)

This supports my hypothesis of nature conservation functioning as a bridge for the territorialisation of land in favour of the expansion of international corporations.

There already is an energy project under development by the Danish International Development Agency (DANIDA) within the NRT’s conservancies with EUR 6.69 million granted to “Support to Northern Rangelands Trust (NRT) Water, NbS and clean energy project 2023- 2027”.

“The intervention will target 43 community conservancies in the northern and coastal terrestrial and marine ecosystems covering an area of 63,336 km² of land in 10 counties namely Marsabit, Isiolo, Samburu, Laikipia, Meru, Baringo, West Pokot, Lamu, Garissa, and Tana River. (...) Primarily the main collaborators will be NRT as the lead, and its 43 community conservancies. Other collaborators will include conservancy associations, county and national government, research institutions, other DANIDA programmes, international organizations and private sector actors.” (DANIDA, 2023)

The mentioned private sector actors may come from the DANIDA Green Business Partnerships (DGBP), which similar to SIDA’s PPDP is a public-private partnership branch of the development agency. One of the project’s aims is to establish solar panels on schools, households and clinics. DANIDA has had a similar project in Kenya in partnership with another nature NGO WWF “Solar for Cooling: Energy and refrigeration solutions for small-scale fishing in Kenya”. In this project, the key commercial partner was the Denmark-based solar panel company X-Solar alongside Danish cooling system company Vestfrost Solutions and two Kenyan companies. Danish company Vestas, German Siemens and Swedish ABB have also been important beneficiaries of the large-scale project Wind Power Lake Turkana (Figure 6), by establishing their technologies (World Bank, 2011). The project is also mentioned in the description of the clean energy programme in focus: “With the opening of Africa’s largest Wind Power project in Lake Turkana, supported by Denmark among other investors, wind is becoming a more important source of electricity.” I therefore, suggest that the energy companies may also get revenue from the Danish support to the Northern Rangelands Trust despite the human rights violations by the NRT. In 2020 Kenya Pastoralist Journalists Alliance with Isiolo Human Right Defenders, Borana Council of Elders and Borana

professionals wrote a petition to DANIDA and other donors to the NRT accusing the Danish government of misconducting an investigation of the conflicts of the NRT with the affected communities. They wrote

“We shall write this to the attention of your journalists’ association in Denmark that you are a party in fueling conflict by choosing to give unbalanced story in a conflict [involving] vulnerable and sensitive land issue that has claimed over 80 lives.” and that “ the tragedy that happened this week where a team were sent for a fact-finding mission into the NRT’s flagrant violations of human rights deliberately failed to include and/or give an opportunity to Isiolo Human Right Defenders (who were the petitioners in this matter) is an absolute miscarriage of justice and an insult to the Isiolo people.” (Mittal and Moloo, 2021, p.42).

Despite contradictory feedback from local human rights groups to consultants hired by the Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs in April 2020, Danida reaffirmed its commitment to NRT with an increased grant by 38 per cent, totalling DKK 61 million for the period 2021 to 2025 (Mittal and Moloo, 2021, p.18). This was an extension of the previous grant of DKK 50 million for the Kenya Country Programme 2016-2020. The human rights violations were also ignored by SIDA:

“There has not been any submission of clear evidence of the allegations in that report. We disregard it. We think it is fabricated for political reasons.” (First Secretary in Environment, Climate, Biodiversity, Swedish Embassy, Nairobi, 2024)

The funding of the NRT might be partially chosen by the personal connections of the Embassy’s employees. The First Secretary in Environment, Climate, Biodiversity responsible for the collaboration with the NRT at the Swedish embassy in Nairobi, where SIDA is located:

“I know Iain Craig from my youth, we are age-mates. Since 30 years I have been going to his home in Lewa for birdwatching.” (Interview, Nairobi, 2024)

This is a problematic case and it reflects the value of personal connections in accessing funding and getting territories for the expansion of companies.

Finally, France has also been a dedicated supporter of the NRT conservation programs. Between 2012 and 2018, the French Development Agency (AFD) allocated €8 million to the Kenyan government in support of the "Conservation of Biodiversity of North Kenya and Development of Pastoral Communities" project. This project was executed through a coordinated

territorial effort involving various stakeholders such as the Kenyan services for protected areas and wildlife (KWS and KFS), local government, NGOs, pastoral communities, and representatives from the city of Marsabit. In 2019, the French Development Agency (AFD), in collaboration with the French Global Environment Fund (FFEM), awarded Northern Rangelands Company Limited €5.7 million to finance the "Conservancies Working to Preserve Kenyan Biodiversity" program (2020–2025) (FFEM, 2020). Apart from enhancing institutional and financial capabilities at three conservancies around Marsabit, the program aims to establish four new conservancies situated between the Meru National Park, the Shaba Reserve, and the Lorian wetlands, among other objectives (Mittal and Moloo, 2021, p.20), which is working directly in favour of the expansion over the NRT's control over resources. It is also important to mention here the involvement of French Total Enegies in the exploration of oil together with Maersk Oil with links to the NRT's conservancies in Turkana, which I will discuss later, but also the investments of Total in the Lokichar-Lamu pipeline under the Kenya Joint Venture (KJV), in which Total is one of the shareholders (Ministry of Energy and Petroleum, 2024; Mwita (2024). The French funding may also relate to the governance of the region and securing the pipeline as well as the LAPSSET corridor, which I will tackle in the next section about the EU's security operations in the northern rangelands.

Swedish, Danish and French financing of the Northern Rangelands Trust, is very much intertwined with deeper geopolitical, economic, and corporate interests. Such conservation projects, in which environmental and humanitarian goals are loudly declared, often obscure land territorialization favouring European corporations through the public-private partnerships of the aid agencies with the corporations from their countries. The expansion of the NRT territories often comes at the expense of pastoralist communities what fact the donors choose to neglect as the access to Northern Kenya's land falls within the strategic objectives of the EU in its pursuit to secure raw materials and the areas for new energy projects, that will power the transition underpinning the Green Deal granting the EU member states continuous economic growth.

5.1.2.2 EXPANSION AND MILITARISATION OF THE NRT'S TERRITORY WITH THE EU FUNDING

The mentioned conflicts related to the NRT can also be a tool for the creation of new opportunities for investment through displacing pastoralist communities and catalysing violence.



Figure 7. Graduation ceremony of the NRT rangers (NRT, 2022)

The establishment of new territories is related to “the violence in pastoralist areas [which] is intimately linked to political developments in Kenya, which have created opportunities to negotiate territorial claims” (Mittal and Moloo, 2021, p.32). The NRT and the EU donors present themselves as the solution to these crises and offer conflict management solutions, which can assist in further militarised control over resources and ‘accumulation by dispossession’ as suggested by Fairhead, Leach and Scoones after Harvey (2012, p.243). At the same time as ‘strengthening the security’ in the region, the NRT is also allegedly one of the causes of the violent intertribal conflicts over shrinking resources enclosed within the conservancies, which in turn requires even more military control.

The EU is supporting the militarisation of the NRT conservancies through three distinct initiatives: The EU Kenya Rangelands Ecosystem Services Productivity Program (RangER), the Ustahimilivu Consortium, and the Community Policing Initiative (CPI). RangER aims to bolster governance, peace, and security for both wildlife and communities within the Amaya Triangle counties of Laikipia, Samburu, Isiolo, and Baringo. The EU supports the RangER program with a grant of €4.9 million allocated for the period 2020 to 2024 (EU, 2021b). The ‘peace’ in the conservancies is enforced by the NRT’s private security forces 9-1 units, which some herders deem as supporting the Samburu bandits:

“Guyo Dokata's son and Godana Badasa's son were killed in a planned conflict with the 9-1 presence and support openly seen. The 9-1 rogues used their vehicles with NRT labels to transport the Samburu bandits who were armed to the teeth and monitored the unfolding from a safe distance. In this particular case, over 100 cattle were driven away. Around the same time a mother and a herder, Kulat Gashe (from Bulesa) were killed in a fierce fight with Samburu attackers. Over time, we came

to believe that the 9-1 monitors our movement, grazing pattern, location[s] and furnish[es] the Samburu bandits with it.” – as told by Mzee Wario Wako, Elder in Biliqo-Bulesa, Chari Ward, June 19, 2019 (Mittal and Mooloo, 2021, p.34).

According to this account, the NRT is responsible for the manipulation of the conflicts and siding with the Samburu tribe, which violently attacks other tribes. I encountered another testimony of the involvement of the conservancies in the displacements during my fieldwork in Isiolo. There I interviewed members of the Turkana of Loruko community who have been displaced from their village in the Nasuulu NRT conservancy by a conservancy-stimulated conflict in 2012.

“12 years ago, when the NRT conservancy was initiated me and my peers were away at school. When we got back we were devastated to see that our homes and our parents are no longer there.”

The words are those of a 28-year-old member of the Turkana of Loruko community (Interview, Isiolo, 2024). His parents were no longer there as they ran away leaving all their belongings and animals behind when the bloody clash between the Samburu and Turkana tribes occurred in the village. What happened was that when the conservancy started the managers established new grazing restrictions imposing on the villagers rules of which community can graze when and where. According to the 28-old Turkana man that's when the conflict started, when communities started clashing over the limited grazing land, which was essential for their livelihoods as pastoralists.

“Beforehand we had our traditional pattern for grazing, but now through the restriction from the conservancy and their rules about how to graze the land the communities started having differences over the land. As before the pastoralists had access to the natural resources that they were negotiating between each other, when the conservancy started they started quarrelling over the pastures and water, over whose cows, goats and camels can graze. Each community wanted to claim the land that was left for grazing, not taken away for wildlife by the NRT Nasuulu Conservancy.”

The conflict got so violent that both the Samburu and over 1000 Turkana fled, leaving the village empty. However, over time the Samburu got brought back by the NRT to the village and no such attempts were made to assist the Turkana in the return. The Turkana of Loruko lost all their animals, which in turn gave more grazing land to the Samburu upon their return, to the wildlife and to the carbon credit project.

"That time we have animals, we have also things from the house, we lose our houses, everything in the house. You run away, you leave your house with everything there. You go and start another life. That time had 15 goats and lost them all." (Turkana or Loruko elder, 40, Interview, Isiolo, 2024).

A displaced woman (55) also remembered:

"We left everything there. When we were displaced from that area, we were running away with our own children and we were sitting under the trees because we didn't have a place to shelter. We were living and sleeping outside during that time. We went and through the good Samaritans, people, we are the ones who were telling them to assist, to give us somewhere to rest, somewhere to stay. We were begging all over, telling people, maybe the neighbours, the good Samaritans, can you please assist us, just accommodate us, let us have somewhere to shelter, somewhere to stay. We were even begging for the cups to take some water and to take some tea, because we didn't have anything. we were borrowing even the pangas, the pangas, to go and do some cutting of this small, after we were given somewhere to stay, we went and cut some strips, just to build their thatched houses for them to get somewhere to stay, and for shelter. Due to that situation, that's why we started now to cope up, we go and do some charcoals, cutting off, you cut a tree, you do some charcoals. Go and sell those charcoals to maybe around, around the people who are, the hotels around that places. So, After we cut that tree, we cut like an acacia, now we get charcoals, they carry it with our heads, we bring it to their town, and then sell it to get something to take for their children."

All the displaced members of the Turkana of Loruko tribe agreed that the establishment of the Nasuulu conservancy was at the root of the conflict. Without considering that the NRT has an interest in the crises, we can believe in the official narrative leaving the whole responsibility to the 'uncivilised' tribes as suggested by the First Secretary in Environment, Climate and Biodiversity responsible for the collaboration with the NRT at the Swedish embassy in Nairobi, where SIDA is located:

"There's a natural resource conflict but you see, inside the fence, the community have agreed to put that land for that purpose. So there's a vote on it. Now, not everybody agrees with that vote but the majority want to do it. So there's always going to be people who disagree. And you get a lot of troubles formed by disgruntled youth because they don't have work and they don't have a feeling of being part of the benefits. So there have been properties burnt down because people got angry quickly maybe with alcohol in the picture and afterwards it seems that there wasn't really much of a real issue just on the spur of the moment and people get excluded." (Interview, Nairobi, 2024)

If we indeed blamed the pastoralists, in such a narrative more external mediators are needed for conflict resolution. In accordance with that the EU supported another programme the "Ustahimilivu Consortium" in April 2020. Notably, one of the program's significant achievements, as reported by the NRT, is the establishment of a "mobile ranger team, known as 9-6," which has effectively supported conservancy rangers, Kenya Wildlife Service (KWS), and authorities in various tasks such as anti-poaching patrols and conflict resolution. For the period 2020-2023, the EU has allocated €4.7 million for this initiative. Both of these efforts build upon the €3.5 million grant committed by the EU in 2018 for the "Community Policing Initiative (CPI)" aimed at combating wildlife crime and fostering livelihood development through training, equipment provision, intelligence gathering, and infrastructure development (Mittal and Moloo, 2021, p.16; D-portal, 2024). As we can see here all the funding provided by the EU has focused on the topic of security and protection of the NRT's territory despite the claims of the NRT causing the conflicts.

The new security measures bring with them higher weaponisation of the regions. The displaced woman (55) from the Turkana of Loruko tribe said that the establishment of the Nasuulu conservancy also brought with it the establishment of the presence of guns in the area, which the EU is supporting through the funding programmes. This is a part of a larger militarization project of Kenya as a NATO ally that the EU has been supporting for example by sending \$21m in military support in June 2024 (Mutambo, 2024). In the last years, the East African region has been rapidly destabilising alongside militant groups clashing over mineral extraction that the EU is also dependent on for the Green Deal. Militarisation of regions with exports of minerals and petroleum to Europe was described earlier in the case of France sending armed forces to protect Total Energies' gas extraction site in Mozambique. It also resonates with the Aid for Trade agenda, in which grants sent overseas aim to protect value chains and integration into global trade or what Cupers (2021) suggested that the "European infrastructure and development aid for Africa increasingly aspires to counter the movements of "undesired" (...) populations without touching the global extraction industries and economies" which is important also in relation to LAPSSSET, which will direct the international commodity flow. One can also wonder if together with the militarization of regions weapons from the EU manufacturers get introduced mirroring a story I heard from an ex-DANIDA worker about the sales of Danish medical equipment alongside medical aid projects in the Middle East. The EU-member states are amongst the biggest arms exporters globally with France (2nd) producing 11% of global exports, Germany (5th) 5.6%, Italy (6th) 4.3% and Spain (8th) responsible for 2.7% (Wezeman et al., 2024). One might therefore speculate that the creation of crises as in Harvey's 'accumulation by dispossession' grants further expansion and protection of the

NRT's territory and through militarisation supported by the EU's aid for security the potential influx of European arms.

Despite of the NRT potentially causing intertribal conflicts through causing a diminishment of land available for grazing, most people I interviewed in Isiolo agreed that the rangers have helped reduce cattle rustling. However, when speaking about rangers I am not certain if they mean exactly the private security from the NRT, KWS or the police reservists, unless specified:

“The security of the conservancy is the only thing that is beneficial to us. They react on time when cattle rustling occurs.” (Man, 21, Somali)

Similarly, pastoralists I encountered in Ngaramara also saw security improvements:

“The region is not that safe earlier there were conflicts but after 2 years the conflicts have reduced but development has not occurred in this region.” (Man, 65, Borana, pastoralist, interview Ngaramara, 2024).

“Matters on security are not that bad there was only one incident of cattle rustling reported in January.” (Man, 20, Meru, pastoralist, interview Ngaramara, 2024).

All the respondents in a village in the Leparua Conservancy also agreed about the security improving (Interviews, Leparua Conservancy, 2024). However, only a month after the interviews conservancy-related violence arose in the village.

“Something very sad happened during this so-called election of committee members [19.07.2024]. Some people were ferried from town to rig the election by a politician - particular governor of Isiolo who benefited millions from the NRT funds including carbon credit funds. He tried to force full endorsement on the person he wanted to be the conservancy chairman. The resident members of Leparua got angry and became violent and one person was killed and two others injured including a division administrator who works for the national government who was hired by the NRT to preside the election this so-called conservancy because of carbon credit funds is bullshit it's seeds of conflict between the local tribes” (Abdikadin Hassan, chairman, Isiolo Human Rights Defenders, private communication, 2024).

This statement puts into question the availability of information to the villagers as their claims about the NRT improving security are contradictory to Abdikadin Hassan's statement, proving the manipulation of the conflicts by the local politicians aided by the NRT. This might have been



Figure 8. Board in the Leparua Conservancy informing about the EU and AFD funding of the local road, June, 2024

caused by the lack of transparency of the information about the NRT and the accessibility obstructed by the high illiteracy levels, lack of internet and the lack of knowledge of English, which is the language of the NRT's financial reports etc. When I asked in the same village if there were funds coming from Europe to the region, the villagers were aware only of the carbon credits money from the Northern Kenya Grassland Carbon Project. However, in their village, there was a large board (Figure 8) mentioning the funding of their asphalt road provided by the European Union. According to my interpreter from Isiolo, the villagers were unaware of this funding from Europe as they were largely illiterate, so they could not read the board and even if they could read, they did not know English. The information online is in English and to be accessed it requires having availability of internet on a smartphone, which is too expensive for most villagers to have and again knowledge of the English language. Through the lack of access to information, the NRT has a near monopoly in controlling what the villagers know about their operations and aims, about their profits, international donors and political operations, there is no transparency:

“The European funding that I am aware of is carbon credit, the issue is that the money that is provided to the community is not aware of where it is from as the people giving the funding do not clarify it.” (Man, 50, Borana).

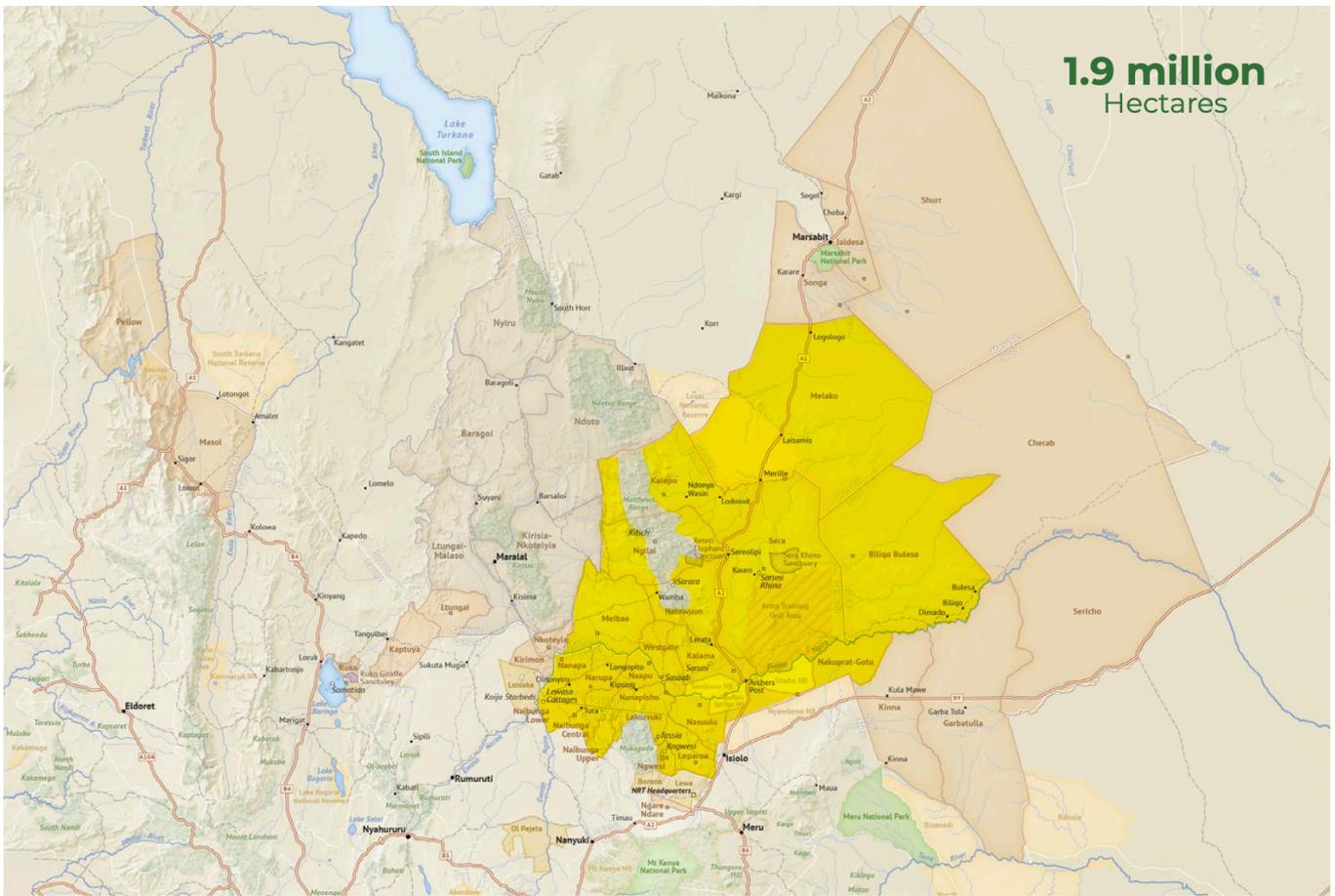
Driven by the NRT and supported by the EU, the militarisation of Kenya's pastoralist regions, particularly of the NRT's conservancies is a part of a larger political and economic strategy aimed at protecting resource-rich areas. The establishment of the new NRT conservancies

encourages and intensifies conflicts over grazing areas, which exacerbates the violence it then tries to resolve. It also serves as justification for more EU-funded weaponisation of the NRT's rangers. The EU's financial support of the militarisation may be furthermore accompanied with the purchasing of the European arms. The geopolitical interests of the EU are aligned with this dynamic, especially with regard to the LAPSSET corridor, which is vital for trade flows and access to more remote resources. The violence, which is presented as an intertribal struggle, conceals more sinister intentions to seize these lands for further investment. Thus, although EU support is presented as advancing peace, in the end, it helps maintain territorial integrity and safeguard international trade routes linking the export ports in Kenya with the crucial green energy mineral exporting countries such as the DRC. Finally, all the people I interviewed in Isiolo agreed that the security has improved in the region, however, they did not link the conflicts in the conservancies to the operations of the NRT, which might have been caused by the lack of access to information about the organisation.

