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ORIGINAL ARTICLE

Neglected Components in Dominant Accounts of a Good Life? — Disagreements among Maasai Pastoralists

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Abstract
Lists of basic needs necessary for a decent human life have found their way into approaches to sustainable development such as the "Safe and Just Space for Humanity" framework. The "dominant" conceptions of a decent human life have been criticised by social groups which find themselves at the margins of public debates such as the Degrowth or Post-colonial movements. According to the latter, the dominant conceptions neglect certain values which are necessary constituents of a decent human life: meaningful activities, convivial activities, and relationships of certain quality (love, respect, harmony, care) towards human and other-than-human beings. With this paper, we present results of interviews with male Maasai pastoralists in a village in Northern Tanzania in which we elicited what they consider as requirements for a good human life. According to our results, Maasai pastoralists disagree about the necessary constituents of a decent human life as well, replicating the controversy from the international debates between the proponents of the dominant approaches and their critics from Post-colonial and Degrowth movements.

Keywords Conviviality · Good life · Maasai pastoralists · Degrowth · Sustainable development

Introduction

Sustainable development aims at a social organisation of all global societies in which the needs of all current beings are satisfied without compromising the needs of future generations (WCED 1987). Kate Raworth (2012, 2017) has suggested that we interpret the ideal of sustainable development in terms of a "safe and just space for humanity". This interpretation contains the requirement that (i) human interactions with the natural world comply with the thresholds from biophysical systems ("safe") and that (ii) all humans realise a quality of life above a certain minimal level ("just").

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The thresholds from biophysical systems are usually represented by the so-called Planetary Boundaries (Rockström et al. 2009, most recent version Richardson et al. 2023). To demarcate the just space for humanity, a specification of the decent human life, i.e., the minimal quality of human life which a moral community owes to all its members, is needed.

The debate on how to conceptualise the quality of human life has changed considerably in the last thirty years, and arguably for the better. It has turned from a representation mainly in terms of income towards multi-dimensional accounts based on diverse normative concerns such as basic needs, capabilities, satisfaction with one's own life, or the degrees of happiness (c.f. Stiglitz et al., 2009; Metz, 2017:114; Stewart, 2019). A prominent outcome of this debate was the Human Development Index (HDI) which has been broadly adopted in international politics (Sen 2000). The HDI contains three components which determine one's quality of life: income, life expectancy, and education.

Still, there is a broad agreement among scholars that the three components of the HDI are too narrow to adequately represent a decent level of human well-being (Sen 2000; Stewart et al., 2018: Chapter 6). To account for this critique, recent representations of the decent human life in

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approaches to sustainable development use a broader list of necessary components. O'Neill et al. (2018) have suggested a comprehensive account of the necessary constituents of a decent human life which includes the following components:

- Material standard of living (income, nutrition, sanitation, access to energy)
- Education
- Healthy life expectancy
- Employment
- Political participation (democratic quality)
- Social support (availability of friends/relatives to count on in times of need)
- Distributive justice (distribution of income)
- Satisfaction with one's life.

However, even this comprehensive list of requirements for a decent human life faces criticism from social groups which find themselves at the margins of public-political debates — such as the members of socio-ecological movements in (Western) Europe (the so-called Degrowth or Post-Growth movement) and representatives of indigenous societies in the Global South. They argue that certain values they consider as essential components of a good or fulfilling life are not adequately represented in the mainstream discourses on development (Muraca, 2012; Kallis et al., 2018; Beling et al., 2018; Yap and Watene, 2019; Virtanen et al., 2020; Vásquez-Fernández and Ahenakew pii tai poo taa, 2020). According to them, the following values are necessary for an adequate human life as well:

- relationships of certain quality (love, respect, reciprocity, harmony, care) between humans and towards other-than-human beings (Beling et al. 2018; Virtanen et al. 2020, Vásquez-Fernández and Ahenakew pii tai poo taa, 2020)
- conviviality (Illich 1973; Latouche 2010)
- meaningfulness of one's activities (Illich 1973; Latouche 2010)

Since even this more comprehensive list does not include some of the values emphasised by marginalised communities, the notion of a decent human life in approaches to sustainable development is in danger of strengthening the asymmetry problematised in decolonial studies: a politically normative concept established in the centre conflicts with evaluative or epistemic stances from the margins.

This paper contributes to the debate on the conceptualisation of the notion of "decent quality of life" by invoking voices of a semi-nomadic Maasai pastoralists from the Northern part of Tanzania.

Semi-nomadic pastoralists in East Africa provide a prominent example for communities suppressed *because of* their way of living and, therefore, to the underlying conceptions of a good life. They have been marginalised by the political mainstream since the arrival of Europeans in the nineteenth century (Oba, 2013; Hodgson, 2001; Fratkin, 2001; Homewood and Rodgers, 1991). Several policy programmes were implemented since that time, programmes which aimed at changing the way of life of nomadic pastoralists nudging or even forcing them into sedentary ways of life and agricultural production instead of pastoralism (Aminzade et al., 2018; Coulson, 2013; Schneider, 2006; Scott, 1998).

Colonial and post-colonial administrations established narratives according to which the way of life of nomadic pastoralists was archaic and backward because it was economically inefficient — less productive than the industrial farming and wasting arable lands — and could not generate enough income to afford all the amenities necessary for a decent life (Mhajida, 2019; Ndaskoi, 2005; May & McCabe, 2004; Neumann 2001).

