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'Inhabiting Otherwise': Maasai Pastoralists' Ontological Struggles Over Land in Tanzania

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ABSTRACT

In this paper, I take the case of Maasai pastoralists' land struggles as an entry point to demonstrate ontological struggles over how land is known, treated and managed in Tanzania. Engaging political ontology and Indigenous scholarship and drawing on my own lived experiences as an Indigenous Maasai, I highlight a Maasai relational mode of inhabitation (*Eramatare*) that informs different natures being struggled over in land conflicts. Firstly, I show how this mode of inhabitation differs from a modernist-colonial mode of inhabitation that structures destructive societal relations with nature. Secondly, I illuminate how *Eramatare* challenges the colonial assumptions about nature and the insights it may offer to those seeking for a decolonial socio-ecological transformation.

IKISIRI

Katika makala haya, nayachukulia mapambano ya wafugaji wa Kimaasai kuhusu ardhi kama mwanya wa kuelezea mapambano ya kiontolojia juu ya jinsi gani ardhi hujulikana, na kusimamiwa nchini Tanzania. Kwa kutumia mrengo wa taaluma za Siasa-Ontoloji, Stadi za Watu Asilia na uzoefu wangu binafsi kama Mmaasai, naonyesha jinsi gani aina ya maisha jumuishi kimahusiano (*Eramatare*) yalivyo na uhusiano na kile kinachopiganiwa kwenye migogoro ya ardhi. Mosi, naonyesha ni jinsi gani aina hii ya maisha jumuishi kimahusiano hutofautiana na aina ya maisha ya ukoloni-usasa ambayo yanasababisha uhusiano wa kiuharibifu baina ya jamii ya binadamu na maringira ya asili. Pili, naelezea kiufasaha jinsi ambavyo dhana ya *Eramatare* hupingana na mitazamo ya kikoloni kuhusu mazingira asili na vile vile, naeleza mafunzo ambayo *Eramatare* inaweza kutoa kwa wale watafutao mabadiliko ya kijamii-ikolojia yapingayo ukoloni.

1 | Introduction

In June 2022, forced relocations of the Maasai pastoralists from Ngorongoro district in northern Tanzania were widely reported by media and human rights organisations. Two issues that drew international attention were: first, the plan of the government of Tanzania to relocate up to 70,000 Maasai pastoralists from the Ngorongoro Conservation Area (NCA), where they allegedly pose a threat to ecological integrity and wildlife tourism; and second, the creation of 'Pololeti Game Reserve' in the same

district threatening the displacement of yet another 80,000 Maasai from Loliondo. A presidential decree was issued gazetted the 1500km² strip of village land bordering Serengeti National Park for wildebeest migration, breeding and what the government calls protecting 'the ecological integrity' of the entire Greater Serengeti. Both relocation from NCA to Msomera and installation of beacons in Loliondo to demarcate the newly created game reserve were accompanied by human rights violations. This is an example of green grabbing, that is, 'the appropriation of land and resources for environmental ends' (Fairhead

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et al. 2012, 237). Notably, the move to relocate the Maasai has a long history of systemic marginalisation aimed at impoverishing their living conditions to render them relocatable and appropriation of their lands justifiable (Goldman 2011; Shivji and Kapinga 1998; Weldemichel 2020).