5.1.2.3 TERRITORIALISATION THROUGH THE NORTHERN KENYA GRASSLAND CARBON PROJECT (NKGCP) AND RESPONSES FROM THE LOCAL COMMUNITIES

The main revenue to the NRT comes from tourism and the Northern Kenya Grassland Carbon Project (NKGCP), which generates profit through the selling of sequestered carbon on the voluntary carbon markets. This world's largest soil carbon project (2 million hectares) is also what according to the NRT brings 'development' to the communities in the form of bursaries, health and other contributions which function in a way reminding of corporate social responsibility (CSR) programmes, which grant businesses higher compliance rates amongst the affected residents. Through the compliance of the communities, further expansion of the NRT is possible and the larger the area of the carbon credit project, the more funding can allegedly go to the communities. NKGCP's community development is therefore an argument for why more territories should be given to the NRT.

The project operates under the NRT's for-profit company NRT Trading and one of its objectives is to give back a part of the revenue to the communities living within the conservancies. The major offsetters between 2013-2016 were Facebook (Meta) and Netflix, purchasing respectively 90.000 and 180.000 out of 3,2 million credits (Counsell, 2023). According to the brochure for the project each participating conservancy received \$324.000 from the sales of the



Next Steps: Expansion Potential

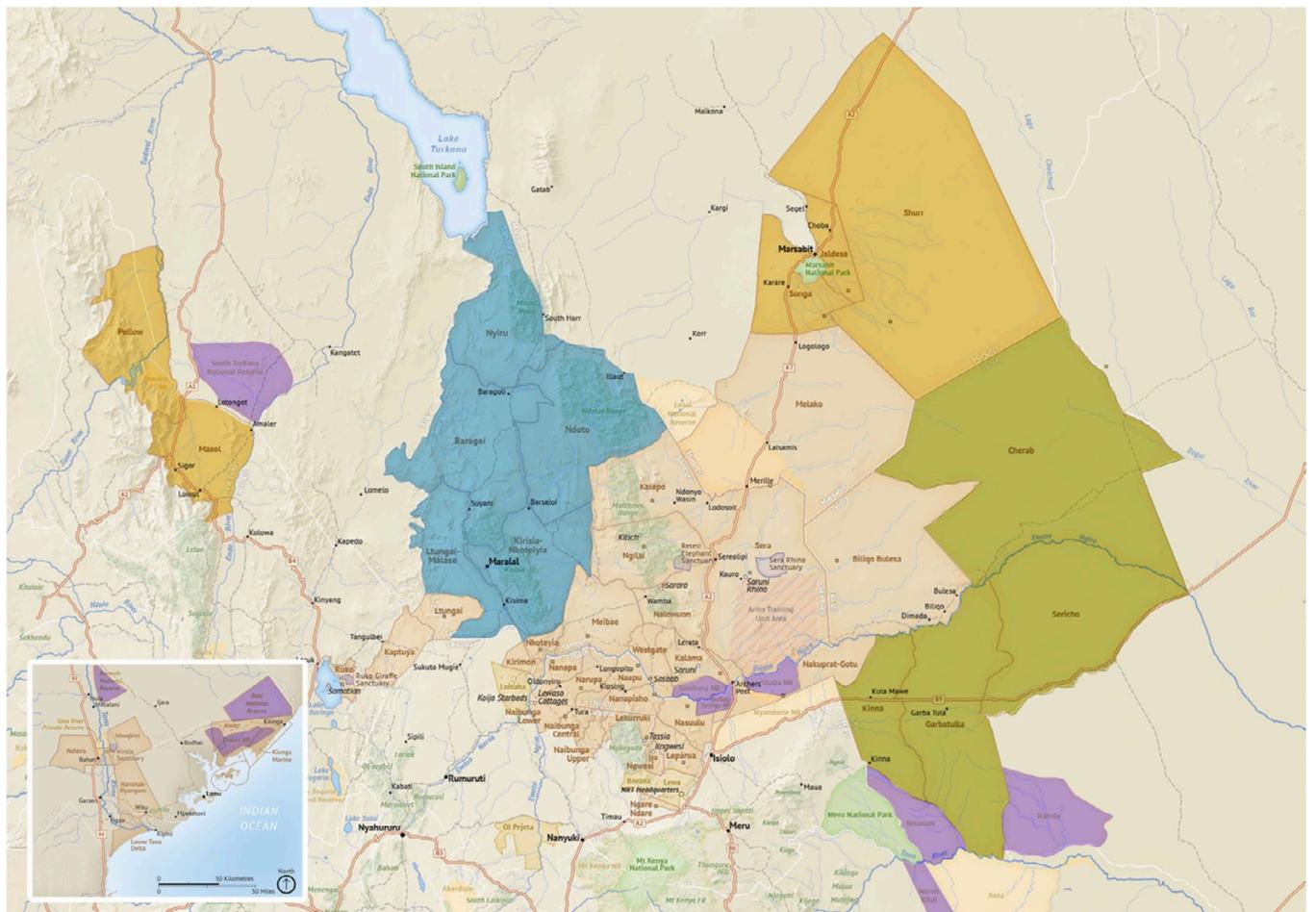
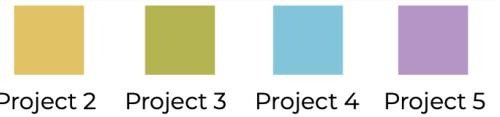


Figure 9. Map of the Northern Kenya Grassland Carbon Project (yellow shape) (NRT, 2023)

Figure 10. Map of the proposed expansion of the Northern Kenya Grassland Carbon Project (NRT, 2023)

carbon credits and this trend is supposed to be repeated annually. Most of the funds were supposed to go towards education bursaries, tourism, water, infrastructure and health. When I looked into what that sum entailed I got to the results that in fact it was \$194.000 going to the communities, while the rest was allocated to the wildlife and the the previously discussed militarised security. That amounted to \$7 per person per year in the Namunyak Conservancy of 26.643 people or \$46 per person in the Nasuulu Conservancy, from which at least 1000 Turkana of Loruko got displaced at the establishment of the conservancy, which is a pattern also reported in other regions (NRT, 2023; Soils for the Future, LLC, The Nature Conservancy and the Northern Rangelands Trust, 2019). In this model, it works in the benefit of the remaining tribes to displace other tribes, as they can then get more benefits from the carbon sales. The sale of carbon credits in 2022 generated \$14,6 million (NRT, 2023), out of which

- “1. Native Energy will receive 10%-30% of gross revenues to cover marketing costs depending on the type of credit sale.
2. Soils for the Future will receive a consultant fee to meet monitoring and other technical costs, as well as future verification and validation costs.
3. NRT will receive the remainder of gross revenues. Of these NRT will retain 40% to meet project costs, such as for education, conflict resolution, grazing coordinators, and social monitoring, and 60% (30% of gross revenues) will be distributed to communities through the NRT Pooled Conservancy Fund”. (Soils for the Future, LLC, The Nature Conservancy and the Northern Rangelands Trust, 2019)

That amounts to between \$1,4 million and \$4,38 million for Native Energy’s marketing efforts. In the scenario in which Native Energy receives 30% of the revenue the fee for the Soils for the Future would amount to \$2.730.200 and the the NRT management would be left with \$2.995.920 annually for the carbon sales. This shows the large inequality gap in profiting from the financialisation of the pastoral community land, with the majority of the funds being concentrated in the hands of the NRT, the Soils for the Future consultancy and the marketing agency Native Energy instead of the communities whose ancestral land the project is situated on.

The NRT is also proposing an expansion of the project (Figures 9 and 10), which will not only increase revenues from carbon credit sales but also make it possible to claim a larger territory with the support of the EU-based aid agencies. For example, under the Danish project “Improving Community Resilience and Rangeland Management” the carbon credit project is seen as highly successful and with a “potential for expansion (...) to other conservancies” (Danish Embassy, 2022). An example of a positive impact on the Nasuulu Conservancy is mentioned. Yet, what is not

said, is that there was a displacement of over 1000 members of the Turkana of Loruko community when this Conservancy was created. When I asked the members of the dislocated community about how the NRT established the Conservancy in their village, a 55-year-old displaced woman explained:

“We lived in Loruko when the Conservancy came. They told us that the Conservancy came here to take good care of us and of the area around us. When the Conservancy was initiated that is when the conflict started. Before the Conservancy was there, we were living peacefully. When the conservancy came the conflict and those kinds of disruptions, insecurity, there was a lot of insecurity, started within our place. When they came they asked us to give them our land. The reason we gave them our land was that we thought we would get some assistance, like taking our children to school, getting some sponsorships for the graduates, or maybe the kids who were getting out of high school. We were thinking, that maybe the Conservancy is coming to help us, and assist us, to ensure that we have security. We only gave them a small portion of land to place the headquarters. However, when the conflict happened the NRT brought back the Samburu and took over our land.”.

This was also explained by another member of the community:

“Most people from our community are illiterate. They don't understand. They can be tricked very easily.” (Man, Turkana of Loruko, 28)

Furthermore, as a 40-year-old elder said:

“When the conservancy started they came only to talk with the community and told them we are coming here. There is no written agreement with us. The conservancy is operating illegally.” (Man, elder, Turkana of Loruko, 40)

According to the displaced members of the Turkana of the Loruko tribe, their disappearance benefited the carbon credit project due to the lower number of livestock, more space for grazing for the other tribes and wildlife and space to establish a private tourist lodge near the river. The lower numbers of livestock also make it easier to control the carbon leakage, which is necessary for the NKGCP's success.

The process of registration of the new conservancies was also explained by Abdikadin Hassan the chairman of the Isiolo Human Rights Defenders:

“They have extended to the whole of Isiolo, this conservancy, by force, not by the will of the people, by force. By registering a Community-Based Organisation of 15 people. They register a CBO for 15 people or 20 people. They are giving them money to go and register. And this thing brings conflict between the residents. The majority are not supporting. Only few are supporting it because they get money from NRT. Then they force this conservancy thing, and they are now bringing a Conservancy Bill and a Rangelands Bill, which will replace Community Land Committee, which is supposed to govern this land.” (Interview, Isiolo, 2024).

Indeed, since 2020 the NRT has been trying to register a new legislation in Isiolo County - “The Community Conservancy Bill”, which was going to make it simpler to convert the community-managed communal tenure land into conservancies as opposed to assisting the communities in registering and getting formal title deeds for the community land (Isiolo County Community Conservancy Bill, 2020). What was further underlined in the “Rangelands Bill” (County Government of Isiolo Rangelands Management Bill, 2022) was the optimisation of the economic potential of the rangelands, which may lead to more dispossessions if the investments require people-free land.

Despite the high inequalities in the division of the revenue by the NRT and the ancestral land being taken away from the community’s control, the people I interviewed in the Leparua Conservancy were at least on the surface pleased with the operations of the NRT. However, while interviewing people in the village, we sensed some community members wanted to direct us to particular interviewees. The moment we entered the settlement we were approached by a community elder, who told us that we should have informed the villagers in advance about the research so that they could prepare for it. After that, another elder, who was also a conservancy board member insisted that we send him the report after it was complete. Then after two interviews, we were approached by another elder who refused to be interviewed as he was working on a county project. He however insisted on directing us to the right people to speak to. Within the first half an hour we could feel the elder's anxiety about the investigation and their desire to control who gives us information. Eventually, we encountered an NRT employee on a motorbike, who also refused to participate in the interview. I wondered if the elders' anxiety related to what the Kenyan conservationist Mordecai Ogada replied to me in an email asking if he could provide me with contacts around the NRT conservancies in Laikipia

"(...) this isn't possible. I would not want to put innocent community members in danger. NRT is running militias and working with government security officials who threaten and punish people for speaking against them." (Personal communication, 2024).

Therefore it is hard to verify what the communities felt about the NRT. Another perspective on why the communities appreciate the NRT was given by a nature warden, ex-Tullow Oil employee Joseph Kalapata (52):

"We have been used to these small peanuts. Now, it's become a disease that we feel that we are building. Despite what the NRT advertises it doesn't build schools. It's like maybe water bowls. Maybe a small corporate social responsibility (CSR) project, a little cash. You have to understand that this is a poor community. Today, you may come to my village and take away 100 million shillings. But you bring back 10 million. And we sing for you, praise for you. You are the best. God bless you. Don't go away, come back." (Joseph Kalapata, 52, Isiolo)"

My account of being surveilled when interviewing in the Leparua Conservancy, Mordecai Ogada's statement about the NRT threatening the residents as well as Joseph Kalapata's claim about the desperation of the poor communities for even the smallest financial contribution are important to keep in mind while reading the following testimonies.

In the Leparua Conservancy, the people were happy about the access to school bursaries, boreholes and employment opportunities. Furthermore, the interviewed women were positive about the loans provided by the NRT, which enabled them to transition from pastoralism to shop-keeping, which encouraged the process of sedentarisation necessary for further enclosure of the land in Northern Kenya. However, there was one critical voice saying that

"The conservancies are good but biased toward majority tribes [seems afraid to say it as he hesitates]. For example, I have gone for job interviews in the conservancies 3 times and got rejected each time because I am from a minority group. I have not benefited from the conservancies but I have seen others getting bursaries and the youth getting employed." (Man, Borana, 40).

All the responders agreed that grazing land reduced over the years

"There is competition for grazing land and this is brought about by the number of animals possessed by the community and the resource availability. This then leads to conflicts for the resources such as grass and water." (Man, 45, Borana).

Moreover, according to some, there was more development in the region but also drought, which affected income opportunities, loss of animals and resource conflicts. The conflicts between pastoralists have allegedly affected the poverty rates in the village

"People around here are experiencing high poverty rates. Most of the people living around here are orphans and this has been caused by cattle rustling which has been an issue since 1996" (Man, Borana, 40).

On the other hand, other voices were saying that poverty is decreasing:

"Poverty levels are not that high as we have a source of income." (Woman, Borana, 22)

Their income was coming from the loans given by the NRT which fueled further dependency of the communities on the NRT. The Conservancy was providing loans, schools and bursaries, which actions mirror the CSR activities of other resource-extracting companies to maintain a good name in a given region while exploiting its resources. Here, the NRT also does not pay royalties to the county government according to Joseph Kalapata (52), nature warden in Isiolo (Interview, Isiolo, 2024). Instead, the profits were allegedly spent on bribing politicians to maintain the power and operations according to Abdikadin Hassan, the chairman of the Isiolo Human Rights Defenders (Interview, Isiolo, 2024). This way the community could be directing its anger at the county government while praising the NRT for all the charitable things done for the region, while it continues to enclose more community lands.

It seemed however that only the people living directly within the conservancies could be the beneficiaries of the NRT operations. Even people living as close as 2 km from the border of the conservancies could not get access to the bursaries; indeed some would not even know about the existence of the NRT unless it was mentioned on the radio. They all agreed however that the grazing land was shrinking as a result of land grabbing and intertribal conflicts.

This was underlined by pastoralists I interviewed on random encounters who were separately herding cows, camels and goats on community land in Ngare Mara, just a few kilometres from the borders of the conservancies. None of them have benefitted from the conservancies. They could only see the NRT land cruisers passing by. One had not even heard about the NRT conservancies, but he had lived in the area for just 4 months then (Man, 20, Meru, pastoralist). They had not heard of any European funding in the region. Furthermore, land grabbing of their community land was a major issue:

"Grazing land is available but the cattle have reduced in number which has led to the increase in poverty levels. Land-grabbing has become a major issue. The rich have grabbed land and fenced it they have not bought it from anyone and most of the time you are chased away from the land and this causes you to relocate. For example, land grabbing has occurred in an area called Seventy-Eight." (Man, 65, Borana, pastoralist).

"Before land grabbing began they made sure that we the poor people moved to other regions so that they could settle. " (Man, 31, Somali, pastoralist)

Additionally, apart from land being grabbed by the elite, it was also taken by other tribes:

"The grazing land has been reduced and this is due to the issue of land grabbing. Samburu and Rendile have grabbed most of the land and this causes us to move with our herd to another area. Poverty levels are high since there is really no place to work you are surrounded by enemies everywhere and they always want to take your cattle. " (Man, 25, Borana, pastoralist).

Similarly to the case with pastoralists, most of the people I interviewed in the town of Isiolo have not benefitted from the conservancies and the Northern Kenya Grassland Carbon Project.

"The conservancies are biased and mostly help themselves and help the rich within the society. Us poor people we have no one to represent us and raise our concerns. The major issues about the conservancy the land grabbing and the tribalism and need for connections. They are taking the land, but they are not really giving it to the community. They fence it and prevent grazing in those areas but it's community land. I have seen people getting helped by the conservancies and most of them buy plots, shops, and fair on well with life." (Man, 21, Somali, Isiolo).

"Conservancies have not been of help to us. I am also not aware of anyone who benefited from the conservancies." (Woman, 26, Borana, unemployed, Isiolo).

There was another woman (37, Somali) who had not benefitted from the bursaries, but she had heard about them through the radio as the NRT promoted itself there. However, there was one man who I encountered who has strongly benefitted from the NRT operations as a board member:

"Wildlife conservancies are the best, giving out bursaries, [creating] employment, [creating] women empowerment, and youth empowerment. I have benefited from the conservancies a lot ... young men are trained in tailoring, bike repairs, and so many other things the conservancies are helping. We have constructed a hotel that is sponsored by the conservancy and 60% of the hotel's profit goes

back to the community. The hotel is owned by the community and gives back directly to the community. I am aware of European funding such as DANIDA, USAID, and many others. I am not aware of how much they give to the Isiolo county but I am aware of how much the projects done across the county cost. DANIDA constructed a borehole. There is an Italian grant that constructed a swimming pool which cost 5 million Kenya shillings” (Man, 37, Borana, self-employed).

Apart from his positive statements, the rest of the respondents have complained about the continuous poverty in the region, bad governance, reduced land for grazing and cattle rustling:

“The government is making upgrading life difficult. The cost of living is high. So we can't really afford that well compared to the earlier years. The land for grazing has reduced. There are matters of cattle rustling in the region. The cattle are really suffering. I don't really have any space to graze that much.” (Woman, 37, Somali)

"The land for grazing has reduced and this can be attributed to drought and hunger. " (Woman, 26, Borana, unemployed).

Furthermore

"The area has experienced low work rates and the development around this area is not that well off." (Man, 35, Meru).

Apart from the man directly involved in a conservancy, the responders were not aware of any European funding coming into the region, which was the case of inaccessibility of information through the lack of internet and competency of the English language, in which the documents were written. Similarly to the pastoralists and the people in the Leparua Conservancy, most people I interviewed in Isiolo agreed that the rangers have helped reduce cattle rustling. However, when spoken about rangers I am not certain if they mean exactly the private security from the NRT, KWS or the police reservists, unless specified.

Analysing the interviews we can see that the funds from the carbon credits and funding from the EU-based donors were benefitting only people who lived directly in the conservancies with people living even a kilometre further not being able to access any of the benefits. Furthermore, due to the high illiteracy, the communities were subjected to manipulation when it came to the conservancy registration. The communities were giving away their pastoral land in hope of benefiting from the bursaries and other CSR activities of the carbon credit scheme. Unfortunately,

in some cases, the establishment of the conservancies was causing intertribal conflicts and displacements through the shrinking grazing land. On top of that when the land was handed over to the conservancies, the communities were losing the power over their ancestral land potentially for the duration of the carbon credit project which spans over 30 years. In case of the carbon credit fund, the majority of the revenue was allocated to the NRT management, consultants and marketing. What is crucial for my thesis, however, is that as claimed by the Danish Embassy, the carbon credit project was working successfully and to the benefit of the conservancies, therefore it needed further expansion through further funding to gain control over ever more territories. The control over ever-larger territories by the NRT is beneficial for the European donors. As the NKGCP has a lifespan of 30 years, the NRT and its partners become major political stakeholders in Northern Kenya, which in turn gives them preferential access to new investments within the conservancies.



Figure 11. Tullow Oil facility at Ngamia 8 in Lokichar, Turkana County (Nation Media Group, 2023)

5.1.2.4 THE NRT AND TULLOW OIL

The land territorialised by the Northern Rangelands Trust and its donors for example through the Northern Kenya Grassland Carbon Project can open up new regions for resource extraction and other investments. The NRT has in its history an episode of collaboration with a

petroleum company Tullow Oil (Figure 11), which assisted it financially to create a new conservancy in the area of its oil wells. The partnerships between nature conservancies and mineral extraction actors are not a new phenomenon as pointed out by Leech, Fairhead and Scoones (2012) and by Vuola and Simpson (2021). This is propelled by the growing competition for land and its resources under the ‘new scramble for Africa’ fuelled by the green transitions. Paradoxically the undergoing race is also for the continent’s petroleum with the EU actors such as Total Energies and ENI at the forefront. Through territorialisation by fencing off areas for wildlife, the resources can be explored on privately governed territories outside of governmental control (Noe, 2009). Vuola and Simpson (2021) also showed examples of Chinese mining companies entering new territories by offering packages of integrated mining and biodiversity projects, both displacing rural communities simultaneously. The mining and petroleum corporations but also the NRT itself as shown in the case of the NKGCP use social and environmental responsibility (CSR) marketing strategies to be perceived as beneficial to the development of the society which mirrors how the Western countries provide ‘aid for trade’ to establish favourable conditions for free trade agreements, in which they have an advantageous position as the historically higher capital holders (Carmody, 2016). The CSR strategies are crucial in the competition for accessing new petroleum blocks in Kenya. In 2022 the Petroleum Commissioner James Ng’ang’a said “that most oil and gas blocks are open so it was imperative for the Ministry to generate data on the availability of these deposits to attract investors which will in the long run benefit the community through Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR).” (Ministry of Energy and Petroleum, 2022). Therefore, the partnerships with the nature conservancies could be beneficial on multiple levels such as the control over large territories and their resources simultaneous to maintaining an appearance of good-doers through the CSR programmes.