Transformation of the native lifestyle was often paternalistically justified by the claim, to improve pastoralists' quality of life as the following quotation of Nyerere[1] demonstrates:

> People tell me, "The Masai are completely happy." I tell them, it's not a question of whether they are happy. That's a philosophical question. I'm not trying to make them happy! But there is a difference between clean water and dirty water. My problem is to get that woman clean water. My problem is to get her a healthy child. Happy! I'm not involving myself in that. The Masai know that these things are possible- milk for children, clean water, good houses: these things are objective, desirable, necessary. (Julius Nyerere, quoted in Smith, 1981: 12)

Meanwhile, there is growing research aiming to elicit conceptions of the good life of semi-nomadic pastoralists in Eastern Africa (Woodhouse and McCabe, 2018; Walker et al. 2021). Based on these insights, our research focuses on the question of how members of a community marginalised because of their way of living — Maasai pastoralists — view the controversy about the necessary components of a decent human life depicted above.

The paper contributes to the research which aims to strengthen knowledge from the margin (Hoang, 2022; Mukono & Sambaiga, 2022; Sultana, 2021; Hooks, 1984) but which tries also to show complexity of the views from the margin. It presents results of an interdisciplinary collaboration between a scholar with Maasai origin trained in political economy (Leiyo Singo) and a scholar trained in practical philosophy in Europe (Eugen Pissarskoi).

[1] Julius Nyerere was the first President of Tanzania, 1962–1985.

According to our results, the necessary constituents of a good life are controversial among the Maasai pastoralists as well: some of them endorse the conception, which is represented in the dominant discourses on development, some of them endorse the constituents which the proponents of Degrowth and Post-colonial positions advocate for. We interpret these results as initial evidence for the claim that the controversy about the necessary constituents of a decent life is not restricted to the Global North but is entrenched into various communities worldwide (similar results are found in Matthews et al., [forthcoming]). With our paper, we intend to motivate further research since substantial policy implications follow (we indicate them in the last section), especially if the initial evidence from this paper gains further empirical support. The controversial conceptions of a decent human life require radically different socio-economic institutions for their realisation: The additional components of the Degrowth and Post-colonial conceptions — relational values and meaningfulness of activities — are better realised outside of capitalistic markets.

The text is organised as follows. In the next section, we describe the controversy as it has emerged in the Global North among a dominant conception of a decent life and its alternative. In the Methods section, we describe the methodology of our empirical research. The "Interview Results" section presents the results of our interviews. Subsequently, in the last section, we discuss what follows from them regarding the identified controversy about conceptions of a decent life.

State of Research: Controversy about Conceptions of a Decent Life

Conceptions of a Decent Life in Accounts of Human and Sustainable Development

Conceptions of a good human life are notoriously diverse. There is a broad variety of related concepts: flourishing life, fulfilling life, well-being/welfare, happiness, dignity. Usually, the concepts are used in a close connection with a particular normative background theory. Utilitarian ethicists prefer using the notions of happiness, well-being/welfare, or goodness of a life. Ethicists working within Aristotelian normative traditions often use the notion "fulfilling life" or "flourishing" to express the highest ideal of a human life (translating the Greek "eudaimonia"). "Dignity" is a central normative concept in Kantian ethics in the Global North, but plays also a central role in Afro-Communitarianism which uses African notions ("ubuntu" in Bantu, "unhu" in Shona, "utu" in Swahili, or "botha" in Tswana translated into English as "humanness" or "personhood" (Ikuenobe, 2016: 445)) to express the highest ideal of a human life. The notion "good life" (translating "buen vivir") is used in teleological ethics from Latin America (c.f. Agostino and Dübgen, 2014).[2]

There is no agreement on theories systematising our reasoning about the normative sources of the quality of human life (Griffin, 1986; Estes and Sirgy, 2017; Crisp 2021). Approaches to sustainable development do not presuppose a full-fledged conception of the quality of human life. Rather, they contain the normative requirement that a quality of human life at a certain minimal level be available to everybody. For that reason, approaches to sustainable development need a specification of minimal conditions which each individual ought to be able to attain, or in other words, of components of a human life which a moral community owes to each of its members. We shall refer to these components of a fulfilling life as the "necessary components of a decent human life" (or human life of a decent quality).

At the international policy level, utilitarianism had provided for a long time the theoretical background for evaluation of the quality of human life, measuring it in terms of monetary income. This changed with the notion of "Human Development" introduced by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP, 1990) and the corresponding measure "Human Development Index" which has become an established representation of a decent quality of human life (UNDP, 2020: 227). Since the three dimensions of the HDI (income, health, and education) are too narrow to adequately represent the human quality of life (Sen 2000; Stewart et al. 2018), further lists of basic constituents have been suggested and justified by scholars from different parts of the world (e.g., Doyal and Gough, 1991; Max-Neef et al., 1992; Narayan et al. 2000, Nussbaum 2000; Alkire, 2002).

Scholars working on approaches to sustainable development have recently turned their attention to conceptions of a decent human life when operationalising the "just space" for humanity (Raworth, 2012; 2017). The most comprehensive account has been suggested by O'Neill et al. (2018). The components of their approach are derived from several theories of a good life: basically, they refer to the "Theory of Human Needs" (Doyal and Gough, 1991) which they have adjusted by components used by Raworth (2017) and added an indicator representing a subjective evaluation of the quality of life (life satisfaction). The resulting components "are common to studies following the SJS [safe and just space] framework and the social objectives contained in the SDGs [Sustainable Development Goals]" (O'Neill et al., 2018: 89). For each component, O'Neill et al. have specified a minimal threshold value which is required for attaining a decent level of a particular component. According to their results, some states fulfil the thresholds in all eleven constituents

[2] This listing does not aim at completeness.

(Netherlands, Austria, Germany), but other, e.g., Malawi, Zambia, or Chad, do not meet even one.