Of relevance to the theme of this article, and the Symposium of which it is a part, is that the violence against the Maasai is a manifestation of an ontological conflict stemming from two different ontologies of society–nature relations and the coloniality of power structuring these relations. One ontology, that is modern/colonial/capitalist, envisions Maasai landscapes as empty of people and works to dispossess, commodify and extract economic value from them (Burow et al. 2018; Gardner 2016; Kramm 2024). Another ontology, that is, Indigenous Maasai ethico-onto-epistemology, represented by *Eramatare*, sees a relational landscape in which people's identities, livelihoods and spiritualities are deeply embedded in the land, plants and animals. *Eramatare* is a fundamental worldview that represents the Maasai vision of a complete life in which nature is perceived as intertwined with human society in relational terms. Some critical social scientists have already shown that nature in Maasai lands differs from the modernist-colonial ways of knowing and narrating nature (Goldman 2020; Neumann 1998; Western et al. 2020). However, the Maasai perspective remains marginalised by post-colonial development and conservation policies inspired by colonial inhabitation. Malcom Ferdinand (2020, n.p.) describes colonial habitation as a 'violent way of inhabiting the earth, subjugating lands, humans, and non-humans to the desires of the colonizer'. Under European colonialism, Maasai lost an estimated 60% of the lands they had once inhabited (D. Hughes 2010; Kantai 2007), and the Kenya–Tanzania border that cut through the heart of Maasailand remains a constant reminder of that painful colonial encounter.

While the colonial wound and enduring sense of loss are shared by all the Maasai on either side of the (Kenya–Tanzania) border, this article focuses on the Maasai of Tanzania. One fundamental difference between them is that livelihood diversification, commoditisation of land and collapse of the commons are more pronounced among the Maasai of Kenya (Nkedianye et al. 2020; Rigby 1989). However, while policies differ between Tanzania and Kenya in terms of state versus individual ownership of land, both countries adhere to the same prescription of curbing migration, settling families and commercialising herd management and production (Homewood et al. 2009). How much of the traditional Maasai lifestyle remains? Already in the 1980s, the Maasai predicament was concerning:

At the present the Tanzanian Maasai have increasing difficulties in reaching their own standards of good living. They are drawn into the mainstream of the national economy and the political machinery of the state. They are becoming increasingly dependent on economic and political forces outside their control. Their economic security and capacity to determine their own lives are reduced and their very existence as an ethnic group is threatened. Paradoxically, this situation has a large extent been created by national

development efforts ostensibly aimed at improving their well-being and living conditions.

(Århem 1985, 13)

Whereas my focus is to articulate ethico-onto-epistemological insights of Indigenous Maasai nature relatedness, I remain mindful of the bearings of neoliberal environmental rationalities on the same. That said, I deliberately mobilise the phrase 'inhabiting otherwise' to argue that while capitalism has of course changed many aspects of traditional Maasai life, there are still non-capitalist practices and relationships that can be brought to surface and serve as a building block for a different type of economy. This conceptualisation aligns with the diverse economies research agenda, which views the economy as a contested terrain that allows for the exploration and development of new ethical and socio-ecological visions (Gibson-Graham and Dombroski 2020; Gibson-Graham et al. 2013; Roelvink et al. 2015). It goes without saying that Indigenous peoples' historical resistance to colonialism, state formation and global capitalism attest to real existing alternative relationships and lifeways (L. B. Simpson 2017). The burgeoning literature on socio-ecological transformation suggests that place-based and rooted experiences of those that have historically been silenced provide realistic solutions to the multifaceted crisis of the Anthropocene (Gómez-Baggethun 2021; Jackson 2021; Latouche 2009).

For instance, referring to the experiences of African pastoralists, Ian Scoones (2022, 101) makes the case that, 'in many respects, Africa is ahead of the game in constructing alternatives from the margins'. However, in the same edited volume on African futures, Clemens Greiner (2022, 36) raises a critique against the framing of pastoralists as egalitarian, close-knit, environmentally adapted communities exploiting a unique ecological niche. He suggests that we drop the term 'pastoralists' from our analytical frameworks because it is intimately connected with reductionist notions of pre-capitalist livelihoods and problematic notions of environmental adaptation. Likewise, Penelope Anthias and Asher (2024) reflect on what seem to be a paradox of Indigenous peoples' nature-cultures. They argue that one paradox of current representations of Indigenous nature-cultures is that Indigenous peoples are held up as embodying alternatives to capitalist modernity yet disproportionately suffer the environmental harms of capitalist development. From where I stand, this is not a paradox, as such. The Maasai, for example, are held up as embodying alternatives by those opposed to capitalist development, but by those who argue for the need for capitalist development, the fact that they embody alternatives is precisely the reason and rationale for their exclusion and dispossession.