For some scholars, however, the relationship of the nature conservancies with the mineral resources in Kenya is much older than the current race for the resources. The conservationist Mordecai Ogada argued that the British colonial administration was establishing nature reserves on strategic areas of mineral wealth after mapping the resources during the colonial rule:

“While addressing the media in 2003, the then-Russian Ambassador to Kenya intimated that Russia knew what mineral resources the country’s subsoil had as early as the late 1940s. It later emerged that in that decade, under contract from the British, Russian geologists had done explorative studies in the country and had mapped out what minerals Kenya has and where. Incidentally, this was around the same time the British colonial administration embarked on the declaration and

gazettement of game parks and game reserves, starting with the Nairobi National Park in 1946. From this, one can only ask, could there be credence to the muted claims and suspicions that most so-called wildlife protected areas are host to much of Kenya's mineral wealth?" (Mbaria and Ogada, 2017, p.311).

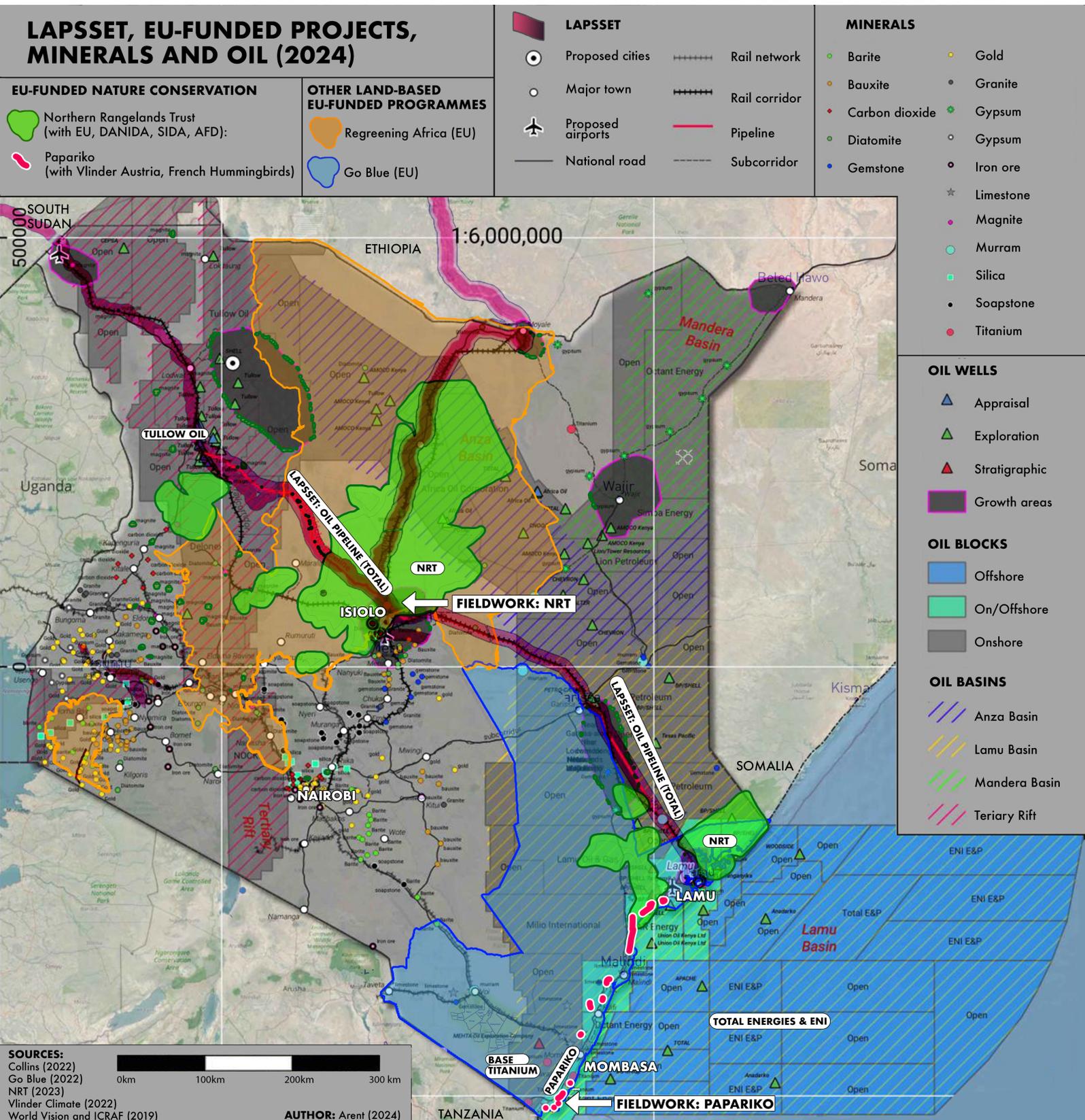


Figure 12. Map: Oil, mining, conservation and infrastructure developments in Kenya with Tullow Oil in the North-West of the map along the LAPSSET pipeline (red line within wide pink line) (Map by the author, 2024)

These allegations were furthered by the co-author of the quote above, the investigative journalist and urban planner Gatu wa Mbaria (personal communication, May 2024). He claimed that European countries have been investing in the NRT because of

“Mineral hedging and all that. Look for three things from Google: Oil Blocks Map of Kenya, Map of NRT Conservancies and Mineral Occurrence Map of Kenya. Then read everything you can get about the neo-colonial project in Kenya, the second scramble for Africa and why the West is in such a panic and is trying every trick on the book to retain its stranglehold on Africa.”

These arguments were supported by the new Free Trade Agreement between the EU and Kenya and new investments in LAPSSSET established in the mineral and oil-abundant drylands of East Africa stretching from Lamu to the vastly exploited Democratic Republic of Congo and the oil-rich South Sudan. According to an ex-employee of Tullow Oil Joseph Kalapata, the main reason for the plans for the LAPSSSET corridor was petroleum, the motorways came as an addition (interview, Isiolo, June 2024).

As I mentioned at the start of this section, the NRT has historically partnered with Tullow Oil to support the exploitation of the wells that allegedly initiated the establishment of the LAPSSSET corridor. As we shall see, this is of relevance to understanding the interests of the NRT and its donors in the areas of Isiolo, Samburu, Tana River and other counties where the NGO operates which is a crucial case for this dissertation.

Since 2015 the NRT has been financially supported by a \$12 million contract with British Tullow Oil and Canadian Africa Oil Corp to create and manage conservancies in Turkana and West Pokot following their 2012 discovery of “560 million barrels of crude oil in the Lokichar Basin of Turkana Country and in August 2019 the first shipment of crude oil exported from the country”. The goals of the collaboration were to support the understanding by local communities of the advantages of commercialising the oil resources, support social and environmental development, and maintain the good reputation of the oil companies for their operations to continue without much opposition from the local communities (Mbaria and Ogada, 2015). This was a CSR strategy to maintain positive relationships with the marginalised communities, who were losing their ancestral commons at the same time. The strategy was also helping to avoid media scandals, which often feature petroleum companies, especially under higher attention to the need for divestments from fossil fuels.

All of these occurrences were stimulated by the discoveries of oil and its further exploitation by British Tullow Oil PLC in collaboration with Canadian Africa Oil Corporation, Danish Maersk Oil and the French Total, which later sold their shares. Total is however still at 25% shareholder in the Lokichar-Lamu pipeline, hence I the French funding for the NRT's governance operations of the regions, which the oil infrastructure goes through as I pointed out earlier (Mwita, 2024). Tullow Oil has been exploiting the oil field since 2018 and exporting it by road to Mombasa. In the long run, transport through the LAPSSET oil pipeline to Lamu port was planned and "in light of these plans, LAPSSET counties [were] already suffering from problems of speculative illegal acquisition of community land" (Mkutu and Mdee, 2020, p.838 after Kibugi et al. 2016). Land grabbing from the pastoralists was not only driven by speculative estate purchases but also by the large areas required by the petroleum, mining and clean energy projects such as Wind Power Lake Turkana. For its operations, Tullow Oil PLC has fenced off 30 well pads of around ten acres each in Turkana in the years 2012-2015 in surprise to the local communities. Further 15500 acres were compulsorily acquired for the oil pipeline and a central processing facility and 51000 acres for LAPSSET. In the meanwhile the NRT conservancy in Turkana County was in the process of establishment. Mkutu and Mdee (2020) argued that the Turkana county government was not included in this secretive deal and has taken the matter to court (Mkutu and Mdee, 2020, p.838). The formation of the conservancy was therefore put on halt. The process, however, took several years, during which Tullow Oil donated \$1.9 million per year to the NRT for the first three years from 2014 and then \$950,000 as a part of their CSR programme and rental of the operating base in the NRT conservancy. At the same time allegedly best grazing land in the county was taken away for the wildlife reserve. Further controversy was raised concerning the issue of armed security forces used by the NRT independently of the police, and the lack of inclusion of the National Environment Management Authority as well as Kenya Wildlife Service in the formation of the conservancy (Mkutu and Mdee, 2020, p.843).

After a survey of 1500 residents by CORDAID (2015), the general perception of the oil industry was that it is not beneficial to the local population. "One community representative put it this way: "Our camel is being milked while we are watching." (Mkutu and Mdee, 2020, p. 846). The growth of the industry has been accompanied by a variety of non-violent protests and roadblocks, of which one forced Tullow to halt operations for three weeks, and another led to the destruction of property in Kapese County valued at \$60,000 (Mkutu and Mdee, 2020, p.847). The establishments of the conservancies and the oil industry were also linked to conflicts during the

2016-2017 severe drought in Kenya during which more than

“10,000 pastoralists and over 135,000 cattle entered a private ranch; large numbers of wildlife were shot, and a game lodge was burned. British co-owner of the Sosian Conservancy was murdered, and an officer commanding the Laikipia West Police was also shot and critically wounded (Business Daily 2017). The conflict seems to have had a number of triggers, including drought, land grievances, governance failures, political machinations leading up to the 2017 election, and speculative land acquisition along the route of the LAPSET corridor.” (Mkutu and Mdee, 2000, p.848-849).

This example showed similarly to the instances before that enclosing land was the source of conflicts between the private estate owners and the rural communities during droughts. The multiple enclosures happening simultaneously furthered the problem contributing to the shrinking land and access to crucial resources. This example also showed that the control of the territory by the NRT was beneficial to Tullow Oil, otherwise the latter would not have financially supported the expansion of the former.

The involvement of the Northern Rangelands Trust with Tullow Oil’s petroleum extraction in Turkana underlines an intricate relationship between land use, resource extraction, and local communities. Framed under Corporate Social Responsibility programs, these alliances appear closer to serving external commercial interests rather than environmental or social benefits. The use of conservation areas to secure lands with mineral wealth in the historical context shows how colonial-era land strategies continue to shape contemporary resource exploitation. Conservation areas as a tool of territoriality underpin the question of the lack of involvement of local authorities and communities in critical decisions. Ultimately, these partnerships help global corporations and foreign donors while local populations are kept at a disadvantage-marginally impoverished-thus, vulnerable to dispossession.

5.1.2.5 TERRITORIALISATION FOR MINERAL EXTRACTION BY THE EXPANSION OF THE NORTHERN KENYA GRASSLAND CARBON PROJECT

In the literature and locally there are circulating stories and allegations of the correlations between the areas territorialised by the conservancies and the future extraction of the minerals and oil there. The accusations are based on several aspects. Firstly, the roots of Iain Craig in British colonialism together with his relationship with the British royal family and the global elites and the

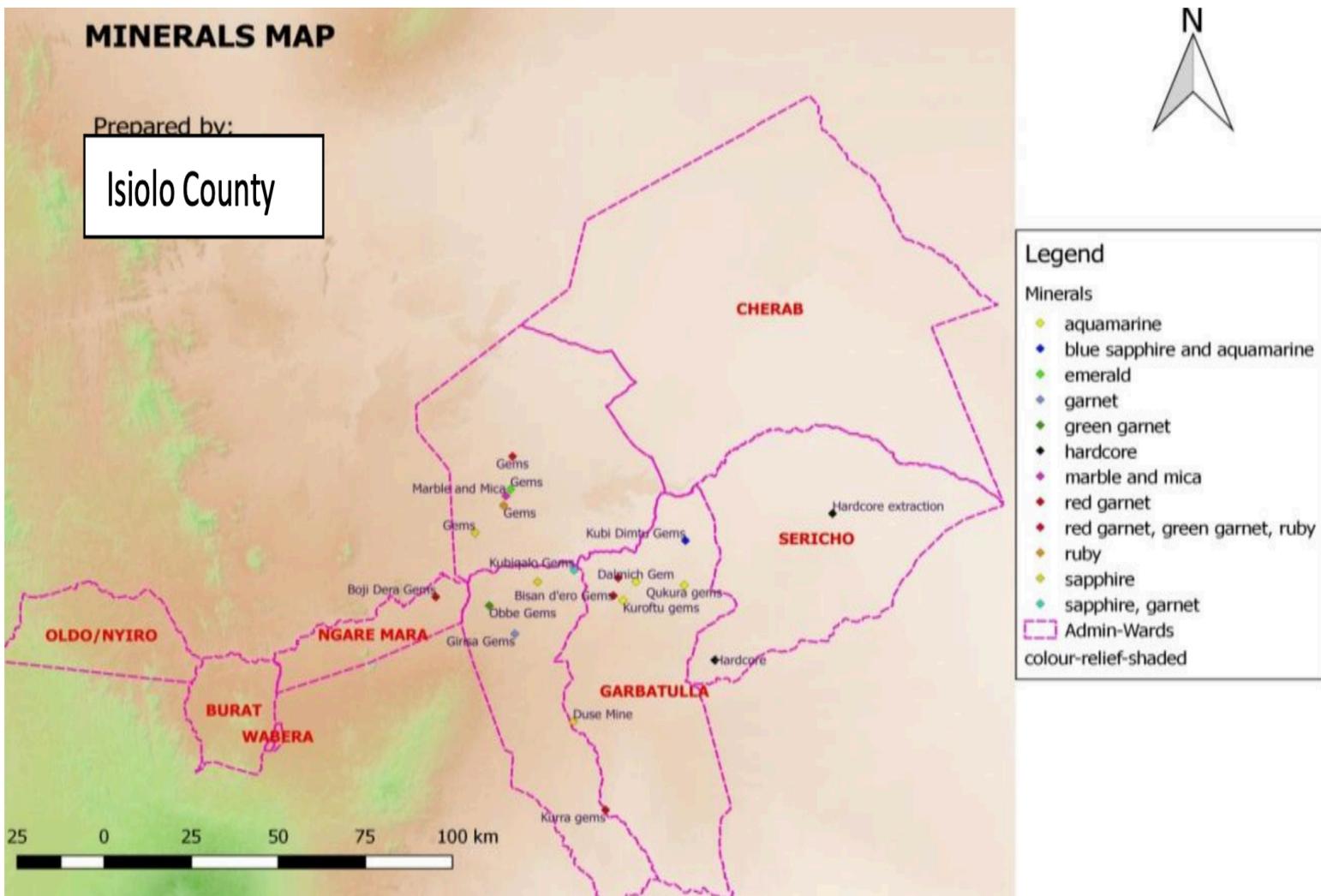


Figure 13 Map of the minerals in Isiolo County (Isiolo County Integrated Development Plan, 2018)

creation of mineral maps in Northern Kenya by the British (Mbaria and Ogada, 2017), therefore a strategic placement of the conservancies on the mineral reserves. Secondly, the relationship between Tullow Oil and the NRT (Mkutu and Mdee, 2020). Thirdly, the local stories and media news. Indeed when we look at the map (Figure 14) of the conservancies, their expansion for the Northern Kenya Grassland Carbon Project and the availability of the minerals, we can see the correlation between the expansion territories and mineral richness. Some of the minerals include coltan, essential for the energy transition, which is located around Mount Kenya, Samburu, Turkana, West Pokot, Kitui and Tana River (Munene, 2024) where the NRT is already situated or with the wish to expand through the carbon credit project. Investments in mineral mining were also encouraged by the Isiolo Government as

“Isiolo County is among 15 other Counties in Kenya that are richly endowed with minerals classified as precious metals, rare earth and radioactive minerals, base metals, industrial minerals, construction and building materials and gemstones. These minerals include gold, rare earth elements, and gypsum.” (County Government of Isiolo (n.d)).

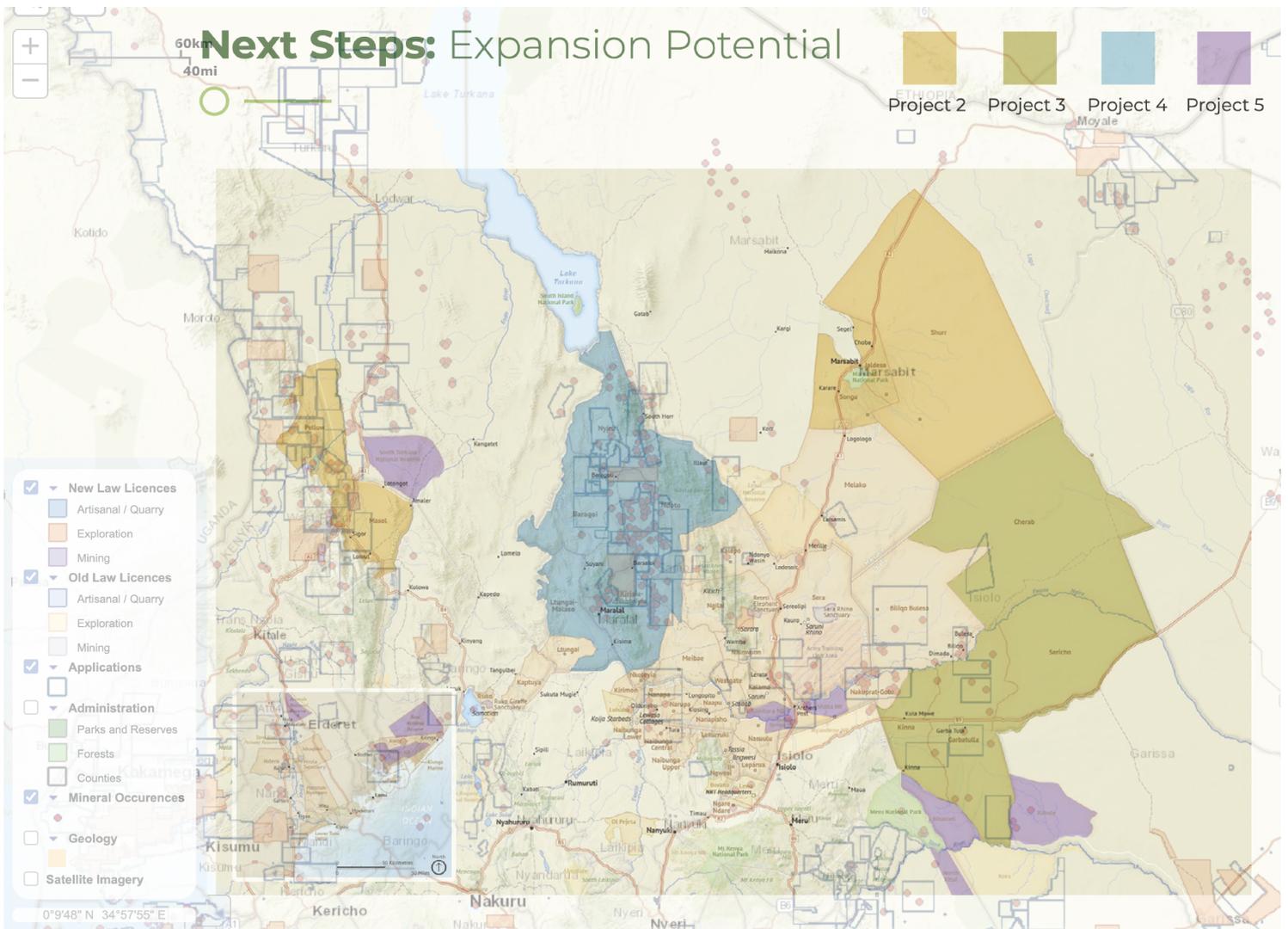


Figure 14. Map: Mineral exploration (blue rectangles signify mining licence application areas, whereas red circles are the identified minerals) and expansion areas of the Northern Kenya Grassland Carbon Project (mustard, green, blue and purple shapes) (Sources: The NRT, 2023; State Department for Mining, 2024).