We take the list by O'Neill — we shall refer to it as the "Human-Needs-Inspired-List" (its components are listed in Section 1) — as an example for a comprehensive account of the necessary constituents of a human life of a decent quality. As we shall argue in the following, even this extended list is considered by some stakeholders as not a complete one. Let us turn to this more radical position.

Critique of the Minimal Requirements for a Decent Human Life: Neglected Components

Degrowth Critique

Proponents of Post-colonial movements and of ecologically motivated movements in the Global North such as the Degrowth or Post-Growth movement (we shall use the name "Degrowth") criticise the conceptions of a good life used in the mainstream approaches to sustainable development.

Degrowth questioning of the mainstream conceptions of a good life (e.g., Muraca, 2012; 2014; Kallis et al., 2018; Büchs and Koch, 2019) goes back to the criticism of the notions of "development", "progress", or "quality of life" brought forward in the 1970s by authors such as Ivan Illich, Andé Gorz, and Marshall Sahlins. Degrowth proponents concede that certain components of a good life have been realised to an unprecedentedly high degree on average in the early industrialised, affluent societies.[3] Despite these achievements, their criticism proceeds, the socio-economic institutions of capitalist economies hinder their citizens from realising further components of a fulfilling human life whose absence substantially impoverishes its quality (e.g., Illich, 1973: 24; Latouche, 2010: 70): notably, autonomous or self-determined activities, solidarity, and convivial relationships.

The Degrowth proponents justify this claim by the following reasoning. The early industrialised, today affluent societies of the Global North have established socio-economic institutions dubbed as market or capitalist economies (for a historical review, c.f., Polanyi, 1944): they have a relatively high proportion of private ownership of land and of the means of production, a relatively high division of labour in production of goods and services, a universal means of exchange, and markets on which prices for goods and services are set. Citizens of these societies spend a relatively high proportion of their time in market activities: most of their time, they are engaged in generation (earning) of financial income (usually by exchanging their labour for wages), in educative activities for increasing the productivity of their labour, or in spending their income.

Market-mediated activities are relatively efficient in provisioning values which can be satisfied by exchange. However, according to the Degrowth position, market-mediated activities are relatively inefficient in provisioning the values of autonomy/self-determination, solidarity, and conviviality (c.f. Nørgård, 2013). Degrowth proponents do not deny that the transformation to the market or capitalist economies in the Global North has liberated a vast majority of its citizens from the social restrictions in the pre-industrial societies offering them much richer opportunities to pursue their own conception of a good life (take the impact on women's opportunities as an example). However — and here the Degrowth criticism comes into play — for the vast majority of citizens of market or capitalist economies in the Global North, exchanging one's labour for wage has emerged as the sole source of income which is a necessary means for realisation of one's conception of a good life in these economies. Exchanging one's labour for wage is according to the Degrowth perspective inefficient in realising the value of autonomy/self-determination because a labourer usually contributes to a goal which is set by her/his employers.

Market-mediated activities are allegedly inefficient in realising convivial values because they are governed by formal rules, set hierarchies, and external goals (i.e., goals which had been set without that one had a real opportunity to determine them). Convivial values are most efficiently realised in social interactions whose goals are shared by all participants, where the social roles/hierarchies are unanimously accepted and whose rules are internalised. These kinds of interactions can typically be experienced in friendships and families but also in self-organised enterprises or activities. Solidarity is typically realised in caring activities: helping or supporting others without expecting a reward — a relationship which is impeded by formal contracts specifying the amount of support and the corresponding reward.

According to the Degrowth criticism, the ways of life which are outcomes of the capitalistic organisation of economies overprovide the individuals with exchangeable goods and services and underprovide them with values which result from autonomous, caring, and convivial activities. Or, to put it differently, one would lead a better life than an average life in an early industrialised, capitalistically organised society of the Global North if autonomy, caring, and convivial values — self-determined, joyful activities among mutually recognised/respected beings, laughing, playing — were realised to a higher degree even if they had less financial income and wealth.

[3] Evidence for components of a good life which are met to a high level in the affluent societies can be found in O'Neill et al. (2018).

Post-colonial Critique

Post-colonial scholars further emphasise the importance of relational values between humans but also towards non-human beings for a fulfilling life:

> From the Indigenous perspective, respect inherently implies relatedness and 'respect is an essential feature for establishing and maintaining relatedness'. [...] For Shawn Wilson, an Opaskwayak Cree from Canada, relationships extend to interaction with all creation. Likewise, for the Burungu, Kuku-Yalanaji Aboriginal People in Australia, this relatedness is dynamic, complex, and transcends human beings, and is extended to the Land—including animals, plants, waters, the sky and spirits. (Vásquez-Fernández and Cash Ahenakew pii tai poo taa 2020: 67).
>
> One of the characteristics for Indigenous theories of constructing sustainability and communal well-being is that they draw from contextualizing one's healthy relations with other humans and other-than-human beings (understood as nonhuman beings, such as plants, animals, and many other lifeforms regarded in animist conceptualizations), rather than considering them as independent entities. (Virtanen et al. 2020: 78).

Meanwhile, empirical research among semi-pastoralist communities in East Africa has been conducted inquiring which components of a good life members of Maasai in Tanzania (Woodhouse and McCabe, 2018) and of Samburu in Kenya (Walker et al. 2021) endorse. Both studies presupposed the framework "Wellbeing in Developing Countries" (McGregor, 2007) which distinguishes three general dimensions of a good life: material, subjective, and relational.

Woodhouse and McCabe (2018) report that "Relational aspects of well-being were discussed far more in the women's interviews than in the men's" (p. 8, own numbering). Additionally, the older generations of interviewed pastoralists were concerned about preservation of relational values such as cultural traditions (Woodhouse and McCabe, 2018: 9), and they demonstrated less endorsement of material constituents such as possession of private land or house than the younger Maasai interviewees (Woodhouse and McCabe, 2018: 6).