In a previous study, we explored neglected components of a good life that are embraced by Maasai pastoralists in Tanzania (Pissarskoi and Singo 2024). By focusing almost exclusively on capitalist dynamics, we often overlook the many principles, practices and institutions that function differently within the cracks and margins of the system. Gibson-Graham uses the image of an iceberg to illustrate that while the tip of the iceberg is the visible capitalist economy, the base underneath is formed with a wide range of activities, places and people (Gibson-Graham et al. 2013). In the present article, I draw on the insights that

the case study of Maasai *Eramatare* as ‘inhabiting otherwise’ can offer to those seeking a decolonial socio-ecological transformation. I consider the existence of institutions and practices informed by the ethos of *Eramatare*, namely *Osotwa* (sharing/gifting arrangement), *Alaji* (age-set system) and *Engigwana* (structured dialogue) as a testimony that Western modernity has not succeeded in constituting a total reality (Wynter 2003). These institutions and their associated principles and practices have sustained Maasai as a collective over decades even in the face of ever mounting pressure to erase them as a people. They provide alternatives to modern-colonial ways of being, knowing and governing offering an inspiration for alternatives to colonial natures.

To rally support for the defence of their traditional economic practices and nature relatedness, Maasai pastoralists have come to embrace the notion of ‘Indigenous peoples’ (Hodgson 2009; Igoe 2006; Kipuri 2006) and self-identification as ‘people of nature’ (Berger 1993; Goldman 2020; Knowles 1989; Melubo 2020; Western et al. 2019). This self-identification can sometimes become performative for political reasons. In a context of internal colonialism and development as a ‘coercive utopia’,¹ framing Maasai’s land struggles as an Indigenous rights issue is a way of articulating a relational worldview, that land and identity or nature and culture are inseparable. This nature-culture nexus is exemplified by the way Maasai define themselves as principally the ‘people-of-cattle’ (*Itung’anak lö-Ngishu*). Maasai identity is deeply intertwined with their cattle, a connection established and preserved through complex cultural narratives and ceremonies that far surpass a transactional bond (more on this later).

The concept of nature relatedness, which refers to the subjective sense of connection people have with the natural environment, has been used to capture nature-related worldviews (Howell et al. 2011; Nisbet et al. 2009, 2011). However, some scholars have maintained that claims based on Indigenous nature relatedness are at least partially performative and politically expedient, as opposed to being based on definitive cultural traits (Giblin 2017; Valkonen and Valkonen 2014). Yet, at the heart of environmental conflicts lie different ontological politics that define and make sense of land and non-human beings. Understanding these ontological politics is essential to grasping the deeper struggles over what nature is and how it is valued (Sippel and Visser 2021; Sullivan 2017). This calls for attention to the essentially different meaning that land, environment or nature can hold for different peoples (Shaw et al. 2006; Sippel and Visser 2021; Sullivan 2017). Burow et al. (2018) emphasises the coexistence of multiple ontologies of land. However, simply acknowledging the coexistence of multiple ontologies is not enough because some of those ontologies are based upon the death, destruction and erasure of others (Bhambra and Holmwood 2021; Bhambra and Newell 2023; Rose-Redwood 2021).

In the words of Colombian American decolonial scholar Arturo Escobar (2016, 20), ‘what occupies territories is a particular ontology’. Whose ontology acquires visibility and legitimacy in visioning possible futures, and which voices are centred or peripheralised in debates over socio-ecological transformation, are indeed key questions at stake (Blasser 2013; Cameron et al. 2014). Recent works on Maasai land struggles (Gardner 2016; Weldemichel 2020) give limited attention to

questions of ontology, hence fail to point out alternatives to state-corporate ‘ontological occupation’ (Escobar 2016, 14). My contribution seeks to fill in this gap and build bridges by connecting my grounded experience of Maasai nature relatedness with existing conceptual works in political ontology and Indigenous studies. Following Chilisa et al. (2017), I argue that people of all worlds should have equal rights to name their worldviews and apply them to define themselves/nature.