“The county is endowed with lots of minerals which have significant economic importance and left untapped and poorly explored. Geological surveys have shown that the county has untapped deposits of minerals such as blue and yellow sapphire, in the Duse location, ruby in the Raspu and Korbesa locations, limestone and biromix in Merti, and gas in Merti and Alango locations.” (Isiolo County Integrated Development Plan, 2018)

More light was shed on the matter by the ex-public affairs consultant at Tullow Oil Joseph Kalapata who has also been assisting a local geologist around Isiolo in mineral exploration:

“We have mining development in this region and most of the mining was discovered recently in a place called Kom. Some of the mining development is done around the Archer's Post in Samburu County. They mine gemstones. Within Kom we have gold. Communities are mining with the help of mining companies, mostly small-scale local Kenyan companies. We have also Kinna, Bisanad and Duse. In Duse mine, we have gemstones. We have blue sulphur. Green granite. We have also coltan in Kinna. We have sand in the Ewaso Ngiro River and we have also Isiolo River sand. There are private companies from Nairobi mining coltan. We also have companies of individuals from South

Africa mining coltan but they have not majorly invested hugely, but they come for testing to try and see the capacity they can be able to generate from the mine through exploration. The County Government of Isiolo were engaging different investors to see who can be able to come and start a huge investment in the coltan mine. The players are Kenyan and South African. We also have some Turkish. In a place called Kula Mawe, there is uranium sand. My uncle is a geologist, that's why I know. But now we don't have enough resources to start mining. Now he decided to work with other companies in exploration. I know cobalt is there in Kinna because we had samples. I carried so many samples of coltan and cobalt.” (Joseph Kalapata, 52, interview, 2024)

The mines mentioned by Joseph Kalapata lie within the current territories of the Northern Kenya Grassland Carbon Project or in the areas of expansion. Kom, where the gold is mined is situated on the border of Sera and Biliquo Bulesa conservancies, whereas Kula Mawe with uranium sand and Kinna with cobalt are located in the areas of the proposed expansion as visible in Figure 14 the areas of Project 3 on the eastern part of the map and Bisanad next to them in the Project 5 area, while Archer's Post lies surrounded by already existing NRT conservancies (Figure 14). Furthermore

“The government is currently prospecting for petroleum oil in Chari and Cherab wards in Isiolo North Constituency” (Isiolo County Integrated Development Plan, 2018).

These are again areas of expansion of the Northern Kenya Grassland Carbon Project, which raises the question if another collaboration of the NRT with Tullow Oil will be unveiled as was the case in Turkana. There are also speculations about mining within the NRT conservancies. Similarly to Mbaria and Ogada (2017), Adbikadin Hassan, the chairman of Isiolo Human Rights Defenders agreed that there are

“Minerals in our area, NRT has surveyed, have done their mapping and they have put conservancies in those areas. And somehow, it looks like a protected area. We don't know if they already extract the minerals because they have some airstrips in those areas. And they already have some rangers to protect them. They don't tell you anything. They are under their boss' order. They are paid. So they say to be quiet. So the employees of the NRT, they have no say.” (Interview, Isiolo, 2024)

An almost identical statement was made by another inhabitant of Isiolo.

“Yes, European Union, they use Ian Craig [founder of the NRT]. They send him money to make the conservation, so that these minerals, when he took from here, it goes to Europe. He has machines. So where he put the machines, you can't cross, because of the rangers. He gives them guns, he gives

them food, he gives them vehicles. Those who are there with cattle, they saw it and told the people. The chopper came and took the mining in the box. Then he flies it all the way to Lewa, then from Lewa, to the European countries. He's doing business with the minerals.” (Interview, man, Borana, 40, Isiolo).

These statements are based on speculations and overheard stories. It is therefore hard to treat them as facts as there is no confirmation of these claims. What is possible to attest to however is that there is indeed a high pressure on mineral exploration in the areas of the Northern Kenya Grassland Carbon Project and its expansion. The information on the Kenyan ministries’ websites is scarce and the mining companies exploring in the areas in focus are sometimes untraceable. Furthermore, the NRT conservancies are in a way excluded from governmental control and as said by my interviewees, they are secured by militarised rangers. Therefore, 1) many deals and explorations may be conducted without information spread to public sources and 2) the lack of knowledge propels speculations and fantasies about what could be happening within the conservancies, which are inaccessible to most. However, the claim about the European actors seeking profits from mining within the conservancies may be reflecting the previous partnership between SIDA and the Swedish mining equipment company Epiroc in the DRC (Figure 15), in which the application of the development to seeking new mining contracts may have been what granted the company large-scale operations in the country. This strategy could be also utilised in Northern Kenya as Epiroc has an office in Nairobi.

To investigate the allegations of the mining in the NRT conservancies and their connections to the EU I have researched the companies in the area of the map from Figure 14, which I have

Epiroc gets large mining equipment order from DRC copper mine



Figure 15. Headline of a news article about the Swedish company Epiroc (Parker, 2022)

listed in the table in Figure 16. There is indeed an interest in mineral exploration in Samburu, Isiolo, Meru, Turkana, Laikipia and Tana River within the areas of expansion of the Northern Kenya Grassland Carbon Project. The licences are sought to search for the base and rare metals, industrial minerals, lithium, magnesite, precious metals, copper, gold,

Area	Mineral	Company name	Country of origin	Date applied
Samburu	Construction blocks	Qian Kun Group Limited	China	2023
Isiolo	Asbestos, Heavy minerals, Nickel	Panyam Mining Limited	India	2024
Samburu	Construction blocks	Jiu Jiu Gui Zhen Group Limited	China	2024
Samburu	Base and rare minerals, Construction minerals	Gwelgwel Enterprises Limited	?	2023
Turkana	Base and rare minerals	Kopromboi Limited	?	2023
Samburu	Chrome, Iron ore	Richern building & construction limited	?	2019
Samburu	Chrome, Base and Rare metals, Iron ore, Niobium, Platinum, Tantalum, Tin, Titanium	The Valley Home Grown Peace Community Based Organisation	?	2021
Samburu	Beryl, Beryllium, Corundum, Feldspar, Mica	Nachola Mines Limited	?	2015-2017
Samburu	Base and rare minerals	Chroman Trading Corporation Limited	?	2023
Samburu	Chrome Manganese	Samburu Contractors Co-Operative Society LTD	?	2024
Samburu, Meru	Chrome, Copper, Iron ore	The Lord Group Limited (Lord Purus Trading Limited)	Offices in Kenya and UAE	2024
Samburu	Gold	Rotor Systems Limited	Norway	2024
Samburu	Precious and non-precious metals	Elba Mines Ltd	?	1999-2032
Samburu	Construction and industrial minerals	Wan Shi Ju Ye Group Limited	Chinese in Kenya	2024
Samburu	Base and rare metals, Graphite, Precious stones, Heavy minerals, Industrial minerals, Silica sand, Silimanite, Vermiculite	Neo Natural Mineral Ltd	?	2024
Samburu	Construction and industrial minerals	Libkwop Company Limited	Kenya	2021
Samburu	Chrome, Copper, Lead, Zinc	Tavez Connections Ltd	Kenya?	2015-2017
Samburu	Construction and industrial minerals	World Unite Group Limited	?	2024
Samburu	Construction and industrial minerals	Zhong Sheng Group Limited	China	2024
Samburu	Base and rare metals	Match Electrical Limited	Kenya	2017-2019
Samburu	Construction and industrial minerals	Mwatu Mining Company Limited	Kenya?	2023
Samburu	Construction and industrial minerals	Minelite (Kenya) Limited	?	2018
Samburu	Construction and industrial minerals	Cemex Limited	Mexico	2018
Samburu	Construction minerals, Base and rare metals	NGUTUK ONGIRON COMMUNITY	Kenya	2023
Samburu	Construction and industrial minerals	Cosmos China Group Limited	China	2023
Samburu	Construction and industrial minerals	OpenCast Ventures Limited	Germany	2018
Samburu	Manganese	STONES OF WEALTH LIMITED	Kenya	2024
Isiolo	Beryllium	S&A MINING ENGINEERING COMPANY LIMITED	Armenia?	2024
Isiolo	Base and rare metals, Industrial minerals, Lithium, Magnesite, Precious metals	Panyam Mining Limited	India	2024
Isiolo	Base and rare metals	Ngurumani Mining Limited	?	2023
Isiolo	Beryllium	Minetrac Limited	?	2024
Laikipia	Construction minerals, Base and rare metals	Taxan Holdings Limited	?	2024
Meru	Construction and industrial minerals	JIU JIU GUI ZHEN GROUP LIMITED	China	2024
Isiolo	Nickel	Ngurumani Mining Limited	?	2024
Isiolo	Beryllium	MINETRAC LIMITED	?	2024
Isiolo	Precious stones	Humamo Kenya Limited	Kenya	2023
Tana River	Construction minerals, Base and rare metals	Sino Africa Minerals Limited	China	2024
Tana River	Construction minerals, Base and rare metals, Precious stones	Savanna Gems	?	2023
Tana River	Construction and industrial minerals Iron Ore	MABOKA MINING LIMITED	South Africa?	2024
Machakos	Copper, Gold, Base and rare metals, Iron ore	YPM MINING LIMITED	UK	2023
Machakos	Copper, Precious metals, Base and Rare metals	Daxco Limited	UK	2024
Meru	Precious metals, Base and rare metals	Digi Minerals Limited	?	2024
Meru	Precious metals	Lawrence Guantai M'itonga	Kenya	2024
Meru	Export	Rift Valley Copper Mining Limited	?	2019
Meru	Construction and industrial minerals	Njiru Mate	Kenya	2020
Meru	Copper, Gold, Base and Rare Metals Group, Iron ore	PM Resources (Africa) Limited	?	2023
Meru	Base Minerals	Exclusive Mines Ltd	?	2012-2016

Figure 16. Mining companies' applications to conduct exploration in the areas of the Northern Kenya Grassland Carbon Project and the areas of its expansion (State Department for Mining, 2024)

nickel, beryllium, lead, zinc, silica sand, precious stones, heavy minerals and iron ore amongst others. Many of the prospectors are Kenyan companies. There is also a number of Chinese miners. When it came to companies based in the EU, there was a German prospector OpenCast Ventures Limited searching for construction and industrial minerals. From Europe outside of the EU, there was Rotor Systems Limited from Norway exploring for gold as well as YPM Mining Limited and Daxco Limited registered in the UK (State Department for Mining, 2024). Out of 50 companies I researched, 21 I could not find on the internet, therefore I could not even estimate their country of

registration. What is visible though is the abundance of minerals in the territories of the Northern Kenya Grassland Carbon Project and the territories of the project's proposed expansion.

The NKGCP appears to be linked with the wider interest in mineral extraction, especially those lands rich in high-value minerals such as coltan, gold, and cobalt. While actual extraction remains speculation, the layering of conservancy territories onto mineral-rich lands, taken together with historical and corporate partners, raises cause for concern about the motivation for conservation. While the militarisation of NRT conservancies and limited public access creates a non-transparent environment where the resource deals might well be occurring behind closed doors, some speculative allegations of secretive mineral extraction underpin the growing pressures for resource control in this region. Further, a lack of governmental and mining companies' transparency fuels the suspicions of locals, further muddling the connections between conservation, land control, and resource exploitation. What is nevertheless confirmable is that this large territory is secured and protected for various operations and if the actions result in mineral mining, then the minerals will be transported via planes or LAPSSET to the global value chains with various beneficiaries including clean energy technology producers of which wind turbine manufacturers are concentrated in Europe with the Danish Vestas, French GE Renewable Energy, German Enercon and Nordex at the forefront (www.globaldata.com, 2022), while the solar panel production being concentrated in China (Sunsave, 2024). In conclusion, securing the territory by the NRT alongside LAPSSET and in the mineral-rich regions may have the EU's support to secure the smooth operations of mineral value chains and their logistics amongst other potential objectives like the establishment of new large-scale clean energy projects in Northern Kenya.

5.1.3 DISCUSSION

Northern Kenya is undergoing a transformation propelled by the discovery of oil in Lokichar, construction of the LAPSSET corridor, mineral exploration and clean energy projects which fuel the sedentarisation of pastoralists. The sedentarisation in turn opens up more parcels of land for investments by both the local elites and foreign companies (Lind, Okenwa and Scoones, 2020). These processes further the displacement of local pastoralist tribes from their community land, as the primary legal mechanism meant to secure their traditional holdings – the registration of the title deeds for communal land, enabled by the Community Land Act of 2016 – has been rendered largely inaccessible due to the high costs of legal processes, illiteracy amongst the affected

communities, and a general lack of information (Vogelsang, 2019). The Northern Rangelands Trust (NRT) takes advantage of the slow pace of this bureaucratic process and alters the pastoral commons into ‘community conservancies’ in return for the promise of ‘development’. However, during fieldwork in Isiolo County, I learnt that it was only a small group of people who gained from the Northern Kenya Grassland Carbon Project (NKGCP) through loans and bursaries. What I understood was that the benefits from the NKGCP operated in the form of the NRT’s CSR programme, which was supposed to grant the organisation community’s compliance to continue the expansion of the territory.

The rest of the community not gaining from the NKGCP experienced shrinking grazing land, which in turn fueled intertribal conflicts, which then led to further displacements of certain tribes from the newly established conservancies. The mechanism worked in the following way: more land is taken for the conservancy, which in turn increases the violence experienced by the local population, both in terms of shrinking land available for grazing and a more intense battle for the remaining resources, with the NRT favouring certain tribes like the Samburu for example by allegedly supporting the Samburu bandits (Mittal and Mooloo, 2021, p.34). This was observable in the case of the Nasuulu Conservancy, where over 1000 members of the Turkana of Loruko tribe had to flee their lands in 2012 because of a violent clash with the NRT-backed Samburu. As was noted by a woman (55) from the Turkana of Loruko tribe, it was only with the establishment of the Nasuulu Conservancy that firearms appeared in the area. As a result of this propelling of the violence by the NRT’s expanding territory, there appear more reasons for the further militarisation of the NRT with blame put on the pastoralist communities and paradoxically further expansion of the conservancies to provide ‘security’. The expansion, militarisation and clearing of the territory of certain pastoralist tribes through the manipulation of conflict also makes it easier to control the ‘leakage’ of carbon in the Northern Kenya Grassland Carbon Project, which makes the project more reliable on the voluntary carbon markets, which in turn leads to higher prices per credit. This as we can see is a prime example of the process of ‘accumulation by dispossession’.

Accordingly, due to the need for heightened safety in the light of the intertribal conflicts propelled by the NRT, since 2018 the EU has been funding the organisation mainly in the form of supporting the security of the conservancies in the programmes “Ranger”, the “Ustahimilivu Consortium” and the “Community Policing Initiative”. One of the reasons for the EU’s funding of the militarisation of the NRT conservancies may be the securing of the LAPSET trade corridor in the same region, also stretching to the war-ridden DRC, South Sudan and Ethiopia transporting critical minerals and oil to the port in Lamu, where the NRT conservancies have also

been established. This happens in accordance with Cupers's (2021) claim that "European infrastructure and development aid for Africa increasingly aspires to counter the movements of "undesired" (...) populations without touching the global extraction industries and economies." Moreover, access to the previously remote resources which LAPSET opens up is important for the diversification of the critical material sources for the execution of the European Green Deal and the production of technology for the green energy transitions.

The NRT has also been supported by the EU member state's international development agencies SIDA, DANIDA and AFD operating within the strategy of so-called 'aid for trade' alongside its private-public partnerships. Arguably, through funding the NRT, these donor agencies can access new territories for the expansion of the operations of mining and energy companies based in their respective countries. This view is based on Jessen's (2020) theory of the corporate state, as well as on a range of examples of aid agencies having engaged in such partnerships in the region – for example, SIDA's collaboration with Volvo and the Swedish mining equipment company Epiroc in the DRC, or DANIDA's work in Kenya with the Copenhagen-based X-Solar. As the NRT is one of the biggest stakeholders in Northern Kenya, the donors can get preferential access to the new large territories for investment for example in the recent DANIDA-funded clean energy project in 43 NRT conservancies under the "Support to Northern Rangelands Trust (NRT) Water, NbS and clean energy project 2023- 2027".

There are furthermore speculations by the local communities, activists, academics and journalists of the NRT being involved in resource extraction within the conservancies and an interest in the minerals and oil in the areas of the future expansion of the Northern Kenya Grassland Carbon Project. Historically, the NRT collaborated with Tullow Oil, which in turn funded the NRT's expansion in areas of oil extraction in Turkana. While I can not prove direct links between the NRT and current mining operations in the conservancies as information is scarce, I can only suggest such a connection based on circumstantial evidence: the conservancies lie on mineral-rich geology which is under high demand for exploration as shown on the Kenyan Mining Cadastre website. One might speculate that the NRT therefore gets to either be directly involved in mining or as the main stakeholder join the decision-making processes of who will mine within the conservancies. The EU's funding to the conservancies secures the territories' resources and prevents future conflicts over the minerals to grant undisrupted flows of the commodity chains between East Africa and the EU, where the industry producing clean energy technologies is based.

LAPSSET, EU-FUNDED PROJECTS, MINERALS AND OIL (2024)

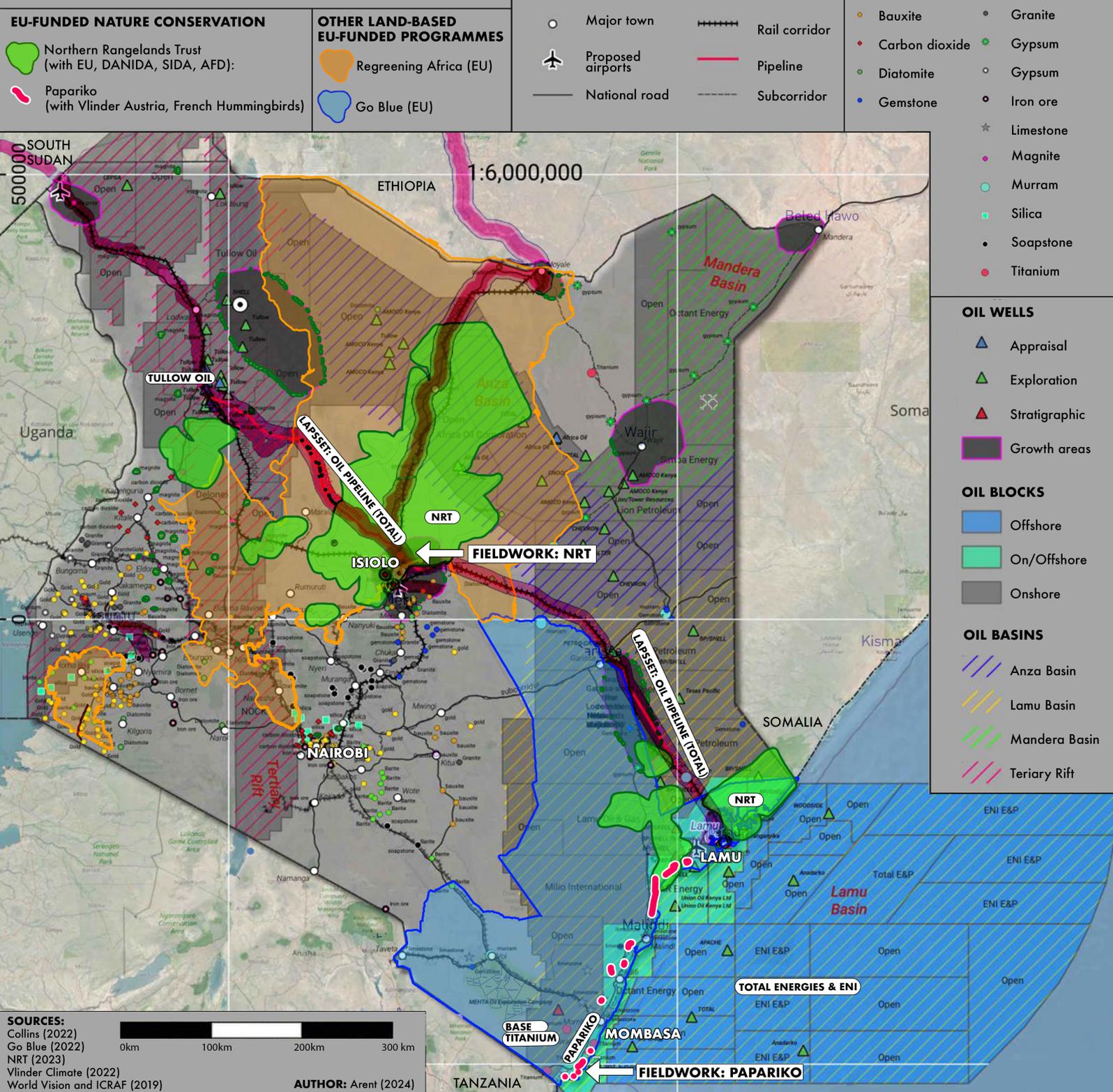


Figure 17. Map: LAPSSET, EU-funded projects, minerals and oil.

Kwale County, which I will now focus on, is situated in the Southern part of the coast between Tanzania and Mombasa.

Important for the following part are also:

- the EU-funded Go Blue (blue shape with blue outline);
- minerals (small circles, stars and squares);
- the oil blocks (large blue, turquoise and grey rectangles) (Map by the author, 2024)

5.2 KWALE COUNTY

5.2.1 REGIONAL CONTEXT: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, MINERALS AND OIL

The case study I will here consider is situated in a similar context as the one above: economic modernisation, the development of trade and mining infrastructure under Kenya Vision 2030, large-scale EU-funded development and conservation programmes and the prohibition of rural communities from the use of natural resources in the name of nature restoration and the production of carbon credits. Here, I will again analyse the EU funding of nature conservation projects. I will also explore the connections between territorialisation through mangrove conservation and the interests of various actors in the minerals and oil in the region under the new scramble for Africa, in which the EU is participating to access the strategic resources for the green energy transition. The central part of the case study will be the mangrove restoration project named Papariko in coastal Kwale County. However, before I get to this, it is essential to describe the regional developments taking place alongside the nature preservation efforts which will be introduced later. This will give us the context, in which the carbon credit project plays a part.

Kwale County is located in the southern 250km stretch of the coast between Mombasa and the border with Tanzania. The coastal areas towards Mombasa, such as Diani, are dominated by the tourism industry, with large beach hotels and poor settlements of hotel labourers surrounding the tourist infrastructure. Further towards Tanzania, the tourist infrastructure is much less present. There, the coast is covered with mangrove forests by the water and with fishing and agricultural settlements further inland, where individual families grow coconut palms, cashews, maize and rice and have small flocks of livestock. Further inland, there are more small-scale agricultural settlements but the landscape is being changed towards mega-scale sugar plantations run by the company KISCOL. The largest road by the coast is the A14, serving as a cargo, bus and taxi route between the port in Mombasa and Tanzania. The conjoining roads are mainly gravel, but there are also more tarmac road developments linking the road with quarries and potential tourist areas. The markets and urbanisation develop around the tarmac roads.