Walker et al. (2021) conducted their interviews only with women. Their results confirm Woodhouse's et al. assessment that members of the semi-nomadic pastoralist communities mention relational values besides the material dimension of well-being when confronted with the question what a good life means for them. Walker et al. (2021) have additionally asked their interviewees to identify the items they would consider as the most important ones for a good life. According to their results, the first five items on the ranked list are sending children to school, having children, good heart, agency, spirituality. The most relevant constituent from the material dimension, water, appears on the sixth position (c.f. Walker et al., 2021: 1132).

The outcomes of these studies support the post-colonial criticism: the Maasai and Samburu communities consider relational values as basic components of their well-being (Walker et al., 2021). However, Woodhouse and McCabe (2018) have also observed that their respondents differed in the prioritisation of the constituents of well-being with differences between gender and age groups (Woodhouse and McCabe, 2018). This observation leads to our research question. According to the narrative we have described in this section, indigenous communities unanimously disagree even with the most comprehensive account of the dominant conception of a good life, the Human-Needs-Inspired List. Additionally, this narrative proceeds, indigenous communities endorse a conception of a decent human life which complies with the conception supported by radical socio-ecological movements in the Global North.

As Woodhouse and McCabe (2018) indicate, Maasai might disagree about what is necessary for a decent quality of human life. With our research, we intend to shed a more detailed light on the presumable consensus among Maasai on conceptions of a good life by discussing with their members what they think about the two conceptions of a decent life distinguished above.

Methods

Choice of the Study Area

The study area — Oltukai village in Monduli District of Arusha region — is found within the Tarangire-Manyara Ecosystem (TME) located between 03° 48′ 02″ and 03° 35′ S, 35° 48′ and 35° 59′ 25″W. As one of the oldest pastoral districts in the country, several resettlement schemes and development interventions aimed to "develop" pastoralists were tried there. With the passage of the National Villages and Ujamaa villages Act of 1974 which stated that all Tanzanians were to live in "proper" villages, operation *imparnati* (permanent settlements) was carried out across Maasailand to resettle pastoralists. This policy was the basis for the formation of villages in Tanzania. Following enactment of the Range Management and Development Act of 1964, the Maasai Livestock and Range Management Project (MLDRMP) was implemented as a model for extending improved practices and production throughout the district (Hodgson, 2001). The presence of Manyara Ranch is a remaining legacy of this initiative. Figure 1 shows the location of the study area.