In political ontology scholarship, alternatives to colonial inhabitation are considered as evidence that totalising signifiers like Western modernity have not triumphed in producing a single reality or a ‘One-World World’ (Escobar 2015; Law 2015). Along this line of thought, I connect *Eramatare*, as ‘inhabiting otherwise’, to broader debates on socio-ecological transformations and future-making (Anderson 2010; Hanaček et al. 2020; McKittrick 2013). My emphasis here is that what the Maasai are fighting for is not simply control over land, or access to it, but safeguarding and reconstituting the complex webs of relations embedded in *Eramatare*. My analysis demonstrates that *Eramatare* embodies a relationality that can inspire decolonial socio-ecological transformation. Though decolonial debates critiquing imperialism, racial capitalism and Eurocentric systems of knowledge are well accommodated in geography (Daley and Murrey 2022; Gamez et al. 2025; Naylor and Jazeel 2025; S. Ouma 2022), the discipline is heavily tilted towards Latin and North America, with less attention to decolonial thinking and political ontologies from Africa. *Antipode’s* ‘Decolonial Thinkers from Africa’ series is but a recognition of, and commitment to remedy, this imbalance. One of the series editors, Stefan Ouma (2021, n.p.), justifiably points out that ‘[w]e recognize that there are several loci of enunciation for decolonial and anticolonial work and would like to give scholars from Africa associated with these epistemic and political projects more space on our website [and in the journal]’.

The rest of this article is organised as follows: After a note on my positionality, I present a theoretical framework that guides and structures my analysis. I make it explicit that contentious issues around natural resource use and land rights conflicts in Africa are haunted by the long shadow of historical colonialism. I then describe Maasai nature relatedness using a Maasai concept of *Eramatare*—and the worldview that it is embedded in—to reflect on knowing and/or being with nature otherwise. I point out the lessons that this relational understanding of nature can offer to those seeking a decolonial socio-ecological transformation. This is followed by a brief conclusion.

2 | A Note on Positionality

As an Indigenous scholar-activist born and brought up among Maasai of Tanzania, my relation to land grabbing, coercive development and colonial conservationism necessarily calls for decolonisation. The parallels between Tanzania’s colonial history and ongoing disenfranchisement and objectification of the Maasai people are appalling. Early colonial writings reinforced the mythic images of Maasai as ‘noble savages’ and icons of ‘wildest Africa’ (Salazar 2009, 53). This framing bears considerable political costs as the Maasai are continuously misrepresented in public discourse and policy. While the government

of Tanzania claims to maintain a creed of identical treatment and denial of the existence of racist attitudes and practices, deeply troubling patterns of othering Indigenous Maasai endure (Maina 2017). For instance, in a 2022 documentary called *Tanzania: The Royal Tour*, the Maasai are portrayed as a primitive people in a modernising country. President Samia Suluhu Hassan introduces them as one of the newest arrivals to Tanzania, migrating from the Nile Valley only in the 1700s, thereby echoing longstanding narratives by the government that the Maasai are not indigenous to the lands they claim to be their ancestral home.

Under circumstances of land grabbing and Indigenous erasure, research is not just a detached academic exercise but a research of power (Coulthard and Simpson 2016; Rodney 1969; Said 1984; wa Thiong'o 1986). As such, my writing is charged with a political responsibility to advocate for the defence and/or recovery of Indigenous self-determination, self-governance and territorial integrity (Coulthard and Simpson 2016; Shivji 1993). This necessarily transcends this article, entailing, among others, (in)direct participation in protests against land grabbing and activist writings that resist misrepresentations of the Maasai and denial of their lifeworlds. Some of these works appear in outlets like *Udadisi* and *The Republic*.² These non-academic outlets allow for the transfer of knowledge to communities outside of the academy. I draw inspiration from Walter Rodney's (1969) scholar-activism and his insight that an organic intellectual should vigorously attack those distorted ideas that are used to legitimise domination and hegemony. My interest is to make knowledge serve the interests of the marginalised and dispossessed communities. In advancing hegemonic resistance, Indigenous scholars seek to decolonise research by centring experiences of those that have been excluded or silenced by oppressive colonial histories and epistemologies (Chilisa et al. 2017; Shivji 1993; Smith 2015; wa Thiong'o 1986).