In the coastal counties of Kenya, international investors aim to contribute to the ‘sustainable development’ of the blue economy, coastal tourism, fisheries, and maritime security. The EU for example provides significant grants to the country’s coast under the Go Blue project, which I will elaborate on shortly. Many investments in the coastal Kwale County’s infrastructure, nature, health and education come from the Australian company Base Titanium, which extracts 4% of global

titanium resources. It is one of the biggest companies and stakeholders in the land politics of Kwale country alongside the KISCOL sugar plantation and factory, as well as the tourism industry. The county is developing beach areas with cabro roads, market stalls, toilets etc. to develop tourism as a part of Kenya Vision 2030’s “Development of Coastal Beach Ecosystem Management” (Republic of Kenya, 2022), which aims to transform Kilifi, Kwale, and Lamu Counties into modern resort destinations by upgrading infrastructure and enhancing beach management. The region is also undergoing a race for the licences for on-land minerals exploration and licences are being sought by international actors to exploit the rare earth mineral reserves in Mrima Hill precious for the green energy transition. There is also competition for the licences for offshore oil block explorations with French and Italian petroleum companies Total Energies and ENI at the forefront. These modernisation processes have been providing a number of workplaces, which are however low paid, and often at the expense of a growing control of local resources by the private sector,

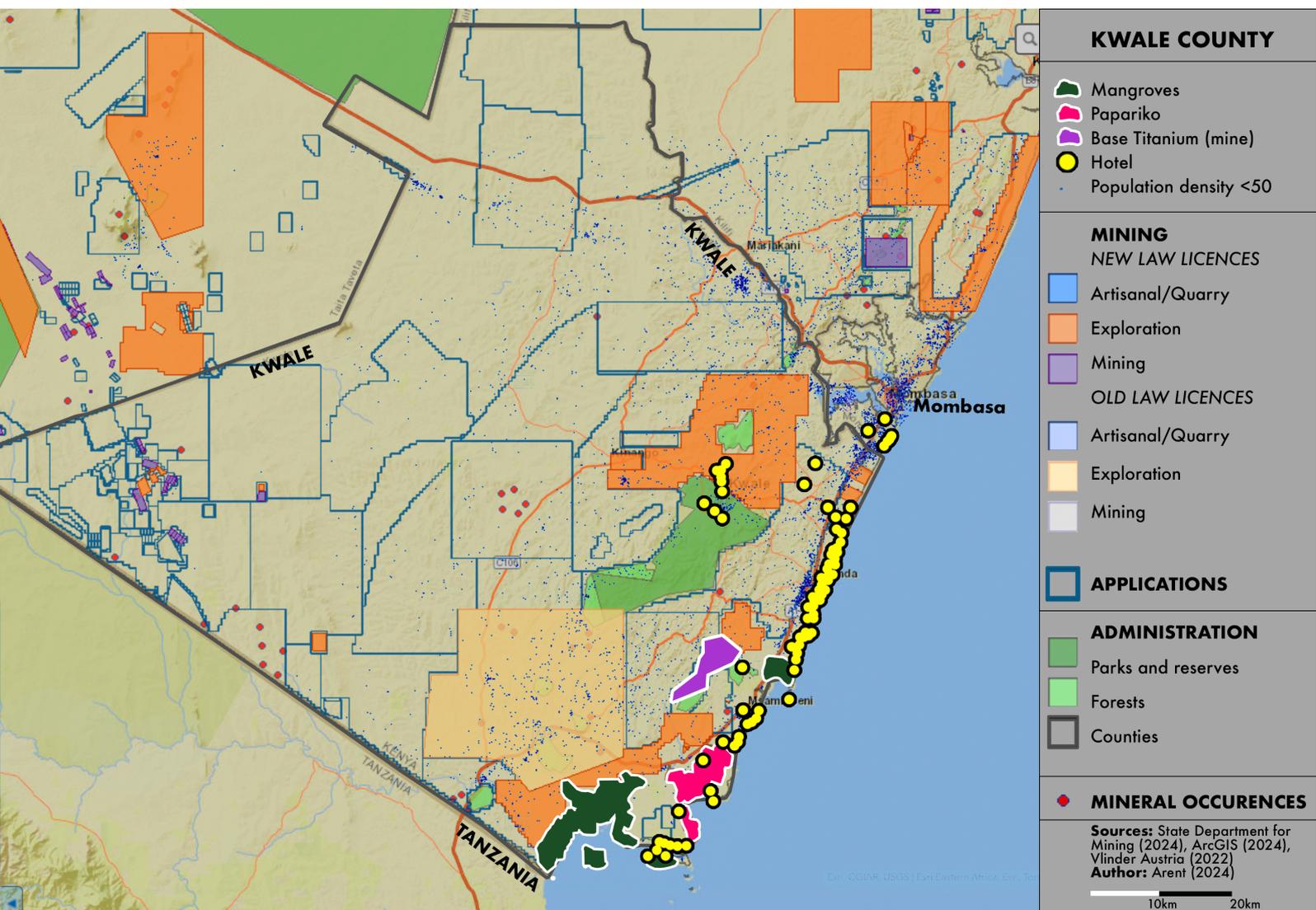


Figure 18. Map: Mineral exploration, hotels and population density in Kwale County; Base Titanium is the purple shape next to Msabmwani (Source: State Department for Mining, 2024, ArcGIS, 2024 and Vlinder Austria, 2022). (Map by the author, 2024)

frequently spearheaded by foreign companies. Moreover, the activities of the various participating companies and individuals have often led to the displacement of rural communities and environmental destruction.

In current-day coastal Kenya, the EU is widely present through the contribution of EUR 24.750.000 under the mentioned Go Blue project (Figures 17 and 19) implemented together with the UN-Habitat and the United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP) which began its realization in the coastal counties of Kwale, Kilifi, Tana River and Lamu in 2021. The European implementing partners are development agencies from Germany, France, Italy and Portugal in cooperation with Kenyan organisations and relevant governmental ministries (Go Blue, 2024). The programme aims to develop blue economy along the Kenyan coast with the objectives of

“Go Blue Growth: To accelerate sustained, inclusive, and sustainable economic urban coastal growth to create jobs with a special focus on women and young people. Focus sectors are fisheries and aquaculture, cassava, and cultural heritage;

Go Blue Land-Sea Planning: To promote an integrated approach to land-sea planning and management in Kenya’s coastal areas to ensure healthy environments. The focus is on strengthening the capacity of local communities, particularly women and youth, through targeted pilot initiatives;

Go Blue Security: To enhance maritime governance through integrated and effective maritime law enforcement hence contributing to the regional and global security and creating a favourable environment for economic development.” (Go blue, 2024)

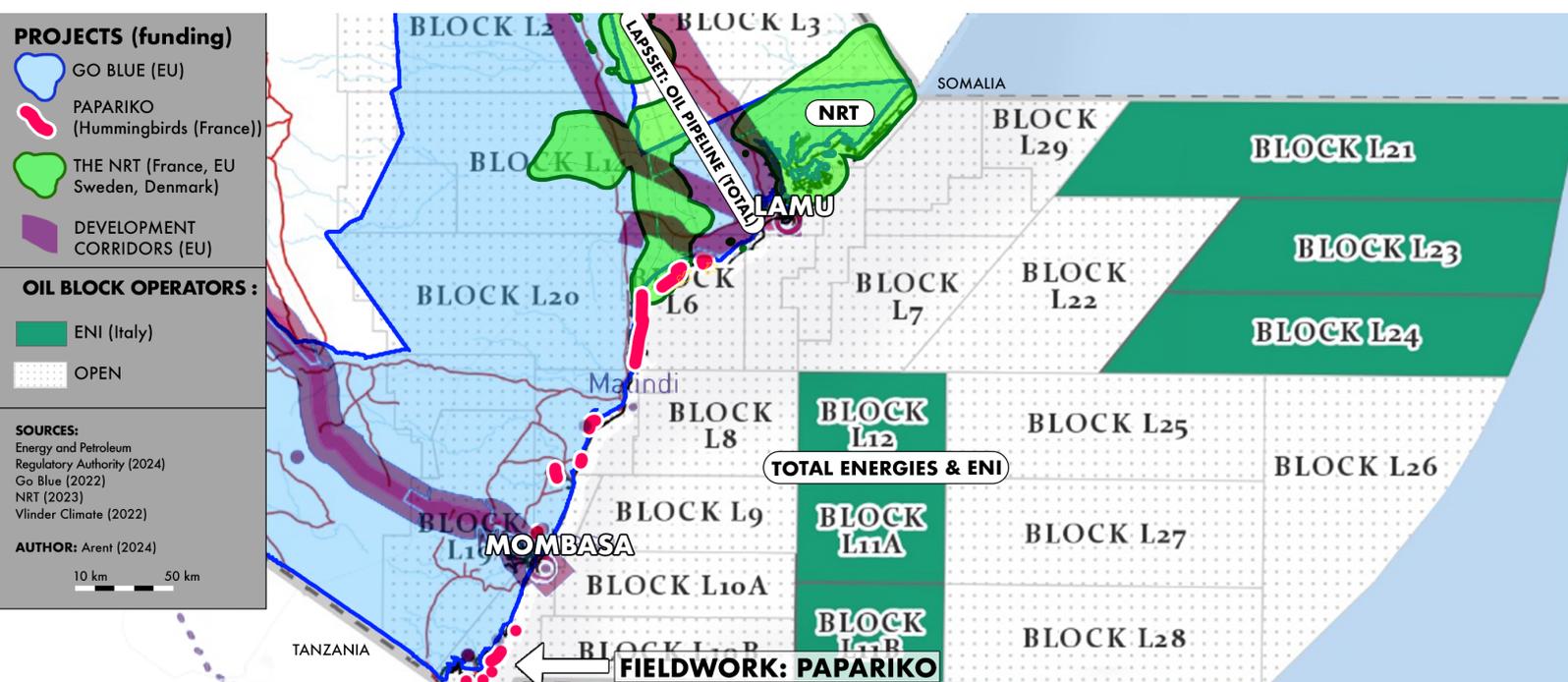


Figure 19. Map: EU-funded projects and oil block operators in Kenya in 2024 (Source: Energy and Petroleum Regulatory Authority, 2024); Total is present in blocks L11A, L11B and L12 sharing them with ENI and Qatar Petroleum (CGTN Africa, 2023). (Map by the author, 2024)

Within this project, different European state agencies take responsibility for the development of various sectors. In Kwale, the German Corporation for International Cooperation (GiZ) is implementing projects in the sectors of “coastal tourism, maritime transport and logistics, vessel repair and maintenance, and maritime security.” GiZ also contributes to the development of aquaculture value chains. The Portuguese impact in Go Blue in Kwale “will contribute to foster governance of tourism and heritage among the stakeholders”. The involvement of Italy focuses on improving fisheries and cassava value chains. As I mentioned the Italian company ENI has a major presence in offshore oil exploration as an operator of at least 6 oil blocks (Figure 19), and also in the Kenya-Somalia border dispute (African Energy, 2022). I will expand upon this below. France is contributing through projects strengthening maritime security, which includes strengthening “the capacity of the Kenya Coast Guard Service and other national and regional agencies” as well as “developing strong legal instruments and regulatory frameworks to address maritime threats and implement maritime law enforcement in the country” (Go blue, 2024). This is somewhat paradoxical as the French company Total Energies is one of the key actors alongside ENI forcing through the remaking of the Kenya-Somali maritime border which will allow for offshore oil extraction in unregulated Somalia. This may cause serious insecurity in the region as pointed out by the mining sociologist Willice Abuya (interview, 2024). Therefore, the security grants given by the EU member states may serve a similar role as they did in the previous case study in the case of protecting the territory of the LAPSSET corridor and the surrounding mineral resources. At the coast, Lamu will become and Mombasa is the main export ports to the EU from the areas covering LAPSSET and beyond, such as Uganda, South Sudan, Ethiopia and parts of the Democratic Republic of Congo. Willice Abuya (interview 2024) furthermore claimed that on the topic of

“European Union’s interest in Kenyan coast we talk a lot about the blue economy. There are a lot of offshore and mineral interests on the coast. In Lamu there's gas, there's oil, in Malindi, in Kilifi there's gas, in Malindi, there's gas as well as oil. I know there's a lot of interest in the resources that we have at the coast and much of it has not been exploited. I hope they're in for a good thing for the interest of the country.”

The interest in the mineral wealth is also in Kwale with a high exploration pressure as we can see in Figure 18 and what was underlined by the county government:

“Kwale County has vast mineral deposits including Titanium (rutile, ilmenite, zircon) at Nguluku and Shimba Hills; gemstones at Kuranze; rare earth elements (niobium, phosphates) at Mrima Hills and Samburu; silica sand at Waa, Tiwi and Ramisi; zinc, lead and copper at Mkang’ombe, Mwache, Dumbule and Dzitenge; baryte at Lungalunga; coal at Maji ya Chumvi; sandstones at Mariakani; limestone at Shimoni and Waa; coral at the coastline and oil/gas at onshore and off-shore” (Kanini, Mumbi, Mutinda, 2023 after Kwale County Government, 2018)

The mineral richness is propelling the race for mining exploration licences, which also puts more pressure on land politics in the county forcing the participating companies to compete using diversified strategies. I here suggest that the EU-funded Go Blue programme functions as one of these diplomatic and territorial strategies aimed at getting preferential access to the mineral and oil reserves in the coastal regions, as suggested by Willice Abuya (Interview, 2024). The expertise provided by the French, Italian, German, and Portuguese agencies has been something observed in the post-colonial Trans-African Highway when experts from Europe were invited to advise on the project alongside introducing European then-state oil corporations like ENI or Total Energies on the continent (Cupers and Meier, 2020), which still have a significant presence on the Kenyan coast. Following the conclusions drawn from the previous case study about the territorialisation by the extractive industries through securing conservation areas and funding them by the petroleum industry’s CSR, I will explore similar correlations in Kwale County.

5.2.2 MINING AND CONSERVATION IN KWALE

One of the main political stakeholders and drivers of development in Kwale is the Australian company Base Titanium (Figures 18 and 20). It is important to analyse the marketing operations of this largest mine in Kenya, including its involvement in nature conservation, to later understand the correlations between French-funded mangrove protection and the petroleum industry. This will provide support to my argument with the work of other scholars working on the extractive industry in Kwale who have argued that corporate social responsibility (CSR) is crucial to getting further mineral exploitation licences. As we shall see, similar dynamics may be present in the case of the Papariko mangrove restoration project and Total Energies.

5.2.2.1 BASE TITANIUM'S CSR

Extractive companies in Kenya often have elaborate CSR programmes to maintain a positive image both at home as well as in Kenya to continue mining or exploration. As we will later learn, Base Titanium is also one of the biggest stakeholders involved in mangrove restoration through its elaborate CSR programme. Titanium is one of the critical raw materials for the EU, for which the EU is completely import-dependent (EC, 2023) The mining license of Base Titanium in Kwale is to expire in 2024. However, in the last two years, the Australian company has been seeking new exploration licences in Kwale, Lamu and Tana River due to the similar geology to Kwale and the high probability of occurrence of rutile, ilmenite and zircon. The CSR programme was introduced to support this goal, which was also established to cover up the disagreeable beginnings of the company's operations in Kenya. Before Base Titanium became one of the key stakeholders in local Kwale politics and mangrove conservation efforts, it was the cause of initial displacements of the county's farmers to start the extraction, which is also what happened when Tullow Oil started their terrestrial operations in Northern Kenya as I described in the previous case study. The future displacements for the mining industry are also pushed for by the new land reforms proposed by the Kenya Vision 2030, which I described in the introductory parts.

Before Base Titanium started the operations in Kwale County it needed the land to be vacant of people as what happened in the county in case of other developments like tourism, plantations or carbon credits. In 2007 the residents in Kwale started facing evictions caused by the new titanium mining project by Tiomin (later Base Titanium). Nammlola (2007) reported about evictions involving bulldozers waking up the remaining farmers who refused to resettle and demolishing their houses supervised by the county police and Kwale District Commissioner Isaac Oseko.

"Mr Justice Joseph Nyamu said that, in the public interest, the Government had the right to seize the land belonging to the farmers, who have been unwilling to give it out for the Sh9 billion mining project." (Nammlola, 2007)

This statement showed the prioritisation of resource extraction by the local government over less profitable types of land use. The issues with displacements were related to unfair compensation for the land. Odhiambo (2016) interviewed people in Kwale affected by the expansion of Base Titanium. One of the residents Maingi said that for her 45 acres of land, which included "her parents' grave sites, two houses and other structures within the homestead where she lived with her

two sons and her brother" she got 3.9 million shillings (\$38.532). The new land in an area she described as uninhabitable in Mrima Bwiti was a two-hour drive from her village. She has not been compensated for her mature coconut trees, which were giving her 8000 shillings (\$79) every month, and she now had to start anew. She was amongst 480 resettled households, which are to this day involved in 100 land disputes of families deeming the new lands they were moved to as unsuitable for farming, therefore undermining their livelihoods. Some families were also compensated by giving land to family members who then did not want to share with other members, therefore leaving them homeless. Abuya and Odongo (2020, p.1003) argued however that Base Titanium's CSR programmes in Kwale were misdesigned, as they compensated the communities for some losses with no adequate consideration of the ancestral and cultural value of the land captured for titanium extraction.

Since the displacements marking the initial territorialisation by Base Titanium, many, apart from those living in the closest proximity to the mine, have forgotten about the past grievances thanks to the CSR programme, which was necessary for the continuation of resource exploitation as the proposed expansion of mining by Base Titanium "has in the past been met with resistance from some residents and leaders" (Muchai and Omar, 2019). The CSR programmes have been set up to minimise conflict and risk which could affect business revenue, which is also important for the understanding of Total Energies' strategies which I will explore later. Many investments in the 'development' in Kwale like schools, hospitals and infrastructure, came from Base Titanium. Through these initiatives, Base Titanium had an even better image than the government as it was helping where the county officials had failed. According to a local journalist Shaban Omar: "It is helping people more than the government." (Shaban Omar, interview, 2024). Yet, according to Willice Abuya when they invested in roads, it was the roads between the mine and their private export port in Mombasa. This example shows the importance of infrastructure investments for the



Figure 20. Base Titanium mine in Kwale (Base Titanium, 2022a)



Figure 21. Base Titanium CSR school desk donation (Base Titanium, 2022b)

export commodity chains. Furthermore, when Base invested in schools and hospitals, it was their CSR programme (Willice Abuya, interview, 2024) which indeed granted them a friendly image in the region according to the Kwale County local government official (Interview, 2024) and led them to an easier way to seeking exploration licenses in Lamu County. The governor in Lamu said that “he was ready to work with Base Titanium and prays that they find minerals in Lamu” (Omar, 2023). Moreover, Base Titanium estimated that “Kilifi County has 10 times more titanium than Kwale has in Mamburi area. (...) Kilifi South MP Mustafa Id said mining would complement agribusiness pushing the county to be among the richest in Kenya.” Furthermore, according to Base Titanium “land woes, low literacy and joblessness [in Kilifi] would be a thing of the past” (The Nation, 2013), which however has not happened to most of the residents of Kwale.

Here, Base Titanium, while making enormous profits from exploiting local natural resources, presents itself as a saviour, solving the problem of county ‘underdevelopment’ and taking over the role of the government. It is a strategic choice to create a sense of dependence while draining the county of the revenue. The private mining company could take over the role of the local government as the county has not benefited financially since the beginning of its operations and, therefore continues to lack the funds to develop the schools, hospitals etc. According to the county’s director of planning Base Titanium has not paid local community royalties out of the total revenue which has in part gone to the National Treasury while the rest went to Australia. In the words of Walter Rodney (1972), “Foreign investment ensures that the natural resources and the labour of Africa produce economic value which is lost to the continent.” The royalties have not gone back to Kwale’s communities since the start of mining

“because of the lack of the framework to divide it. Until 2017, that is when they did the new mining act. Then the regulations took some time to develop. Until I think 2019 is when the regulations were passed now to direct how those revenues are going to be divided.” (Kwale County, local government official, interview, 2024).

The issue is that they cannot define who the community is, and therefore, they cannot provide the community with royalties. The mining sociologist Willice Abuya (Interview, 2024) explained that to define the distribution of the revenue

“We must have public participation. The person I believe who challenged the Mining Act cannot be a member of the community, and cannot be the government. It's not the company that launched the coup. It was an individual. But having been there, I know who the individual is. I know his

connections with the company. So I'm sure it must have been him. The company must have told him, can you go and do this for us? So that's why there's no community revenue paid. Because of the person connected to Base Titanium. So the revenue is not being paid to the community. So the community continues to suffer through a lack of shareable benefits accruing from the mining enterprise. There's also the local sharing bill, that talks about how mining processes should also take place. If you are mining, who is supposed to supply you with ABCD? And after mining, how do you distribute these resources during the process of mining? That bill has also never seen the light of day. It was put in parliament, and then it deliberately lapsed. So it lapses, and you have to wait for six months before you double it again and nobody has now been interested since to double it again. Like I said, the mining company is very powerful.”

Following the claim by Willice Abuya Base Titanium has been powerful enough to affect national policy-making in favour of its revenue. Beyond affecting the law, the company has managed to replace the Kwale Government in providing services to the local communities, which could have been provided by the local officials if the royalties were paid. This way through the CSR programme of aiding the people with schools, hospitals and infrastructure it has created a sense of dependence of the people on the mining project. Through the successful mining and CSR operations in Kwale Base Titanium has also been welcomed to continue resource extraction in Kilifi and Lamu counties, from which the company will resume the extraction followed by the direct export to the technologically advanced capitalist metropolises through its private port in Mombasa. This will make the country persist as a raw material-producing country which to Rodney (1972) is why “a formerly colonized nation has no hope of developing until it breaks effectively with the vicious circle of dependence and exploitation which characterizes imperialism.”