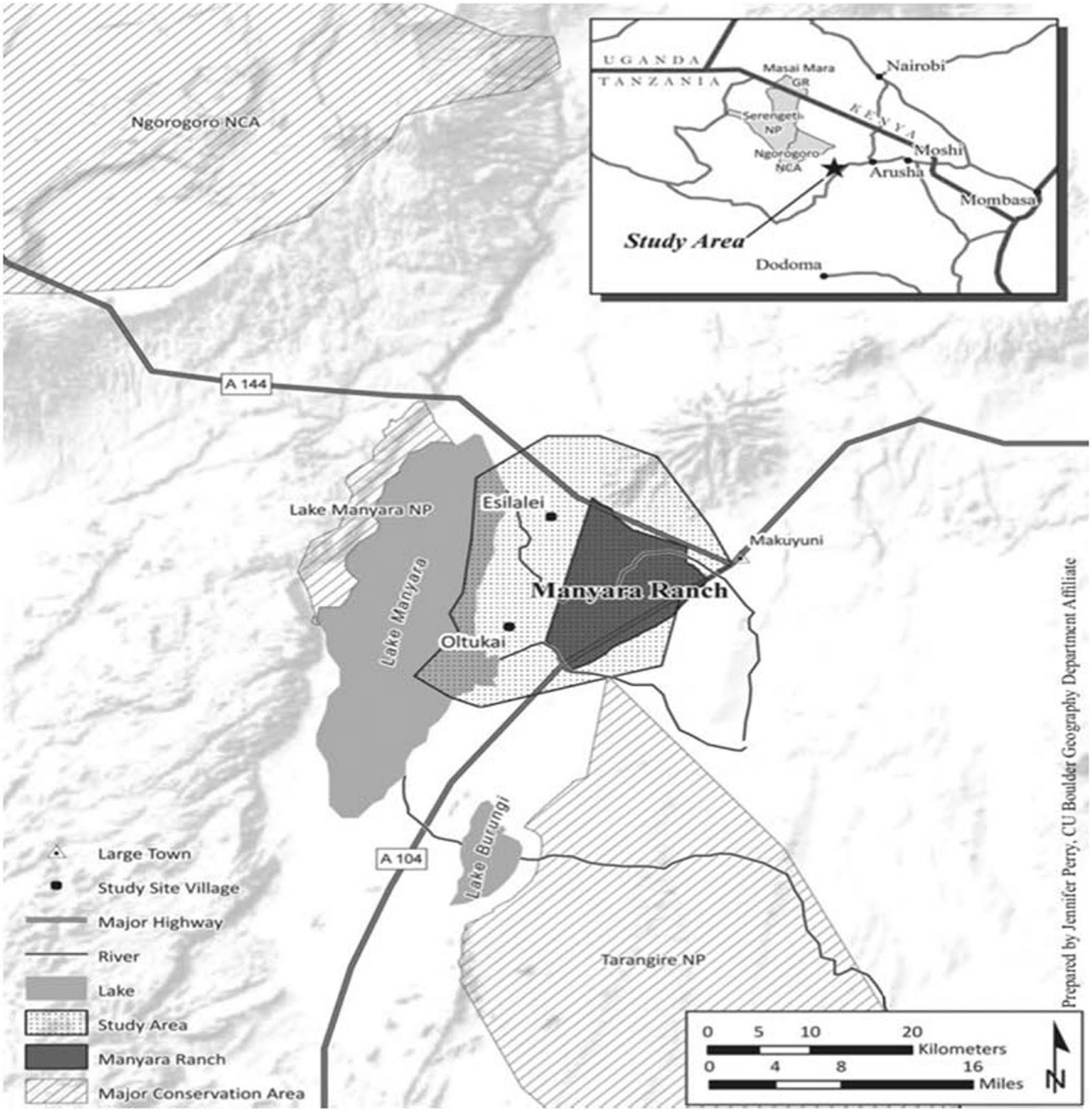

Fig. 1 Location of the study area. Source: Goldman 2011

Although pastoralism is the main economic activity at Oltukai village, other activities including crop production, entrepreneurship, and ecotourism are carried out at the subsistence level. Monduli District provides an environment where rangelands are competed for by pastoralists, crop cultivators, and conservation agencies for wilderness preservation (Kaswamila, 2009; Kideghesho, 2000; Sechambo, 2001). Areas occupied by this village are used by wildlife as migratory routes and dispersal areas within the Tarangire-Manyara and the Greater Serengeti ecosystems. The village is squeezed between Lake Manyara on the west and Manyara Ranch (Conservancy). To the south is Tarangire National Park and Burunge Wildlife Management Area (WMA) and the Ngorongoro Conservation Area lies in the Northwest. The village itself lies within the Mto wa Mbu Game Controlled Area (GCA) and part of its land is contested 45,000 acres of land lying between Manyara and Tarangire National Parks — the Conservancy. Originally,

Fig. 2 Signboard showing area designated for settlement and crop cultivation. Source: Leiyo Singo

this was a state-owned ranch before its privatisation and change of status to a Conservancy in 2001. At the time of privatisation, the villagers asked the government to give land to them since this was village land from the beginning. However, Tanzania Land Conservation Trust (TLCT) which was formed as a local affiliate of American-owned African Wildlife Foundation (AWF) sought after this land for "sustainable tourism". Initially, villagers accepted the idea (Manyara Ranch as a pasture area for both cattle and wildlife) but later resented it after having lost ownership and control over how the land should be managed in the area (Goldman, 2011). They started asking the government to return the land to them. In 2016, the government declared that the agreement that gave Manyara Ranch land to TLCT was a fake contract and that the land belongs to inhabitants of Esilalei and Oltukai villages. However, the status of this land remains unchanged to date. Figure 2 displays a signboard indicating an area designated for settlement and crop cultivation.

Data Collection and Analysis

The goal of the study is to analyse which conception of a decent human life contended in international debates (c.f. "Lessons from the Interviews on Accounts of a Decent Human Life" section) Maasai pastoralists endorse. Usually, lay persons do not have a specified conception of a good life or explicit beliefs about its necessary components. For that reason, we did not confront the interview partners with lists of components of a decent life. Instead, we have taken the notions "pastoralist semi-nomadic way of life" and "life in a city" as proxies for the competing conceptions of a decent life. Maasai pastoralists keep a way of living by which they restrict their embeddedness in market economies, pertaining to what has been called "moral economies" (Scott, 1976). These economies are less efficient in the income generation than market economies — which is one of the reasons for criticism of the nomadically living societies in Tanzania. However, due to a stronger embeddedness in social bonds of Maasai communities, their members have additional opportunities to realise relational values — values which the critics of the dominant position of the necessary constituents of a decent life claim to be necessary. To the contrary, a typical life in a city does not depend on embeddedness in social bonds but requires access to a universal means of exchange — money — and functioning markets to lead a decent life.

Data collection exercise was guided by a decolonial Indigenous paradigm that foregrounds indigenous epistemologies, methodologies, and methods in framing research topics and dissemination strategies (Smith, 2022; Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2019; Chilisa, 2017). The interviews were conducted as semi-structured conversations. In indigenous research, conversational methods, derived from indigenous world views, are preferred over the typical interview methods because they reflect the ideal of equality among participants and emphasise building relationships and connectedness among people and with the environment (Chilisa, 2017; Chilisa & Tsheko, 2014). Holding focused groups was however unreasonable under the circumstances of the COVID-19 pandemic. In that regard, only one focused group discussion was possible. This happened rather spontaneously: there was a traditional ceremony "*Orkiteng loorbaa*"[4] (thanksgiving) and a wedding. Leiyo Singo used that opportunity to hold a conversation circle with six men in an open space outside the homesteads.

Starting with an introductory question (e.g., "What do you like mostly about the pastoral way of life?"), the interview partners were invited to reflect about differences between their pastoralist way of living and a life in the city and to evaluate these differences. Additionally, the conversation addressed their view on the future of their children and the question which way of living — a pastoralist or an urban one — they would desire for their children to lead. Finally, the interview partners were confronted with the question of their attitude to technological means which increase their productivity. To avoid abstract questions, the Maasai pastoralists were asked what they think about modern cattle breeds. In that region, Maasai usually keep the Zebu beef. More productive breeds used in this area are the "Sahiwal" or the "Boran" cattle breeds which are more productive in

[4] In transition from warriorhood to elderhood, a Maasai man conducts a traditional ceremony in which a bull is slaughtered as a thanksgiving as he retires and settle down as a family man.

milk and meat production. The interview addressed the topic of modern breeds asking the respondents whether they keep the modern ones and, if not, for which reason.