By confronting its structural colonialism, the academy is striving to create a more inclusive environment where marginalised voices can be heard within academic conversations. For instance, in its 'Decolonial Thinkers from Africa' series, this journal aims to challenge the limited presence of African scholarship in debates on global societal transformation. My training in political science at the University of Dar es Salaam privileged a very formal social sciences writing style, characterised by third-person voice and analytic objectivity. This inscribed in me a depersonalised and neutral style of writing. Conversely, my PhD journey has been transformative: my thesis' advisor has done a great job encouraging me to confront the political dimensions of scholarship and writing (Bhambra 2017; Rodney 1969; Sultana 2007) and to articulate an identity and affiliation within my own work. I also appreciate the ways in which contributing to this Symposium has prompted me to think about academic writing and my own positionality as a writer more deeply than I normally do. The editors of this Symposium encouraged me to centre my own voice and that of the Maasai pastoralists that I am a part of. 'Don't remove yourself from the text', they would emphasise when commenting on an earlier draft of this paper. From my perspective as a young African scholar, hesitancy in asserting one's own voice is explicitly and implicitly shaped by the structures and politics of coloniality of knowledge.

Knowledge outside of and in opposition to the coloniality of knowledge is often silenced in academia. This silencing of decolonial scholarly inquiry or/and Indigenous ontologies is the denial of the fact that understandings of the world we live in are situated historically and geographically. In the spirit of defiant African scholarship (Daley and Murrey 2022; Murrey and Daley 2023; Noe 2022; S. Ouma 2022), I theorise today's private, exclusionary and unequal property regimes in Africa as enduring legacies of colonialism in the continent.

3 | Ontology of Colonial Inhabitation, Development and People–Land Relations in Africa

The relationships and social structures established in colonial times continue to shape land tenure policies and belonging in Africa today. From an ontological vantage point, colonialism often involved the imposition of a coloniser's understanding of what land (and its proper use) is and what those who exist on it are (Fanon 1965; Ferdinand 2022; Neumann 1998; Tuck and Yang 2012). In this regard, it is imperative to stress that the creation of race coincided with a geohistorical moment of Europe's colonial project that denied the humanity of the other (Bhambra and Holmwood 2021; Fanon 1986). Both the myth of race and the colonial logic of elimination are inextricably linked to the metaphysics of Western dualistic ontology that institutionalises the society–nature divide (Masaka 2018; Mbembe 2017; Moore 2011). This dualistic ontology subordinates nature to humans and hierarchies the latter, with non-Whites classified as less-than-human.

Indigenous scholars view violence against the environment and violence between humans as interconnected, arguing that both are rooted in the colonial ontology of severing relationships with the land (Ferdinand 2022; Whyte 2018). As Mbembe (2017, 10) elucidates, this colonial ontology constitutes the Other as 'a menacing object from which one must be protected or escape, or which must simply be destroyed if it cannot be subdued'. This conceptualisation aids in comprehending the modern world as a product of colonialism—a project based on the destruction of Indigenous worlds (Bhambra and Newell 2023; Fanon 1986; Rose-Redwood 2021; L. Simpson 2004). First and foremost, 'the colonial assault on Indigenous Governance, languages, Knowledge systems, spiritualities, world views, and ways of living was also an assault on the environment' (L. Simpson 2004, 123).