5.2.2.2 MANGROVE CONSERVATION AS BASE TITANIUM’S CSR STRATEGY

In the case of the crossover of titanium mining in the area and mangrove conservation, the latter is used as the source of aid for the community impoverished by various industries in Kwale. Mangrove conservation is supposed to be a source of income and education for the villagers while their resources are siphoned abroad, and their farms taken over by the mining company. Alongside land and environmental policies, mangrove conservation is used as an opportunity to territorialise the Kenyan coastal counties, where the titanium reserves are located and contain the villagers through sets of new rules. Here, Base Titanium not only displaces the peasants, damages the environment and lowers the groundwaters through their industrial mining activities - paradoxically, the company is also responsible for the ecosystem education of the villagers through the mangrove



Figure 22: Board informing about a mangrove conservation group in Shirazi, Kwale being supported by Base Titanium (June, 2024)

projects which are a part of the CSR programme. This is reminiscent of Simpson’s and Vuola’s (2021) example of the Chinese mining companies in the DRC being competitive by offering the mining+biodiversity conservation packages to be able to continue the operations.

As we will see the responsibilities of Base Titanium in Kwale’s mangrove conservation are significant and include educating the local communities, developing forest management plans, security etc. which are big roles letting the company govern the coastal communities beyond the mine. These and other CSR activities have led to Base Titanium’s friendly image in the region. This was remarked upon by all respondents I spoke to in Gazi, Kwale where the company has been involved in mangrove conservation:

“It assists the local conservation groups in the plastic collection and clean up once in a while, school and hospital renovations and also promotes education through sponsoring students.” (Woman, Gazi, 35, interview, 2024).

In Shirazi village (Figure 22), 27 km from Base Titanium the company

“has worked with us regularly during planting days and boosted our incentives. They have also provided our group with 100 chairs and tents for social gatherings and rentals. On the contrary KISCOL [the sugar plantation] is not doing anything for the community.” (Man, 79, Shirazi, interview, 2024)

In Vanga, 79 km from the mine Base Titanium was involved in

“the environmental sector, JITHADA self-help group where we worked with them and they provided us with tents, chairs and sufurias.” (Woman, 50, Vanga, interview, 2024)

The majority of the people I interviewed in Munje village had not heard about Base Titanium even though it was only 23 kilometres from their village and the main industry in their county. This shows how short is the information range in the village and how little information is available. Only the women planting the mangrove forest were aware of Base Titanium:

“We worked with them through various projects like the building of a bottle fence. They also buy seedlings from us, and involve us in plastic clean-ups and planting activities though not consistently.” (12 women planting mangroves, Munje, interview, 2024)

In Bodo, 28 km from the mine,

“They are not involved in any mangrove conservation and local welfare in Bodo. Just twice they offered to pay local women conservationists to do clean-ups of plastic and rubber in the mangrove marshes. They paid per the waste load and have also donated a tent for the local women's conservation group where they can host group meetings and rent to the community as a business.” (Man 50, woman 70, Bodo, interview, 2024)

This was a very minor contribution from Base Titanium, yet granted the company a better image than the mentioned KISCOL sugar plantation and factory, which was:

“not involved in any activity with the community and mangrove conservation, even the road from the sugar plantation to Bodo village which they were supposed to renovate is still in poor condition.” (Man 50, woman 70, Bodo)

The above statements from the villagers in Kwale showed that even a small contribution from the mine was making the residents positive about its presence in the county. Still, as in the case of Munje, the information distribution was also limited to certain groups benefitting from the CSR programme. The availability of information was constricted due to the lack of internet and low literacy levels, which was putting Base Titanium in an unequal position of power, control of information and ability to decide how the money was distributed.

As I presented in this part CSR activities are crucial for extractive companies when expanding operations to further regions, having influence over territories beyond the mine and preventing residents' resistance. It not only grants the companies a positive image but also lets them access the whole planning process in the regions by managing the distribution of the funds. Through the fieldwork, I understood that the company was seen as a major contributor to infrastructure, education and health, which was appreciated by the villagers, who did not have information that the billions of revenue from the titanium exports were not coming to Kwale's government, which could use it to develop the same projects. Base Titanium was also multiple times presented by the interviewees as much better than the KISCOL sugar plantation and factory, which did not develop CSR programmes in the region. Furthermore, in the age of mainstream ideologies becoming more climate change conscious, the extractive industries have to present elaborate environmental programmes to avoid social and media controversies. Therefore activities such as mangrove conservation can cast them in a better light and support further possibility of expansion.

5.2.2.3 TERRITORIALISATION THROUGH RULE-MAKING BY BASE TITANIUM AND VLINDER CLIMATE

As we just learnt, the mining company Base Titanium is one of the key players in mangrove restoration the Kwale County, as well as in other coastal counties in Kenya. Despite representing the extractive industry, it is also involved in the preparation of management plans for the coastal forests. Recently it has also been joined by another foreign company Vlinder Climate, together with the Kenyan implementing partner Umita and a French climate fund Hummingbirds, in the development of Kenya's coastal policies and plans. The latter companies entered regional politics through the Papariko Restoration of Degraded Mangroves carbon credit project which in turn gave them access to "establishing and enforcing new rights and determining acceptable resource uses" which is one of the techniques of territorialisation (Vuola, 2022 after Vandergeest and Peluso,1995). In this part, I will explore how the companies create new rules, what ideologies they transmit and what consequences do these new regulations have for the local communities.

Base Titanium and Vlinder Climate have been collaborating on the establishment of the new rules for resource use within the National Mangrove Committee Participatory Forest Management Plan 2023-2027 for 667ha of Buda terrestrial forests and 2300ha mangrove forests in Mwandamu,

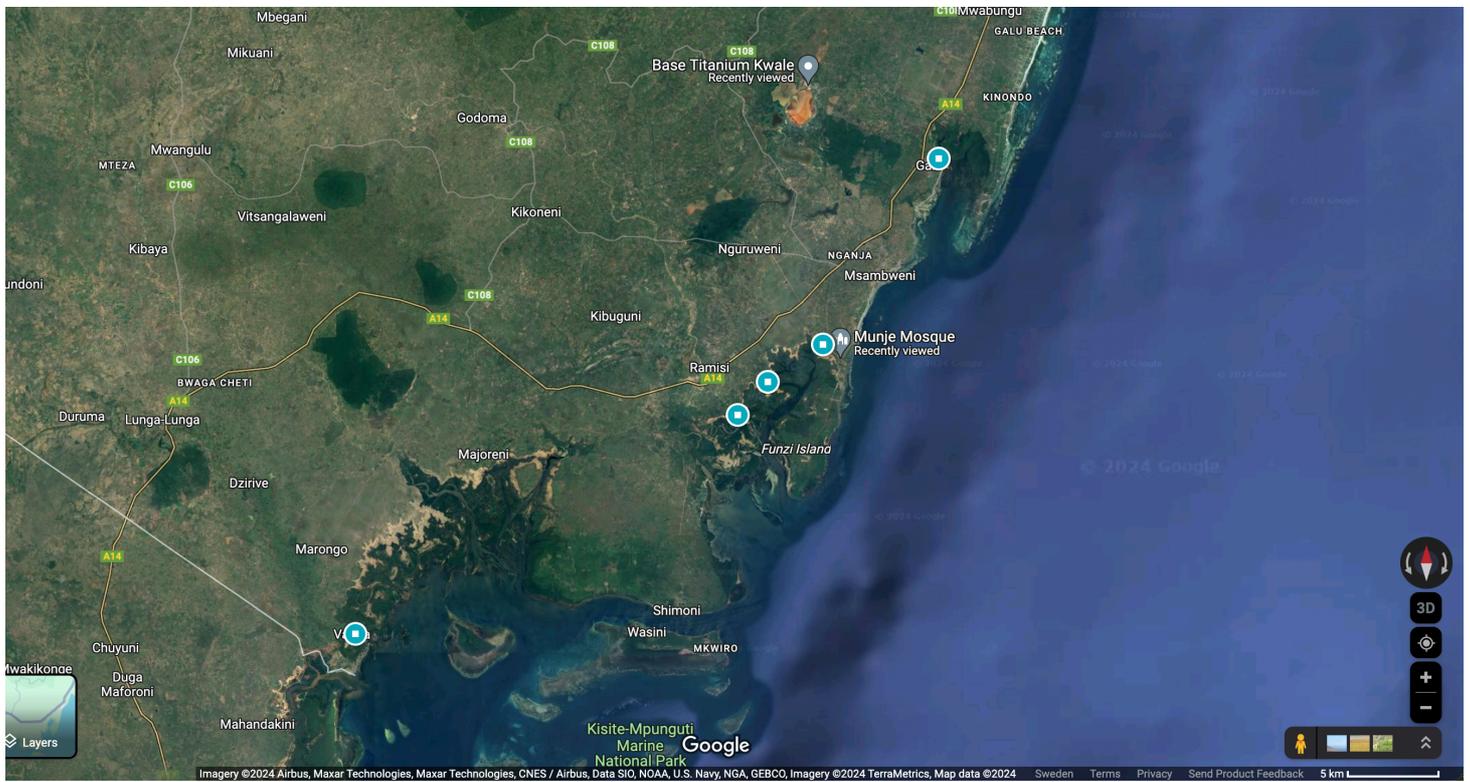


Figure 23. Map: Locations of Base Titanium and mangrove conservation sites (squares); Papariko sites: 3 squares in the middle (Google Maps, 2024)

Bodo, Funzi and Shirazi villages in Kwale (Environmental Programmes Coordinator at Base Titanium, interview 2024), which Vlinder’s CEO denied (Iryna Federenko, interview, 2024) potentially because of not wanting to be associated with the extractive industry. The Participatory Forest Management Plan covers

“2300ha of Mwangamu, Bodo, Funzi and Shirazi mangroves and Buda terrestrial forests (667ha). For that purpose "In just a span of two months COMRED, in collaboration with the Kenya Forest Service (KFS), Vlinder and Umita helped establish Ramisi Forest Association (RACOFA); sensitized 770 community members from 8 villages about the Community Forest Association (CFA); facilitated nomination of 75 delegates representing 13 user groups/rights; facilitated election and training of 13 CFA management committee members on leadership and governance, conflict resolution, resource mobilization and financial management.” (Comred, 2023)

The RACOFA CFA was established as without one the Participatory Forest Management Plan could not be ratified according to Kenyan law. Other partners involved in this PFMP include Kenya Forest Service, Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation, Blue Ventures, Limited Earthlungs, Reforestation Foundation, Plan International and Blue Action Fund (Linkedin, 2024). The involvement of the international NGO in the formation of a new political body of a Community Forest Association is what can also be observed in the areas of the Northern Rangelands Trust's. Abdikadin Hassan from Isiolo Human Rights Defenders claimed that in the case of the NRT

"They register a CBO for 15 people or 20 people. They are giving them money to go and register."

He explained that the people are so poor that they can be easily persuaded if development is promised which might also be the case in Kwale. Nevertheless, through participation in the National Mangrove Committee and the new Participatory Forest Management Plan, international companies like Vlinder and Base Titanium get access to new rule-making on the county and on the national levels. Vlinder's CEO Iryna Federenko explained that they work with community-based organisations (CBOs) as

"for them to kind of start engaging with the government and to kind of say that they want to restore mangroves, et cetera, they need to first obtain the rights to use it." (Iryna Federenko, Vlinder, interview, 2024).

Furthermore, the mentioned forest management plan was initiated by Vlinder:

"We initiated it. The community would want to plant mangroves, but they don't know, like, what kind of permissions or things they need, because this is obviously very new, so there's no legal framework. So we are trying to encourage this legal framework to happen." (Iryna Federenko, Vlinder, interview, 2024)

Through the initiation of the legal framework despite coming from Europe, Vlinder Climate has the ability to establish new rules for resource use as well as for the strengthening of their governance over territories in Kenya. According to Basset and Gautier (2014)

"Territorialisation refers to specific territorial projects in which various actors deploy territorial strategies (territoriality) to produce bounded and controlled spaces (territory) to achieve certain effects. A common goal of territorialization is to govern people and resources located within and around the territory ."

This was also reflected in the Gogoni-Gazi Forest Management Plan 2013-2017 in which the mining company Base Titanium was delegated to various management roles in the mangrove conservation in Kwale. Its roles were to:

- "strengthen the capacity of the CFAs for effective participation in protection and conservation matters"

- “strengthen publicity, lobby groups and individuals to ensure the use of relevant policies that favours conservation, to respond to external threats”
- “undertake site-specific interventions aimed at rehabilitating degraded forest areas
- “seek alternatives and on-farm substitutes for forest products through agroforestry, mariculture, tree planting and other appropriate technologies to alleviate biotic pressure on the forest”
- “initiate MOUs that will spell out relationships, responsibilities and rights of each stakeholder”
- “develop forest management and monitoring plans”
- “disseminate research findings through sustainable and effective awareness and education approaches”
- “train local communities on resource assessment”
- “promote PFM approaches amongst user groups”
- “promote skills for frontline staff to enable them to work more effectively with local communities”
- “train communities on business management skills”
- “develop ecotourism plan”: “survey attractive sites”, “develop marketing strategy”, “strengthen community capacity to manage ecotourism effectively”. (Gogoni Gazi Community Forest Association, 2013, p.33-42).

The foreign companies Vlinder Climate and Base Titanium got to define new rules and policies, which otherwise would be created by the state.

The above reflects again Harvey’s notion of ‘accumulation by dispossession’ which was defined by the state favouring the foreign, private sector as the overseas companies are put in charge of Kenyan resources and the management of crises while the blame for the destruction of the mangroves is put on the local residents (Fairhead, Leach and Scoones, 2012). This echoes a well-known part of the colonial ideologies of the past which “thrived by excreting those who were, in several regards, deemed superfluous, a surfeit within the colonizing nations. This was the case, in particular, of the poor viewed as scrounging off society and the vagabonds and delinquents seen as harmful to the nation.” (Mbembe, 2019). They were kept at bay by militarised forces or made productive to meet the requirements of the modernising colonies, in this case, kept at bay of the previously ‘misused’ mangroves which the state, the extractive industry and the foreign carbon credit companies try to make profitable.

This ideology is reflected both in the management plans with contributions by the Base Titanium and those by Vlinder Climate. In the “Biodiversity Status of Buda Forest, Kenya” (Kamondo et al., 2019) co-written by Base Titanium alongside alongside governmental institutions such as the KWS, KFS, the National Museums of Kenya and National Environmental Management Authority (NEMA) with the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF), the reader is presented with the reasons for the degradation of the coastal forests in Kenya with the main threats being the

expansion of subsistence agriculture extending into the forests, charcoal production, “unsustainable logging”, mining, urbanization, weak law enforcement and “high poverty levels [which] have contributed to unsustainable commercial exploitation for timber, over the years as communities seek means of survival”. Similar reasons are given by Vlinder Climate. What is more, for them, the communities’ use of mangroves directly disadvantages the harvest of the carbon credits. The denial of the residents from the resources is done to prevent ‘leakage’ which is necessary by the Verra voluntary carbon credit methodologies. The prevention of ‘leakage’ makes the company seem more reliable in the carbon markets as the amount of sequestered carbon will be as close as possible to what is sold. Once again the control of the ‘leakage’ will be enforced by the employed scouts who will prevent people from grazing livestock in the conserved areas, as livestock licks the mangroves to supply their salt requirements. They will also prevent illegal logging. When caught logging the communities will face strict action against the offenders (Vlinder Austria, 2022, p.39).

“To prevent people in the community who live near the mangrove forest from depending on the deforestation of the mangroves for charcoal or wood production to generate income for their livelihoods, Vlinder shares 50% of carbon revenues with local stakeholders. By involving them in the entire planting process and continuing to share profits over the next 20 years, it is aimed to create a sense of ownership and awareness for the mangrove forest so that logging or use for agricultural purposes is not pursued. Therefore, leakage is estimated to be zero throughout the whole period. (Vlinder Austria, 2022, p.74)”.

In response to the perception of the local communities as the main cause of mangrove degradation one of the goals of the Papariko project is to establish new livelihoods which will take the anthropogenic pressure off mangrove ecosystems through alternative income activities such as high-value crops, beekeeping and eco-tourism (Vlinder Austria, 2022, p.5). The same was suggested in the Gogoni-Gazi Forest Management Plan 2013-2017 co-developed with Base Titanium (Gogoni Gazi Community Forest Association, 2013, p.iii). Contrary to that, during my fieldwork, I learnt that the villagers did not benefit from some of the proposed alternative livelihoods such as tourism:

"Maybe the organisations that are concerned with mangrove conservation who come and take around the mangrove forests and boat rides in the marshy mangroves to see and enjoy the views with Chinese, Europeans, Asians and sometimes Africans up to the Funzi island. It is however not a basic source of income as they are occasional to come." (Woman 70, Man 50, Bodo, interview 2024)

Still, I did encounter new bee-keeping activities in Munje, where the honey produced by the women involved in the conservation group was later picked up by a middleman to sell in the market.

The creation of new livelihoods is one of the ways territorialisation works as it is a part of “establishing and enforcing new rights and determining acceptable resource uses” (Vuola, 2022 after Vandergeest and Peluso, 1995). Here the Austrian-French-Kenyan mangrove restoration project as well as Base Titanium are supposed to teach the dominant Mijikenda tribe and other groups how to ‘properly’ use the resources, which means: how to not use the mangroves so they generate carbon credits. Historically, however, the tribes’ livelihoods were dependent on the mangroves for survival. In 1998 most of the houses in Kwale in Gasi, Bomani, Bodo and Shirazi where the Pappariko project is situated were built out of mangrove poles with mud-thatched walls and “roofs were made of neatly layered dry coconut leaves (makuti)”. The communities lived off “mangrove pole production, fishing, agriculture, livestock production, small-scale businesses and the tourism industry”. The residents claimed that due to their close proximity to mangrove forests, they should be able to use mangroves freely for the construction of the local houses, yet due to constraints and harassment from "government officials, particularly the Forest Department", the villagers had to purchase mangrove poles from licensed individuals (Juma, 1998, p.759). 26 years after the quoted research during my fieldwork in the coastal villages in Kwale I got similar responses and many houses were still built of mangrove poles and mud.

“In the past, we used mangroves for building, firewood, fencepoles, and boatmaking, but for now, it is illegal for cutting but there are times when the KFS gives out permits to the local women to collect dry/dead mangroves for firewood.” (12 women planting mangroves, Munje)

“In the past, the houses were made of mud and mangrove poles but now we can only build concrete houses due to the ban on cutting mangroves. Also, the mangrove trees have significantly increased in coverage.” (Man, 79, Shirazi, mangrove planter)

“Kenya Forest Service and the police only come to patrol and check out if people are cutting the mangroves. If someone is caught cutting the mangroves, then serious repercussions happen like being taken to jail. I do see the officers who come regularly to monitor for any illegal activities in the mangroves.” (Woman, 33, KISCOL worker, Munje).

Through the ban on cutting mangroves, the local communities become dependent on the use of concrete to build their houses. Firstly, people in the villages are very poor and struggle to afford basic services like education or mobile network, therefore purchasing concrete is a strain on their

already small budget. Secondly, being pushed to purchase concrete through the mangrove pole prohibition takes them from self-sufficiency to inclusion in the international economy, as many of the concrete companies on the coast are Chinese. This is reminiscent of the situation in Northern Kenya where the processes of ‘modernisation’ are also forcing people to be included in the fiscal system as taxpayers through participation in the web of economic interdependencies (Lind, Okenwa and Scoones, 2020, p.16-20). Furthermore, the new rules are monitored by the law enforcing Kenya Forest Service, which also acts as a militarised protector of the mangrove resources and the related carbon credits, which in turn also protect the revenue from the concrete industry. Some residents are trained within the Papariko project to become forest security scouts to protect the mangroves from deforestation with regular patrols (Vlinder Austria, 2022, p.16). In the ideology in which the land has to be developed rationally and productively security is introduced to guarantee it as “the idea is to make borders as the primitive form of keeping at bay enemies, intruders, and strangers—all those who are not one of us” (Mbembe, 2019). The ‘other’ in the case of the carbon credit projects is the one who does not understand the ideological value of the financialisation of the resources. However, in coastal Kenya, the problem is not as much about the lack of understanding of the carbon credit project, but about the continued inequality, poverty and prohibition of the traditional livelihoods, which made the use of the mangroves the means of survival.

Base Titanium and Vlinder Climate work on establishing the new rules for the vast mangrove resources in coastal Kenya, which is one of the markers of territorialisation according to Basset and Gautier (2014). Base Titanium develops mangrove CSR initiatives to secure access to mineral resources in Kenya beyond Kwale County. This calls into question the other potential strategies behind the territorialisation of mangrove conservation by the Papariko project, which I will explore in the coming sections. The two companies collaborate on mangrove conservation in Kwale, Kenya, under the Participatory Forest Management Plan (2023-2027), aiming to govern the coastal forest resource use through carbon credits. These activities, in turn, reduce community control over their villages and mirror Harvey's concept of ‘accumulation by dispossession’. The conservation efforts restrict the villagers from using mangroves, pushing them toward costly alternatives like concrete, thus increasing dependence on the global economy.