Thus, the interview consisted of the following four topics:

- What do you like mostly about the pastoral way of life?
- What do you think about a life in a city, and would you like it to live there?
- Which kind of life would you prefer your children to lead?
- Do you keep "modern" bulls — i.e., imported bulls like Sahiwal or Boran which are more productive than the bulls usually kept by Maasai in that region — and would you like to change your cattle to the "modern" ones?

The interview partners from the Oltukai village were chosen randomly: Leiyo Singo, who is of Maasai origin, visited bomas in the district and started conversations. If his conversation partners agreed to talk about the research questions (and to be recorded), an interview was conducted which addressed the four topics described above. This way, nine individual interviews were led, and one interview was a discussion in a group of six young men. In total, 15 interview partners participated in this study. The interview partners were all male and cover age groups between about 20 and 70 years (Korianga, Ilandis, and Iseuri). All interviews were conducted in Maa language in a semi-structured way in August and September 2020. All interviews were recorded and transcribed, and the scripts were translated in English.

The English scripts of the interviews were analysed by Eugen Pissarskoi in close collaboration with Leiyo Singo drawing on argumentative analysis of discourses (Fischer et al., 1993; Brun and Hirsch Hadorn, 2018; Hansson and Hirsch Hadorn, 2016). The analysis aimed at identification of the interview partners' evaluative attitudes towards necessary constituents of a decent life.

In the first step, sampling units for each of the four interview topics were identified. Subsequently, for each sampling unit, reasons and the interview partner brought forward for their respective position on the particular topic of the sampling unit and the evaluative attitudes contained in these reasons were identified. Partly, the evaluative assertions needed an interpretation to assign them to the values which are discussed as constituents of a decent life in international debates. For instance, the notion "meaningful activity" we report as an outcome of the interviews (e.g., "Own Conception of a Good Life" section) was not used by the interview partners but results from the joint interpretation of both authors the corresponding assertions in the interviews. The resulting values to the four topics endorsed by the interview partners are presented and interpreted in the "Interview Results" section.

We do consider the number of the interviews and their restriction only to one gender group as a limiting factor of our empirical research. There is no systematic reason for this limit. It results from the circumstances of the COVID-19 pandemic alone which did not allow Leiyo Singo to spend sufficient period in the field to conduct the interviews as initially planned. Still, we believe that the results of the collected interviews do provide valuable insights regarding the controversy on constituents of a decent life (c.f. "Lessons from the Interviews on Accounts of a Decent Human Life" section). The results of the study might serve as a starting point for further inquiry of this topic.

Interview Results

Maasai Pastoralists' Own Conception of a Good Life

Discussing the question, what a good life amounts to pastoralists, 9 of 10 interviews contain mentions of "enough livestock" and "children" (Interview 1 does not contain them), often in connection with "being able to pay the school fee of children" and "having enough food for children". Eight of 10 interviews contained additionally having a "house" (or a "farm") as a constituent of a good life (Interviews 4 and 6 did not explicitly mention these items). Nearly everybody considered livestock as a "bank" or source of "income": the number of livestock they envisioned is such that a goat or a cow could be sold if medical treatment was required, or school fees needed to be paid. The items "enough livestock", "children", and "house" we consider as consensual values among all respondents.

Besides these consensual values, there were differences in further constituents. Four respondents mentioned additionally only values which can be exchanged on markets (let us call them market-dependent values, Interviews 2, 5, 9, 10): they mentioned a good residence, accumulation of land and houses, means for mobility, cattle size such that it creates wealth.

Three respondents, in contrast, added only values whose achievement depends on relationships (to other members of a community) or which cannot be directly exchanged on markets (Interviews 4, 7, 8): two interviewees appreciated the pastoralist way of life for the meaningfulness of the activity of keeping animals.[5] One respondent mentioned additionally the solidarity and respect within a community which, however, were disappearing according to his view (Interview 10). Two interviewees mentioned the relevance of what we interpret as the value of belonging: they described

[5] "For example, to settle in the shop from morning to evening is impossible it is better I stay with this goat and when they give birth I carry them." (Interview 8:4).

Table 1 Constituents of a good life — summary of the interview results

Agreement	• Enough livestock (bank; income) • Children (children are nourished; school fees can be paid) • House (or farm)	
Disagreement	Group A (4 respondents)	Group B (3 respondents)
	• Good residence	• Meaningful activity of keeping animals
	• Accumulation of land and houses	• Solidarity and respect within the community
	• Mobility	• Belonging
	• Cattle size creating wealth	

Table 2 Attitudes towards a life in a city — summary of the interview results

Agreement	• Preference for a life as a pastoralist to a life in a city	
Dis-agreement	• Adapted to a life as a pastoralist:	• Opposition to the prevalent urban values:
	◦ born and grown up in a pastoralist society	◦ less belonging, control over one's environment;
	◦ unfamiliar with urban way of life	◦ no meaningful activities
		◦ lack of adequate social relationships
		◦ dirtiness

that they knew what to do in case a person or an animal felt sick[6] (Interviews 4 and 7). Table 1 summarises the results.

Attitudes towards a Life in a City

Confronted with the question what they think about a life in a city, all respondents said that they prefer the life as a pastoralist to a life in a city. Differences arose in the justifications of this claim.

Five respondents argued that since they had been born and grown up in a pastoralist society, they are unfamiliar with the urban way of life and its values (Interviews 3, 6, 7, 9, 10). Six respondents added that because of their provenance from a pastoralist community, an urban life is inconceivable to them for it is neither possible to keep cattle in a city nor is there access to nature (Interviews 1, 2.1, 4, 6, 8, 10). To the contrary, one respondent explicitly said that he does not prefer a city life but if he had been born in a city, he would be accommodated to it (Interview 9).