In the introduction to the Symposium 'Race, Space, Nature' (in this journal), the editors argue that concepts of nature, environment and the ordering of space are fundamentally linked to the organisation of social and political life, a process in which race is central (Brahinsky et al. 2014). They highlight that the pernicious character traits of racial constructs develop through spatial practices and intersect with ideas about nature and belonging. Indeed, existing perceptions of land, which is the site of the construction of meaning, culture and identity, give a fair picture of competing perspectives on sovereignty, rights and justice (Shivji 1998; Sippel and Visser 2021). Several other scholars have explicitly argued that the racist colonial history of the modern world is inseparable from its environmental history (Ferdinand 2022; Moore 2011; Sultana 2022). Thus, disruption

of people–land relations deserves particular theoretical attention here because it is undoubtedly one of the most profound and lingering effects of colonialism in Africa.

For Frantz Fanon (1986), colonialism is a total project that does not leave any part of the human person and its reality untouched. Its philosophy of conquest and dominance involves the imposition of the coloniser's ontology on the colonised, leading to the 'near total destruction' of the latter's ontology or world (Masaka 2018, 287). During the era of European imperialism, colonial inhabitation and its associated modes of subjectivity were imposed on Africa, and it involved occupying the land without acknowledging the Indigenous inhabitants. This violent process essentially erased the local people, their differences and their unique ways of life (Mbembe 2017; Rodney 1972; wa Thiong'o 1986). The phenomenon of colonial violence was inevitable because African customary land tenure and systems of property holding conflicted with and impeded colonial expansion. Therefore, these institutions had to be destroyed or assimilated to consolidate the coloniser's ways of seeing, living, producing and relating to land.

European colonialists imposed private property logics that cast their ways of relating to land as not only superior but having value worthy of legal protection and force (Bhandar 2018; Wolfe 2006). The institution of private ownership of the land significantly impacted African pastoralists, restricting their mobility, shrinking grazing lands and promoting a shift towards settled agricultural production as the 'most productive' land use (Galaty 1977; Gardner 2016; L. Hughes 2006). In cases such as the Maasai, whereby there was no entity that exercised absolute control, it was erroneously assumed that there were no property rights to the resources since the existing systems ensured access for all members of the community. The privatisation of land can be seen as a decoupling from social bonds because it converts communal land into a commodity owned by (powerful) individuals (Masaka 2018; Neumann 1998; L. Simpson 2004; Sippel and Visser 2021). The consequences of this long process of decoupling are often increased inequality, loss of cultural identity, displacement and land grabbing, to mention a few. Colonialism treated Africans as objects that needed to be subjugated, removed or eliminated to exploit their labour and guarantee unfettered access to their lands (Gómez-Baggethun 2021; Wolfe 2006).

Whose modes of inhabitation matter, and what is considered efficient use of land, is contestable. Private property laws establish order over land, control how people behave, and ultimately define people's identity within that space. Millar and Mitchell (2017, 75) opine that 'humans have no choice but to produce nature'. The question that arises is which ontology is a particular framing of nature based upon and how is it articulated? The term Anthropocene has been used to describe the present era, in which human influence has fundamentally altered Earth's climate and ecological systems. The politics, governance and technologies of the Anthropocene have been scrutinised for what they legitimate, particularly appropriations of land (Fairhead et al. 2012; Jackson 2021; Moore 2011; Sultana 2022). Hegemonic global discourses regarding the Anthropocene crisis often fail to account for the historically contingent and racially differentiated processes of colonial and capitalist exploitation. For instance, land grabbing, which is

often driven by powerful external actors, mirrors historical colonial patterns (Ashukem 2020; Fairhead et al. 2012; Shivji 1998).

Criticism of the Anthropocene requires us to shift the focus from human action in general to the specific ways that capitalism, through colonialism and racialisation, operates in relation to and through, nature (Aron 2023; Moore 2011). Critics suggest that we discard the Anthropocene as an analytical concept and adopt the politically charged terms like Capitalocene, Chthulucene and Plantationocene which emphasise the role of capitalism in shaping the relationship between humans and the environment (Haraway 2015). Under capitalism, nature's sole value is determined by its utility for capital accumulation (Koot et al. 2019; Moore 2011). As Moore (2011, 6) puts it, '[t]he accumulation of capital and the production of nature are ... so intertwined as to make the one unthinkable without the other'. This makes it obvious that the capitalist imperative to extract value from nature is focused on the 'the exclusion of some bodies and inclusion of others from rights of use and control' (Peluso and Lund 2011, 672).