5.2.2.4 CARBON CREDITS, UNPAID LABOUR AND LACK OF TRANSPARENCY IN THE PAPARIKO PROJECT

Vlinder Climate directly financialises the mangrove resources through the carbon credit programme Papariko, a prime example of Harvey's notion of 'accumulation by dispossession' through privatising once-common resources, and financialisation through making the carbon offset in the soil tradeable. For the project, Vlinder Climate has been granted the extensive territory covering 3 counties of Kwale, Kilifi and Tana River in exchange for the promised 'development' of the villages near the mangroves. The project is also complementary to the damage caused by the biggest coastal industries including Base Titanium, KISCOL and Asilia bottling company, which are supposed to pay for decreasing the water availability for farming and drinking through the Payments for Ecosystem services like carbon credits (Gogoni Gazi Community Forest Association, 2013, p.19). Papariko's model is borrowed from the NRT's 'community' conservation, yet as we learnt the promised gains for the communities are mainly in the form of the companies' CSR programmes to grant them the residents' compliance with the carbon credit projects. In the project description, Vlinder Climate signs up to give back 50% of the carbon revenue to the communities through a voluntary carbon marketplace Senken, based in Berlin and Cape Town. According to the calculations from Vlinder's website, the project can generate \$353.015 annually at the price of \$6,97/tCO₂ (2023) (Senken, 2024) on an area of 1500 hectares. The price was provided by the carbon credits marketplace Senken, which Vlinder will be using for selling the credits. Senken optimistically estimates that the carbon credits prices will rise with time as the provision of the purchasable credits will be growingly limited. So promised development is based on the speculative international market. However, according to my findings, most of the villagers did not benefit from this carbon credit conservation project.

During my fieldwork at the project's sites in Munje, Shirazi and Bodo (Figure 23) I strived to understand if the communities benefit from Papariko in accordance to the promises made by Vlinder Climate. In Munje I encountered a group of 12 women in the midst of planting mangrove trees with baskets saying "Papariko" and "Umita". They were a part of the Papariko carbon credit project. The women were supportive of mangrove conservation, however, sceptical about the little wages being sporadically paid to them as workers:

"There are not really funds paid directly to us the locals, but through organisations such as VLINDER, UMITA, we do receive some funding to help us propagate mangrove nurseries though

funding is not consistent, only KSH 40,000 [EUR 280] per year which is very little to cater for our livelihoods or kid's needs. The thing is we don't know who gives out the funds but due to fear of transparency, it would be advantageous if at least we had direct connections with the donors for full transparency as the funds received are very low compared to the work done by us local women and it is not monthly income or a guarantee to sustain ourselves. It is very difficult for us to take our kids to school and that is why our community is faced with early pregnancies and theft and crime from the young generation due lack of school fees. This destroys the future of our promising kids who would have been chiefs, even presidents but due to lack of education end up being poor. Since we have helped you with information and your studies, make sure you publish the information especially for the European funding organisations to know about the real situation and intervene accordingly as it would do us much good.” (one out of 12 women planting mangroves for Papariko, Munje, 2024)

The community which was supposed to benefit from the carbon credit project ended up planting mangroves practically for free. The work performed by these women that I encountered, as well as that done by the surrounding local community, was necessary for the carbon credits to be produced and, in turn, traded. This again reflects the imperial character of the relationship between Vlinder Climate managing the project and the labourers, who are working for free to generate revenue from the carbon credits to be sold by the foreign companies on the speculative international market while as the workers are being prohibited from the utilisation of the traditionally used natural resources.



Figure 24. Group of 12 women planting mangroves in Munje as a part of the Papariko project (June, 2024)

Furthermore, despite the planting workers of the Pappariko project admitting that they do not receive any remuneration from their labour, those who are not included fantasise about how much the others benefit:

“It brings profits for those who are involved, as they can meet their daily needs and improve their livelihoods.” (Woman, 33, Munje, interview 2024)

This mirrors the situation in Northern Kenya, where only some groups benefit from the NRT’s conservancies, while all are excluded from their ancestral land on which their livelihoods were dependent. Similarly, those who were not included were also only fantasising about how much the others were benefitting. In another village of the Pappariko project, I encountered a mangrove worker whose wages were also irregular and divided between 33 people. He was

“planting and raising nurseries, and also monitoring for illegal misuse of the trees. We get little incentives from it though not that consistently during planting in our group of 33 and also through organisations such as PAPPARIKO and UMITA which help us to better and sustain ourselves”. (Man, 79, Shirazi, interview, 2024)

In Shirazi, as in Munje, it was only a part of the community benefitting from the project.

“The involved groups receive incentives for conservation and it is not the entire community. The incentives too, that is, you can give up to 100.000, 200.000. And it's a group, not an individual. It's not like it will benefit all. They are not voluntary, that's it, but, they benefit through this group. So, this tent is for all of them, if they will fund them. but, it's not like they have money. In that group, even some are advised, I tell them, give up to 100.000, not just 100.000. Yes. If you split it in 33 people, or 35, or 35, where will it take you? So you can see, two months, or three months, when you struggle to earn, you only get three, four thousand. My wife is getting paid for the nurseries. It's a struggle, because you have been there for three, four hours. It's not like you will be paid, by the end of the day.” (Man, 35, Shirazi, interview, 2024)

The benefit from the project was not in a monetary form but in CSR, which in the end does not contribute to poverty alleviation but just marks the company’s presence in the area.

Bodo was the last site of the Pappariko project that we visited. There once again we drove on a straight gravel road leading to the mangroves with houses scattered around it. There were two large tourist lodge-like houses closest to the mangroves. They were not owned by people from the

village. They looked like the start of more expensive tourist developments in the area. There we interviewed a mother (70) involved in mangrove conservation and nursery cultivation with a son (50). The woman was a volunteer in a group of women working full-time in conservation. She said

“the profits are minimal for self-development is less thus more poverty levels. Mama Vlinder buy the mangrove seedling at 30 bob which is not so often. We also have a credit sacco for self development where we raise the money as a group and can actually take loans from the same. We have no idea about any of the money [from Europe], haven't heard about it and not familiar with European organisations in Kwale. Maybe only through Vlinder, though rarely. The economy is generally low. Just more promises from the conservation organisations but little income and initiative to locals. Like let's say for the women group individuals do participate tirelessly in conservation, planting mangroves and still struggle to support their families and even their children in school, they are still on the poverty levels even after venturing into mangrove conservation.”

This was another example proving the mangrove planting labour being more less unpaid with the higher aim of making the mangroves profitable while living in poverty.

Both in Munje and Shirazi was non-transparent and the access to information was unequal compared to the carbon credit companies, due to illiteracy, lack of knowledge of English and lack of internet. While I could read the information online and by the roads pointing towards European funding in the region and information about the French funding of the Papariko project, the villagers were unaware despite the data being public:

"In Shirazi, we are yet to receive any funding, I really I'm not familiar though I've heard of them".
(Man, 79, Shirazi, 2024)

This lack of transparency puts those who possess information in a position of power and gives them the possibility of manipulation of the information for the benefit of their operations. One of the aims of the project was also to raise awareness in the local community in appreciating the long-term value of mangrove biodiversity to continue the harvest of the carbon credits.

In Bodo, the development was also in the realm of fantasy thriving on the communities without the possibility of fact-checking the statements. The woman (70) and man (50) in Bodo also explained

“Concerning that, maybe if we as women's group had direct access to the European and other related organisations which fund mangrove conservation projects it would be easier and more profitable as it seems that the middle-man organisations which are in Kenya and connect the European organisation

to the local women involved in the real conservation. It really hurts that the women who go to the mud and get into actual planting, conservation and restoration of mangrove forests don't actually get the funds to cater for their daily needs which makes them lose hope and heart to keep on conservation works as the work does not help to change their livelihoods and cater for their basic needs. Some of the middle-men organisations' representatives have since changed their lives from coming on public transport to driving big cars while women who are the ones involved in the actual conservation works still struggle with their day-to-day life sustenance.”

Here the residents explained that most of the profits were going to the middlemen and the companies in charge of the projects. This suggests like in the case of the Northern Rangelands Trust that the ‘community’ conservation functions as a company CSR to support the higher compliance levels with the carbon credit project or other operations as I will later show in the case of Base Titanium.

The Papariko carbon credit project, run by the Austrian company Vlinder Climate, represents an effort towards restoring mangroves in Kenya that, in theory, brings economic gains to local communities through the sales of sequestered carbon. In reality, the project follows the wider regional tendencies of privatisation and dispossession whereby local communities are prohibited from accessing resources formerly used for self-sustenance. Furthermore, as I showed in this section, the mangrove planters worked for little wages or voluntarily and the benefits which were coming were to be shared between the whole villages. This mirrored the CSR programmes of Base Titanium and the NRT, in which little ‘gifts’ were supposed to grant the residents’ compliance for the duration of the project. Finally, there was no transparency in the project’s finances and what was observed by the villagers in Bodo was that the only people getting wealthier through Papariko were those from the middle-man organisation Umita.

5.2.2.5 FUNDING FROM FRANCE: MANGROVES AND PETROLEUM

The potential gains from the territorialisation of most of the coastal counties through the Papariko mangrove restoration project are not elaborated on by the carbon credit company. However, as I pointed out in the previous sections of this thesis, territorialisation through nature conservation and the establishment of new rules for the use of the areas can grant the managing actors access to control over the resources and the decision-making process of who will get to exploit the resources such as petroleum. It is important to note here that Papariko aims to expand to

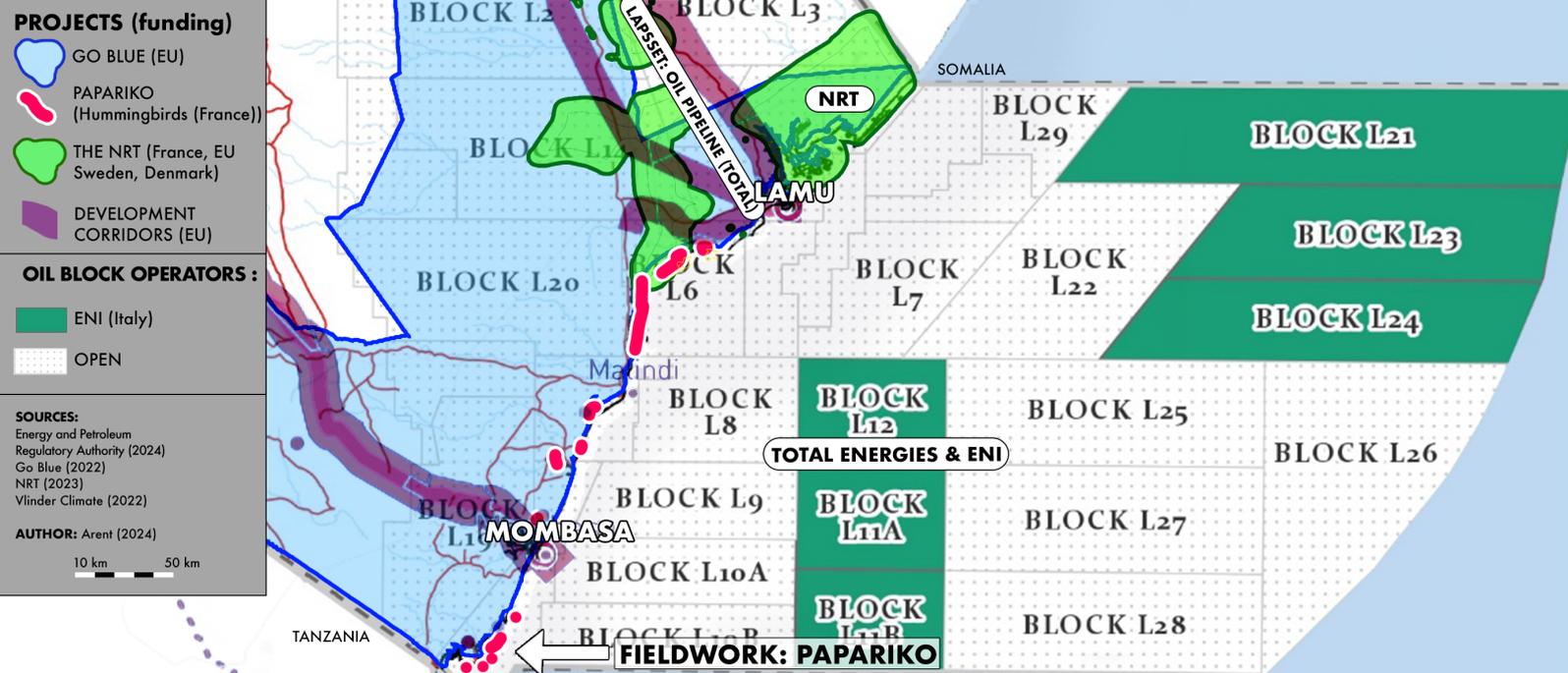


Figure 25. Map: Papariko, Go Blue and oil block operators in Kenya in 2024 (Source: Energy and Petroleum Regulatory Authority, 2024); Total is present in blocks L11A, L11B and L12 sharing them with ENI and Qatar Petroleum (CGTN Africa, 2023). (Map by the author, 2024)

most of the coast of Kenya to Kilifi, Tana River and the previously discussed Kwale, where the Italian company ENI as the operator (41.25% participating interest) and French company Total Energies (33.75% participating interest) together with Qatar Petroleum (25% participating interest) are involved in the exploration of three offshore blocks: L11A, L11B and L12 in the Lamu Basin east of the coast of Kwale (CGTN Africa, 2023). Most of the offshore blocks are however still open (Figure 25), which means that the race for who will get to operate them is still ongoing. The regions are also those receiving funding and expertise from France for strengthening maritime security under the Go Blue project. This is reminiscent of the conclusions from the previous case study of the EU financing the protection of LAPSSET through the militarisation of the NRT as well as the French deployment of the military forces to secure the operations of Total Energies in Mozambique. Furthermore, as we will learn in this section the funding body of Papariko, the French climate fund Hummingbirds has ties to both Total Energies and Tullow Oil. Therefore, in this part, I will explore the potential gains from this mangrove restoration project for the petroleum industry.

Total Energies have a strong presence in the whole East African region. In the Tanzanian Tanga at the coastal border with Kenya concludes the East African Crude Oil Pipeline (EACOP) operated by Total which will transport oil from the Tilenga (TotalEnergies, operator) and Kingfisher (CNOOC, operator) projects in Uganda's Albert Lake basin (Total Energies, 2024.) Total had also 25% shares in the Lokichar oil project before selling its part to the British company Tullow Oil. Now as a shareholder of the Kenya Joint Venture (KJV), it has shares in the Lokichar-Lamu pipeline which is a part of the LAPSSET project connecting the infrastructure with South Sudanese oil reserves (Ministry of Energy and Petroleum, 2024; Mwita, 2024). LAPSSET will also have a

network of motorways with a demand for fuel and Total is the second biggest petrol retailer in the country with 220 petrol stations. Moreover, since 2014 the Italian Eni and Total have been involved in the maritime border dispute in the International Court of Justice covering an area of over 100.000 square kilometres containing “three blocks operated by Eni, with both Somalia and Kenya claiming rights there.” (Offshore Energy Today, 2019). The blocks are thought to have valuable hydrocarbon deposits. The mining sociologist Willice Abuya claims that

“when it comes to the Somali-Kenya dispute, Total is siding with Somalia, because it will be easier for them to exploit the oil if it's given to Somalia as Somalia has no government, no laws. There'll be no procedure. They'll just come in and extract the oil. They exploit the minerals without giving much returns to the governments. So you'll always find their tentacles here and there.” (Willice Abuya, interview, 2024).

This border dispute may cause deep insecurity in the region, which may be an explanation for the French funding of security operations under Go Blue. Willice Abuya moreover claimed that the presence of Total in East Africa is so extensive that their involvement in territorialisation through mangrove conservation could be possible.

Over the years Total has been involved in various CSR activities which included mangrove planting in Kwale in Majoreni, where they planted 14000 seedlings in 2022-2023 as mangroves “store up 10 times more carbon than forests” (Total Energies, 2023). They did not however specify that their oil development projects were also responsible for the destruction of the mentioned forests as

“mangrove forests may be affected in the event of oil spills from exploration, production and transportation activities, especially the Lamu-Mombasa mangrove stretch.” (World Bank, 2016)

The Pappariko project is located in this coastal stretch next to the NRT coastal conservancies in Lamu with funding from the French Development Agency (AFD). Furthermore

“The Arabuko Sokoke Reserve and the Shimba Hill Forest of the coastal areas are experiencing increased activities in the L16, L18 and L19 blocks of the Lamu oil and gas basins.” (World Bank, 2016).

Offsetting through mangrove conservation is therefore important to counterbalance the damage caused by oil spills during activities necessary for petroleum logistics. Total Energies is already

involved in tree planting activities in Kwale, therefore I suggest that with the expansion of the company in Kenya, the number of tree-related CSR activities will grow to grant them the possibility of further resource extraction which was important for the Petroleum Commissioner James Ng'ang'a when selecting which company will be given the new licence:

“Most oil and gas blocks are open so it was imperative for the Ministry to generate data on the availability of these deposits to attract investors which will in the long run benefit the community through Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR).” (Ministry of Energy and Petroleum, 2022)

According to the local government official from Kwale County, territorialisation through mangrove conservation could also make it easier to access the oil resources offshore:

“I think if we are to build any relationship, perhaps if you have secured the territory for the mangroves, essentially you get the priority access to the offshore resource. If an interest came offshore, then they would be closer. If you already have your activities centred along the shoreline, then it would be easier also to build for any exploration offshore.” (interview, 2024)

Historically a company wanted to drill through one of the sites of the Papariko project (Funzi) to explore offshore petroleum:

“In 2016 or 2017, there was a company, I can't remember the name, who at some point had engaged my then minister, the departmental head. They were seeking permission to do some exploration at Funzi. I think they visited the office twice or thrice and then they disappeared. I don't know whether they went ahead. They were seeking to get permission to drill a channel from the Funzi Island then underground, offshore, to explore whether there would be some viable resource. They were seeking essentially permission to explore. The interaction never went to a conclusive end, I don't know what happened.” (Kwale County local government official, interview, 2024).

The territorialisation is also supported by Vlinder's involvement in the county and national resource politics through the participation in the National Mangrove Committee (Base Titanium, interview, 2024) and the Participatory Forest Management Plan for the 2300ha of Mwangamu, Bodo, Funzi and Shirazi mangroves and Buda terrestrial forests of 667ha (Comred, 2023), which can then grant better political access to the offshore blocks.

The role of the involvement in politics and diplomacy in getting new resource extraction licences cannot be overlooked. The French presence in Kenya is also marked by the ambassador's ties with Total Energies' CEO who before getting this rank

“spent two years in the international public affairs department between 2017 and 2019, during which he travelled to Saudi Arabia with [the Total CEO] Pouyanné and managed the thorny issue of one of Total's gas sites in Yemen”.

Wakim, Mouterde and Khoudi (2024) further alleged that

“he maintains ties with Total, as evidenced by social media photos depicting his visit to a nature reserve in Africa alongside a Total executive, in December 2023.”

The key people from the Hummingbirds fund which is the project developer Papariko mangrove restoration have also had long professional engagements and careers at Total Energies or Crédit Agricole, which is one of the key funders of Total Energies (Defund Total Energies, 2024). On one hand, the heads and funders of the Hummingbirds may have decided to change the industry from supporting fossil fuels to bringing on green capitalism. On the other hand, we can speculate that the key people in this company are the corporate extension of the French state making strategic investments for the benefit of France and its capitalist class with Total Energies at the forefront in terms of generating revenue for the country (companiesmarketcap.com, 2024). In the words of the intellectual historian Mathias Hein Jessen (2020):

“Government exists by delegating (or being forced to delegate) power, and by extending rights and privileges to various associations, corporate bodies and corporations in order to achieve certain goals. The main government goal in the neoliberal era of amassing vast profit has long been considered to be best served by one particular corporate form: the publicly traded, for-profit, private corporation. Accordingly, it has been granted extensive rights and privileges to achieve this goal.”

The project developer Hummingbirds is furthermore seeking financing from private funds supported by French public money (Malo Sauzet, Hummingbirds, Interview, 2024). Following Jessen (2020) we can think of a combination of the above as on one hand providing ‘charitable’ state grants for the region on the other with the support of the same state generating revenue from petroleum and carbon credits. Furthermore, in an investigation on Total Energies by Wakim, Mouterde and Khoudi (2024) the authors quoted a senior diplomat describing the turnover of French public officials holding positions at Total proving the point made by Jessen (2020):.

“Nowadays, people stay with Total for several years, they have the same network as before and they use it.”

This may be also applicable to the network of Papariko mangrove project developers with their connections to the French petroleum industry through the CEO - Anais Bach who has served as the head of operations of Nature-based Solutions during her 14-year career at the Paris headquarters of Total Energies, before starting the Hummingbirds in 2022. One of the main investors in Hummingbirds is a French fund Time to Act. Time to Act invests in energy transition, nature-based solutions and venture climate tech. The chairman Damien Ricordeau is also a co-founder of the Hummingbirds. The CEO Frederic Payet was previously the Head of Infrastructure at Crédit Agricole Assurances/Predica and chairman of the Strategic Committee Jean-Jacques Duchamp was previously a deputy CEO at CEO Crédit Agricole Assurances/Predica. The operating partner Alan Follmar also held senior positions at financial institutions such as Investment Director at Proparco, Director at Natixis and at Barclays Capital (Time to Act, 2024). I would like to remind here that Credit Agricole and its subsidiaries are currently the biggest shareholders of Total Energies with shares of USD 14.5 billion. Between 2021 and 2024 the bank was also the second biggest supporter of Total after BNP Paribas with given loans of USD 1338 million (Defund Total Energies, 2024).

The role of the French Hummingbirds is investing in the early stages of nature-based projects globally having in mind corporations which want to offset emissions but do not develop their offsetting schemes.

“We provide the funding for pre-feasibility stages, but because it's the phase where projects are being designed and we have the internal skills to provide technical assistance, then we co-develop the project with the project developer. So what we do is take the project much earlier, bringing them to the moment it's getting certified, so they can leverage this other kind of financing with those bigger corporates that have no technical skills in the voluntary carbon market, they don't know about trees, they don't know about agriculture or mangroves, but they are interested in the commodity. We are a bit in between the project developer and the investor, and also filling that gap because for project developers today, it's difficult to find the money needed to get the project certified.”(Malo Sauzet, Hummingbirds, interview, 2024).