In their reflection about an urban life, further reasons against it have been raised. Four respondents stressed that a city life is accompanied by relational values (marriage and family relations, communal love, care) which they do not endorse (Interviews 2.1, 2.2, 2.4, 5). Two respondents justified their preference for a pastoralist way of life by the fact that it needs smaller financial budget (Interviews 6, 10). They mentioned that despite a "luxury" in the city, they do not prefer this way of life. Five interviewees mentioned that if they had to live in a city, they would lack values which we interpret as a loss of autonomy and belonging: they would not find a meaningful occupation in a city and would have less control over their environment (Interviews 1, 4, 6, 7, 8). Two respondents argued that a life in a city is "dirty" accompanied with "different diseases" (Interviews 3:4 and 7:6).

These replies demonstrate that despite an apparent agreement on the claim that a pastoralist life is preferred to an urban one, there are different explanations for this evaluation. According to the one, the preference results from habituation, and it remains open what they would prefer if they were equally familiar with the two ways of life. According to the other, there are several substantive reasons for preferring the pastoralist way of life to the urban one. Table 2 summarises the results.

Way of Life Desired for Own Children

Reflections of the interviewees on desirable future for their children demonstrate explicit disagreements among respondents regarding their views on a good life. Five respondents replied that they prefer their children to live in a city (Interviews 2.1,

[6] "I prefer this normal life we live in the village because when you feel sick or suffering from fever you just go to forest and pick some roots and use it. If it feels like much acidic you just take specific [plant] roots for vomiting and then you recover to your normal situation." (interview 7:5).

We interpret this quote as endorsing a certain agency (ability to react to a specific circumstances) which requires a certain knowledge (which plants help in which situation and where these plants can be found) and ability to access what, according to the knowledge, is the right means. This agency is not exchangeable on markets. However, it should be noted that market-organized societies have their own means for providing agency in situations of a disease. The agency in the market societies does depend on the availability of means of exchange, for one would mandate a physician to provide the respective knowledge and a pharmaceutical company to provide the respective drug.

Table 3 Attitudes towards the life of own children — summary of the interview results

Group A: Prefer their children to live in a city (5 respondents)	Group B: Prefer their children to remain pastoralists (5 respondents)
• "[children] might be able to build houses for us, buy cattle and bring good development" (Int 2:4)	• "I would like them to go to school and make development according to their time. […] I would like them to live the life I am living." (Int 7:2)
• "[Pastoralism] is very tough and I would like them [children] to live a very good life. […] To build a house and continue living." (Int 10:5)	• "You know the pastoral children will not adopt well to those kinds of jobs, cows are very good and pastoral children will not be able to be completely assimilated to non-pastoral life." (Int 4:1)

Table 4 Attitudes towards more productive cattle breeds — summary of the interview results

Group A: Prefer more productive breeds (4 respondents)	Group B: Prefer traditional breeds (5 respondents)
• Have higher milk production and generate higher incomes	• More productive breeds would lead them into undesired dependencies: ◦ Higher initial investments; ◦ Additional infrastructure needed; ◦ Higher cost of keeping: more feed and water, additional support in lifting needed

2.2, 6, 9, 10) and five answered that they prefer them to remain pastoralists (Interviews 1, 3, 4, 5, 7), one wanted at least one child to remain pastoralist (8). One interviewee replied that he wants foremost his children to become "someone with respect towards other people" (Interview 4:3) independently of where the children live but mentioned on another occasion that he does not believe that a pastoral child would get used to a paid employment/job. Among the four interviews which highlighted values we interpreted as market-dependent ("Own Conception of a Good Life" section), three interviews contained the desire their children to live in a city (Interviews 2, 9, 10) and one interviewee (5), however, preferred them to remain pastoralists because he doubted that one can lead a satisfying life in a city. Table 3 summarises the results.

Attitudes towards Modern Cattle Breeds

Finally, we observed a disagreement in respondent's attitudes towards productive breeds. From the 15 respondents, four replied affirmatively to keeping more productive breeds than the Maasai Zebu they traditionally keep (Interviews 2.2, 5, 6, 10). Five respondents replied that they would prefer to keep the traditional breeds (Interviews 1, 3, 4, 7, 8). One respondent's position remains open (interview 9). This respondent mentioned disadvantages of keeping modern breeds but did not reject the latter if the disadvantages could be overcome.

Among the sceptics of the productive breeds, one argued that these breeds are not real cows at all[7] and that their meat and milk are not tasty (Interview 4). The other four sceptical respondents argued that the more productive breeds would lead them into further dependencies which they would like to avoid: such, the animals are more expensive and would require higher initial investments and therefore financial risks (Interviews 7, 9); they consume more feed and water and the pastoralists doubted that they suit to the environmental conditions of their area (Interviews 1, 3, 7, 8, 9): the pastures they have access to do not provide sufficient feed for the more productive cows (Interviews 3, 9); one respondent mentioned that their farm would need additional water to feed the bigger animals in the dry season (9); nearly all of the sceptical interviewees mentioned that they could not lift up such an animal if it falls down (which happens regularly in the dry season). We interpret these last remarks as indicating the following reasoning: keeping the more productive breeds would require additional infrastructure: provision of water and feeding resources, means for lifting the animals. Installation of this infrastructure needs additional financial resources which would lead into new dependencies which can be avoided by sticking to the established breeds. Table 4 summarises the results.

Summary of the Interview Results: Disagreement among Maasai Pastoralists

There is an agreement between the respondents on certain constituents of a good life: enough livestock (which is considered as a source of a means for exchange (money)), children with the ability to nourish and educate them, and a house (or a farm). Besides these unanimous constituents, the interviewees disagreed about additional constituents of a good life. Some of respondents seem not to endorse the

[7] "Are they real cows or some types of elephants that these people go catch in the wilderness?" (Interview 4: p. 5).

extended list of necessary constituents of a decent human life supported by the proponents of the Degrowth and Post-colonial discourses (Extended List in "Critique of the Minimal Requirements for a Decent Human Life: Neglected Components" section). Rather, we interpret their statements in the interviews as supporting the Human-Needs-Inspired-List. A group of respondents mentioned only values as components of a good life which are covered by the Human-Needs-Inspired-List, a broadly overlapping group of respondents want their children live in an urban setting — to lead a life which is better suited to realise the components of the Human-Needs-Inspired-List. Among them were respondents who justified their evaluative stances with reference to the ability of generating monetary income — an essential resource for realisation of the most constituents of the Human-Needs-Inspired-list.

However, another group of respondents stressed market-independent values as essential constituents of a decent human life. Our interviews with Maasai men show that some of them evaluate meaningfulness of activities with which they are mainly occupied and solidarity in the communities they live in as such relevant that they would accept to live with a lower income for that. We interpret these statements as evidence that a group of respondents endorse the values from the Extended List ("Critique of the Minimal Requirements for a Decent Human Life: Neglected Components" section).

Lessons from the Interviews on Accounts of a Decent Human Life

We cannot claim that our findings are conclusive, but they provide an additional cornerstone to the existing research. Contrary to the narrative according to which indigenous societies unanimously oppose the dominant conception of a decent human life such as the Human-Needs-Inspired List, our interviews show that male Maasai pastoralists disagree about the necessary components of a decent human life. Parts of semi-pastoralist communities of Maasai consider the values from the Extended List as necessary for a decent life. They take the same position as the Degrowth movement in Europe and some post-colonial scholars and movements. However, parts of semi-pastoralist Maasai communities endorse only the constituents of the Human-Needs-Inspired List as necessary for a decent human life. This conception has been presupposed in approaches to sustainable development (Gough, 2015; O'Neill et al., 2018; Raworth, 2017) and in national and international policy strategies under the umbrella of Human Development (by e.g., OECD; UNDP, UNEP, c.f. Stewart et al., 2018).

What does follow from this outcome for the controversy about conceptions of a decent human life? According to our result, the alliances of the controversy on the global scale are more nuanced than depicted at the outset. We doubt that indigenous communities unanimously reject the dominant conception of a good life. Maasai pastoralists are divided between the two conceptions discussed in this text. However, our result does not diminish post-colonial critique of narratives which have been used to justify politics of transformation of native lifestyles of indigenous communities as visualised in the statement by Julius Nyerere cited in the "Introduction" of this article. This narrative still finds broad approval in Eastern Africa (as has been manifested in the public discourse on Maasai relocations in Summer 2022, c.f. Singo, 2022). In his quote, Nyerere endorses the conception of a decent human life as represented by the Human-Needs-Inspired List: the necessary conditions for a decent life are resources for health and protection (nourishment, housing, clean water). According to our reasoning in this paper, Nyerere's statement is not wrong. However, Nyerere neglects that the conception of a decent life he endorses is neither unique nor universal.

Parts of the Maasai community endorse further values as necessary constituents of a decent life: sufficient time for meaningful activities, intensive social relations, sufficient time for laughing, playing, idleness, etc. If installation of access to clean water endangers realisation of convivial values or of meaningful activities, a supporter of the extended conception of a good life faces the same trade-off as a supporter of the Human-Needs-Inspired List faces when confronted with a choice as, for instance, between access to clean water and income.

What does follow from our result for policies aiming at providing minimal conditions for a decent quality of human life? An answer to this question is not straightforward. The two conceptions of a decent life differ in the socio-economic institutions supporting them. Economies with well-functioning markets provide the best socio-economic institutions for the realisation of the components from the Human-Based-Inspired List (c.f. UNDP, 2021). The Extended List includes values whose realisation depends on relationships to others and meaningfulness of one's activities. Realisation of these values is less dependent on functioning markets, in some cases market's incentives even impede their realisation. Social relationships of love, care, including other-than-human beings, meaningfulness of activities, spending time with playing or indulging in idleness cannot be realised within social relationships which govern market exchanges. To support realisation of convivial and caring values, restriction of market relationships might be the most efficient means.

This, in turn, demonstrates that the two conceptions of a decent human life can have contradictory implications for fundamental socio-economic institutions which define the extent of market relationships. For this reason, policy

measures aiming at realising values from the Extended List might be partly contradictory to the policy measures aiming at realising individuality-market-oriented way of living. Thus, the controversy about the necessary constituents of a decent human life leads to deep political controversies which persist, as our results indicate, not only in societies of the Global North but also within indigenous communities.

If political conflicts about basic socio-economic institutions result from disagreements about which values a moral community owes to all its members, the underlying ethical disagreement should be transparently represented encouraging an informed public debate on the disagreement. This, in turn, provides a reason to incorporate both conceptions into international politics and to represent them in development approaches (human development or sustainable development) and derived concepts as the Safe and Just Operating Space.

Author Contribution Eugen Pissarskoi (first author) took lead in analysis of English scripts of the interviews drawing on argumentative analysis of discourses. The analysis was done in close collaboration with the second author. Leiyo Singo (second and corresponding author) conducted the field research in Tanzania and collaborated with the first author in analysis of the interviews. He also handles communication and administrative tasks related to publication of the manuscript.

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Data Availability Data available on request.

Declarations

Ethics Approval and Consent to Participate The research permit (AB3/12(B)) to conduct this study was issued by the University of Dar es Salaam in Tanzania and all research partners gave their informed consent orally for inclusion before they participated in the study.

Conflict of Interest The authors declare no competing interests.

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