It is important to point out that petroleum corporations are also amongst the biggest offsetters through the voluntary carbon credit markets in Kenya with Shell being the top carbon credit buyer (0.907 million credits), BNP Paribas (0.006 million) as the second top funder of Total Energies was the 4th and Total Energies itself was the 6th biggest offsetter in Kenya with 0.001 million credits

bought (Gabbatiss, 2023). The petroleum corporations Total (0.868m), Shell (9.9m units) and Chevron (6.0m) were also amongst the biggest offsetters globally (Gabbatiss, 2023). Therefore we can speculate that the Pappariko project is also developed to provide for the offsetting needs of the petroleum corporations amongst others.

Hummingbirds also have a connection to the petroleum industry through the links to the mentioned oil projects in Uganda and South Sudan. In Uganda, the French company is working with a partner Equatoria Forestry Company founded by Peter Skov who in the years 2013-2020 worked as a country representative for Tullow Oil in South Sudan. Both in South Sudan and Uganda Skov is developing a teak plantation. In the Ugandan project with Hummingbirds the teak and fast-growing species plantation of 18,000 ha and 20,000 ha of indigenous species, of which the “The teak will be harvested and used as construction material in Uganda, while the rest of the project will generate carbon credits.” (Quantum Commodity Intelligence, 2024). Total Energies is also present in the Tilenga oil extraction site in Uganda as the operator (56,67% shares), while Tullow Oil is the extracting company in Northern Kenya which has collaborated with the Northern Rangelands Trust.

The Pappariko mangrove restoration project, although framed as a conservation effort, appears intertwined with the petroleum industry, with its funders having significant ties to Total Energies and other major French corporations which in Jessen's (2020) understanding are an extension of the French state. The project is furthermore situated in the same regions as the Go Blue programme with the French funding of maritime security, which is essential for the undisturbed operations of the trade routes to the EU and exploitation of the offshore oil reserves. The project developers Hummingbirds, have connections to major fossil fuel players Total Energies and Tullow Oil, leading to speculation that their nature-based initiatives may serve dual purposes: carbon credit trade and facilitating access to the offshore oil as suggested by the director of planning in the Kwale county. The project may also be positioned to benefit petroleum corporations which want to offset emissions as suggested by Malo Sauzet from Hummingbirds, with Total being among the largest buyers of carbon credits globally, including in Kenya. Finally, as I presented in the case of Base Titanium extractive industries use environmental restoration as a way of marketing through developing corporate social responsibility (CSR) programmes, which in return grants them better access to further resource extraction licences.

5.2.3 DISCUSSION

The Papariko mangrove restoration project is situated within wider EU and Kenyan strategies for the coastal region of the country developed in line with the agenda Kenya Vision 2030 and the EU-funded Go Blue. Both of these programs have the aim of strengthening the maritime and coastal economy by generating revenue for the country and the society through ‘development’. In the case of the Papariko project, this is done by financialising local mangroves, i.e., by trading emission reductions in the soil on the voluntary carbon credit markets with the promise of benefits for the local communities. What I however observed during my fieldwork at the sites of the project in Munje, Bodo and Shirazi was that, despite the pledges from Vlinder Climate, most residents did not benefit from the restoration efforts. In fact, they were all prohibited from the use of mangroves for subsistence, which their livelihoods had historically depended on. The restriction of the use of coastal forests was necessary according to the demand of voluntary carbon market guidelines for the prevention of the ‘leakage’ of the sequestered carbon. In effect, the local residents had to stop using mangrove poles for house construction and thus, by now being forced to buy concrete instead, become a part of the official economy. The inclusion of the previously self-sufficient communities in the economy through becoming consumers and tax-payers is what may lift the country to the status of a middle-income nation under Kenya Vision 2030. The mangrove planters of the Papariko project were paid very little and not regularly, therefore the costs of the materials to substitute mangroves were a big strain on their already small budgets. The financial operations of Papariko were not transparent and the power dynamics were unequal due to high illiteracy levels, lack of knowledge of English and therefore lack of access to information on the internet about the carbon credit system. The residents also were not aware of the Vlinder Climate’s profile or the wider dynamics of ‘accumulation by dispossession’, in which they were now participating in the role of the dispossessed. The main beneficiaries were the managing companies Umita, Vlinder Climate and Hummingbirds, which was a similar case to the unequal revenue sharing under the Northern Kenya Grassland Carbon Project by the NRT.

Another beneficiary of the mangrove restoration was the foreign extractive industry. The Australian company Base Titanium has been collaborating with the Austrian company Vlinder Climate on the new Participatory Forest Management Plan 2023-2027 for 667ha of Buda terrestrial forests and 2300ha mangrove forests in Mwandamu, Bodo, Funzi and Shirazi villages in Kwale and within the National Mangrove Committee. This way, both companies were able to access territorialisation through the establishment of new sets of rules for the governed coastal regions.

This made Vlinder Climate participate in local and national land-use politics and through the participation in the management of the coastal forests Base Titanium could govern new areas beyond its mine. According to the Director of Planning of Kwale County, the territorialisation through mangrove restoration on the Kenyan coast could act as an access point to further resources like titanium or petroleum if the companies' activities were already situated in the relevant areas.

This takes me to the correlations between the Papariko mangrove restoration project, the French corporation Total Energies and the French state. One might speculate that the Papariko project, through the conservation activities in the coastal counties of Kwale, Kilifi and Tana River, may function as a way of territorialisation for the petroleum corporation Total Energies as the CEO of Papariko's funder Hummingbirds before establishing the company worked for 14 years for Total Energies in senior strategic positions, which concluded in the role of the Head of Operations of the petroleum giant's Nature-Based Solutions. Hummingbirds also has another project in Uganda in collaboration with a former regional representative of Tullow Oil near another project by Total Energies, Tilenga. Following Jessen's (2020) theory of the corporate state I suggest that the placement of Papariko on most of the coast of Kenya is strategic for France and its corporate extension Total Energies as it is situated also where the Go Blue programme is located with French funding and the expertise in the security sector. This is reminiscent of the French deployment of the military to protect the interests of Total in Mozambique and Cuper's (2021) claim that "European infrastructure and development aid for Africa increasingly aspires to counter the movements of "undesired" (...) populations without touching the global extraction industries and economies", which the security funding aspires to.

Finally, the petroleum industry, including Total Energies, is amongst the biggest offsetters through the voluntary carbon markets globally and in Kenya. The nature-based activities which the extractive industry engages in are also necessary for the marketing of the oil and mining companies as I showed in the case of Base Titanium's CSR. The importance of such strategies was underlined by the Petroleum Commissioner James Ng'ang'a, who claimed that CSR activities were crucial for accessing further extraction licences.

6. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Green transitions and the dependency of the EU's Green Deal on the critical materials imported from Sub-Saharan Africa, which is home to around 30% of global mineral reserves (Prichard, 2009) propel the diversification of strategies in the participation in the new scramble for the continent's resources. As I showed throughout my thesis nature conservation of large territories in Kenya is one of such strategies, which shapes the country's landscape not only through the enclosing of the zones for wildlife or forests but also through other landscape-altering developments such as clean energy and mining projects. Contrary to the goals of the Green Deal about phasing out fossil fuels, the EU itself and its member states' corporations invest in oil infrastructure and new exploration blocks in East Africa.

Foreign companies have been welcomed to invest in the country by the agenda Kenya Vision 2030. There the modernisation of the country through developments such as mining and the optimisation of land use is to be aided by:

- a) "collaboration with private entities to fund and manage public projects or services",
- b) seeking "grants and funding from international organisations, foundations, or bilateral/multilateral agencies to support specific projects or initiatives" and
- g) exploring "innovative financing models such as social impact bonds, green bonds, or results-based financing to attract investment for specific social or environmental initiatives." (Republic of Kenya, 2022, p. 39)

But also through

3.4.8 "Compulsory land acquisition" which "permits the State to acquire property for public use or in the public interest." (Republic of Kenya, 2022, p.72)

This essentially fuels the 'accumulation by dispossession' by excluding the communities from the regions of valuable resources and inviting the foreign capital to exploit what the land holds through a neocolonial "alliance between external imperialism and sections of the local bourgeoisie and petty bourgeoisie." (Mkutu and Mdee, 2020 after Woddis (1967) This phenomenon was present for example in case of Papariko mangrove restoration, in which the main beneficiaries were the Kenyan implementing partner Umita alongside the Austrian company Vlinder Climate and the French fund Hummingbirds to the loss of resource use by the local communities who on top of that planted the trees largely for free. Vlinder's case, alongside those of the NRT and Base Titanium by channelling

the revenue from carbon credits or mining overseas reflected Walter Rodney's (1971) statement that "Foreign investment ensures that the natural resources and the labour of Africa produce economic value which is lost to the continent." This was present in the testimonies of the people I interviewed in Isiolo and Kwale Counties, where despite the carbon credit projects' promise of local development, the poverty levels have stayed the same since their beginnings.

LAPSSET AND INVESTMENTS

The critical mineral resources necessary for the execution of the European Green Deal can be introduced to the global commodity chains only when the relevant infrastructure is provided. This is reflected in the EU's funding of the LAPSSET corridor, which will cut across hundreds of kilometres of Kenya's landscape and provide road and pipeline connections to the previously 'remote' mineral and oil-rich areas in Ethiopia, South Sudan, Uganda and the DRC. The funding of infrastructure by the European actors is something that has been happening historically in the region since the establishment of the Kenya-Uganda railway in 1885 under the first scramble for the continent's resources. Later it took place during the project of the Trans-African Highway (Cupers and Meier, 2020), in which the European states provided the expertise alongside internationalising their extractive corporations such as the Italian petroleum company ENI (Scotto, 2022). Now the same phenomenon is occurring under the EU's funding scheme Global Gateway, of which LAPSSET is a part. The EU-based companies such as Total Energies and ENI are direct beneficiaries of the project through the establishment of pipelines, ports and a refinery in Lamu. They are amongst other European companies benefitting from the opening up the previously remote areas to investments which are enabled by diplomatic efforts and strategically placed development aid in which the companies get introduced to the new territories through the 'aid for trade', which comprises public-private partnerships with the international development agencies. Such were the cases of the collaborations of SIDA with the Swedish mining equipment company Epiroc and Volvo in the DRC or DANIDA's work with Copenhagen-based energy company X-Solar in Kenya. I, therefore, suggest that the funding of nature conservation in Kenya around the new infrastructure corridors such as LAPSSET and the Northern Corridor by the EU-based development agencies is a way of accessing large-scale territories for energy and extractive companies from the EU, which can without extra fees import and export the materials thanks to the new Free Trade Agreement signed between the EU in Kenya in 2023.

CONSERVATION, MILITARISATION AND MINING

The relationships between nature conservation, the military and resource extraction were previously described as new alliances that support competing actors in the new scramble for Africa (Fairhead, Leech and Scoones, 2012). The crossovers between extractive industries were noticeable in the NRT's conservancies funded by SIDA, DANIDA, AFD and the EU and Papariko mangrove restoration efforts with French funding in the regions of the EU-aided Go Blue programme. The NRT has historically worked with Tullow Oil, which aided its expansion to the oil-rich counties in Turkana. Furthermore, the conservancies lie on mineral-rich geology and Isiolo County following the private-sector-oriented land and mining reforms from Kenya Vision 2030 is inviting foreign investors interested in mineral exploration. The EU supports future mineral extraction by aiding in vacating the land from people for the NRT conservancies and militarising the region of the LAPSSET infrastructure critical for the international flow of critical resources. This reflected Cupers' (2021) claim that "European infrastructure and development aid for Africa increasingly aspires to counter the movements of "undesired" (...) populations without touching the global extraction industries and economies". The militarisation was further fuelled by the NRT's expansion causing intertribal conflicts, which in turn were giving reasons for the donors like the EU to provide more funding for security operations.

There were some similarities in the case of Papariko. There we could observe the collaboration between Base Titanium and Vlinder Climate, with the first one aiding mangrove restoration as a part of its CSR programme which allowed the company to get further licences beyond Kwale County: in Kilifi and Lamu. The project also had connections to the petroleum industry through the links to again Tullow Oil and Total Energies. The CEO of the Papariko funder Hummingbirds was a former senior employee of Total Energies and was developing another project in Uganda with a former South Sudan representative for Tullow Oil. The coastal region is also where Total, alongside the Italian company ENI is an operator of 3 oil blocks and the same area where France is investing in maritime security under the Go Blue programme which mirrors the EU's security investments in the mineral-rich LAPSSET regions. The French security investments are also reminiscent of the French military protection of Total Energies in Mozambique.

Since, the Papariko project covered 3 counties of Kwale, Kilifi and Lamu, where the interest in offshore petroleum is I suggest that through the territorialisation and involvement in coastal politics through the conservation efforts and Go Blue, the petroleum giant Total Energies gets preferential access to the oil reserves, which was claimed by the Kwale County's Director of Planning. Furthermore, companies' CSR activities like planting mangroves were important for the Ministry of Energy and Petroleum when granting new extraction licences to companies (Ministry of

Energy and Petroleum, 2022). Finally, the petroleum industry, including Total Energies, is amongst the biggest offsetters in the voluntary carbon credit markets globally and in Kenya. I, therefore, believe that both the Northern Kenya Grassland Carbon Project and Papariko were developed with the oil corporations in mind. This shows us how the offsetting markets and the dependency of the international economy on oil and minerals can indirectly shape physical landscapes in the Global South through the carbon credit projects.

SEDENTARISATION AND PROHIBITION OF THE USE OF RESOURCES

The future investments are also supported by the sedentarisation of the pastoralists and vacating large parcels of land from the herd-grazing tribes for clean energy projects, agriculture, tourism, meat production or resource extraction. Enclosing of the previously common land in Northern Kenya was aided by the EU's funding of the NRT conservancies and modernisation of agriculture and forestry through projects such as Regreening Africa often at the cost of the pastoralists and forest-dependent communities being deprived of the natural resources crucial for their subsistence livelihoods. The process of sedentarisation was visible in the NRT assisting the pastoralists in shifting their livelihoods by providing them with loans to start businesses like shops. Through the sedentarisation of the previously nomadic communities, the NRT could expand its territory free of the grazing tribes. In the case of Papariko, the rural communities after the prohibition of the use of mangroves for house building became dependent on the concrete industry, which was making them poorer but generating revenue for the quarries, concrete companies and the country through the taxes. The enclosing of the natural resources from the pastoralists and forest-dependent communities was forcing the no-longer self-sufficient residents to participate in the global economy and the Kenyan fiscal system by becoming consumers and tax-payers, which supports the government in generating revenue from previously remote regions (Lind, Okenwa and Scoones, 2020, p.16) and lifting the country to the status of a middle-income nation under the goals of the Kenya Vision 2030. The prohibition of the residents from the previously common land was also necessary for the success of the carbon credit projects: Northern Kenya Grassland Carbon Project and Papariko which relied on the control of the carbon 'leakage'.

TERRITORIALISATION

The private, foreign companies supported their own territorialisation through the manipulation of crises by which the 'accumulation by dispossession' operates. The NRT, Vlinder Climate and the foreign-capital-inviting government picture the local communities as 'uncivilised'

poachers, threats to the ecosystems or not optimising the extraction of mineral resources, therefore giving the companies reasons to intervene to solve the problems in a way which generates further revenue and creates a sense of dependency of the communities. Territorialisation is also supported by the introduction of the new sets of rules (Vuola, 2022) which was observed in both the nature conservation efforts by the NRT and Vlinder Climate. Both of the companies were involved in regional legislative processes, in the case of the first one through pushing through the Conservancy and Rangelands Bills in Isiolo County and in the latter's involvement in the National Mangrove Committee and the creation of the Participatory Forest Management Plan for around 3000 ha of the coastal forests in Kwale County. The NRT and Vlinder Climate were also involved in the creation of the new Community-Based Organisations, which according to some were cases of power imbalance between the conservation companies which had the information, connections and capital, while the communities were largely illiterate, very poor, without Internet and lacking the proficiency in English, which was making them subjects of manipulation in favour of the conservation companies and their partners. The Community-Based Organisations that comprised only parts of the local residents were agreeing to set aside their natural resources for conservation efforts in exchange for promised 'development' through the carbon credit funds. In both cases, however, it was only a small group of individuals benefitting, while the rest were losing access to the once-common resources. In Papariko the mangrove planters were paid very little and irregularly, which did not help them to provide for example their children's education. The benefits from the Northern Kenya Grassland Carbon Project and Papariko were similar to those from the CSR programmes of extractive companies like Base Titanium in the form of bursaries, infrastructure, new classrooms or health facilities. This way the carbon credit companies as well as the extractive companies could replace the local governments in their provision of services creating a sense of dependency of the communities on foreign companies. This phenomenon was a result of companies like Base Titanium manipulating the national legislation, which resulted in the royalties never getting to the county government, hence the companies could take over the government's role as they controlled the provision of funding to the communities. Moreover, the provision of services through the CSR programmes granted the carbon credit and extractive companies higher compliance rates with the local communities and the politicians, which let them access further territories for generating revenue. Finally, the participation in regional politics and the governance over large territories was allowing the companies to join the decision-making processes of who will get to invest or extract resources in the given locations.

To conclude, the EU member states alter Kenya's landscape and the related livelihoods by funding nature conservation in the country. This enables them to join the governance processes of large territories with mineral and oil richness. The EU and its member states through funding the NRT play a big role in the regional transformations through the sedentarisation of the pastoralists in Northern Kenya, therefore vacating previously common land for investments. This process fuels intertribal conflicts between the pastoralists, which propels the EU-funded militarisation of the region. This in turn grants the security of the LAPSSSET corridor, which is important for the global circulation of critical materials necessary for green transitions and for generating revenue from the clean energy technology production largely based in the EU. Contrary to the objectives of the European Green Deal, the EU and its member states also support the regional expansion of the fossil fuel corporations ENI and Total Energies through diplomatic efforts and funding of the oil infrastructure. Furthermore, there is a strong correlation between the EU-funded nature conservation projects by the NRT and Vlinder Climate/Hummingbirds and the extractive industry through the strategic placing of the projects over critical minerals and petroleum reserves and the infrastructure corridors but also through the direct links of the projects to the extractive companies like Total Energies, Tullow Oil or Base Titanium through the personal connections, funding and CSR programmes. The nature conservation projects grant the involved companies preferential access to the local resources. Nature conservation treated as a form of development aid also supported negotiations of the Kenya-EU Free Trade Agreement of 2023, which granted favourable conditions to these EU-based extractive and energy companies establishing new projects in the region. Finally, in both case studies in northern and coastal Kenya nature conservation efforts were denying the local communities subsistence livelihoods, therefore forcibly including them in the global economy and the fiscal system of the country, which contributes to the goal of Kenya Vision 2030 of becoming a middle-income nation through generating revenue from taxes and the growing number of consumers.

LESSONS FOR LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTS

What landscape architects can take away from my thesis is that the analysis of the injustices embedded in the landscapes should be a crucial part of the landscape planning process as was previously stated by critical landscape scholars such as Yigit Turan (2018), Dang (2021) or Sevilla-Buitrago (2017). Only when this is performed with a land justice perspective in mind, the next steps can be considered based on the knowledge gained. If the analysis is neglected or

misused, landscape design can lead to further exclusion of already marginalised communities. This was visible in the surface-level studies of the regions by the international carbon credit companies, which misinterpreted the social contexts and manipulated the crises to act as the ‘altruist saviours’ to their benefit of financialising the territories. Furthermore, the case studies of the NRT and Papaniko revealed the coloniality of the landscape management plans in their use of the language of describing the local communities as damaging to the resources, therefore requiring them to be ‘taught’ by the international experts how to use their ancestral land. This part of landscape planning acted as a regulatory tool altering rural communities’ behaviours and livelihoods, which was historically an instrument of the British settlers to capture Kenyan riches. I believe that in the times of intensifying environmental racism and privatisation of resources, landscape architects should focus on the question of how landscapes can be decolonised and commonised rather than how they can be designed.

7. BIBLIOGRAPHY

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INTERVIEWS (MAY-JULY 2024)

NAIROBI

Ex-worker of the Wind Power Lake Turkana

First Secretary/Senior Programme Manager at the Swedish Embassy in Nairobi

First Secretary in Environment, Climate, Biodiversity, Swedish Embassy in Nairobi

Malo Sauzet, Hummingbirds

ONLINE

Abdikadin Hassan, chairman, Isiolo Human Rights Defenders, private communication

Gatu wa Mbaria, email exchange

Iryna Federenko, Vlinder Climate, video call

Mordecai Ogada, email exchange

Shaban Omar, video call

Willice Abuya, video call

ISIOLO COUNTY

Meru, Borana, Somali and Turkana are the names of tribes

Abdikadin Hassan, chairman, Isiolo Human Rights Defenders

Joseph Kalapata, 52

Man, 25, Borana, pastoralist

Man, 37, Borana

Man, 40, Borana

Man, 40, Borana

Man, 45, Borana

Man, 65, Borana, pastoralist

Man, 20, Meru, pastoralist

Man, 35, Meru

Man, 21, Somali

Man, 31, Somali, pastoralist

Man, 28, Turkana of Loruko

Man, 40, Turkana or Loruko elder

Woman, 22, Borana

Woman, 26, Borana, unemployed

Woman, 37, Somali

Woman, 55, Turkana of Loruko

KWALE COUNTY

Shirazi, Bodo, Gazi, Vanga and Munje are the names of villages

Base Titanium representative

Man, 79, Shirazi

Man, 79, Shirazi

Man, 35, Shirazi

Man 50, Bodo

Woman 70, Bodo

Local government official

Woman, 35, Gazi

Woman, 50, Vanga

Woman, 33, Munje

12 women planting mangroves, Munje