In Africa, the dominant economic trend since the early 1990s has been to implement neoliberal policies, practices and reforms to enhance local development opportunities. However, instead of officially proclaimed win-win promises—equitably improved rural livelihoods, breaking poverty traps and resource conservation—neoliberal policies and projects work to create new forms of access, claim-making and exclusion. For instance, the political ecology of neoliberal nature conservation exhibits contemporary conservation initiatives such as private nature reserves that are reproduced through similar tactics of primitive accumulation (Büscher 2009; Igoe and Brockington 2007; Thakholi and Koot 2023). They manifest new enclosures and (re)territorialisations that aim to control land and resources, often to the detriment of rural communities by enabling accumulation by dispossession (Benjaminsen and Bryceson 2012; Igoe and Brockington 2007; Neumann 2004).

Development and conservation models based on free market mechanisms extend the legacies of colonialism to the benefit of national and international political and economic elites, in the process often disregarding local traditions, meanings and knowledges. To reverse neoliberalism's or modernity's ecological and social harms requires nothing short of multispecies justice. In other words, it calls for a decolonial understanding of nature(s). What this demands is epistemic disobedience to what neoliberal capitalism obscures or/and seeks to legitimate. Situated perspectives, as the case of *Eramatare* below illustrates, reveal other ways of inhabiting the Earth that allow us to challenge modern-colonial understandings of nature(s) and knowledge. In the following section, I deliberately use the lens of *Eramatare* both as an attempt to theorise back and add to the collective efforts of challenging the limited presence of African voices in debates on global societal transformation (Murrey and Daley 2023; Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2021a; S. Ouma 2022).

4 | *Eramatare*: Maasai Nature Relatedness

A substantial body of literature has shown underlying values of nature relatedness influence environmental attitudes and behaviours (Campbell and Gurney 2024; Damoah et al. 2024;

Nisbet and Zelenski 2013; Tam 2013). The narratives people use to define themselves or nature form an 'interwoven tapestry, its threads being selectively adopted and adapted to make sense of experiences that partly overlap with as well as diverge from those of others' (Wijngaarden 2021, 208). Most social scientists agree that historical and sociocultural factors influence the way people interact with, perceive, interpret and value nature (Escobar 1999; Evernden 1992; Latour 1993). Among the Maasai, nature (weather, water, animals and plants, among others) is an important topic in everyday conversations. 'Is it raining there?', one of my uncles would always ask me when we talked over the phone, and I must repeatedly tell him that rain is not important in the city (where I live and/or work). Ecological factors like weather patterns often determine grazing and migration patterns. For example, when a drought occurs, annual grasses disappear, leading to either migration or death of animals. So, nature is not just a topic of daily conversation but a part of the Maasai community in many ways, which I will explain in the following:

As I hinted early in the introduction, Maasai people regard themselves as people-of-cattle, and this image occupies the conceptual and value centre of being Maasai. I cannot recall how many times I heard my father using the metaphor 'cattle are the soul of man' to sensitise us about the essence and the defining characteristic of cattle to Maasai pastoral identity, much like a soul is to a person. The concepts of Maasai and *wafugaji* (pastoralists) are often used interchangeably in Tanzania. This is partly because the Maasai regard themselves as pre-eminently people-of-cattle, and all other values are thought to follow from that essential commitment, which characterises the notion of being Maasai. A people's value system refers to a collection of beliefs or conceptions of what is ultimately good or desirable (Graeber 2001). Values advance visions of how nature should be related to (Campbell and Gurney 2024; Himes and Muraca 2018). The concept of *Eramatare* is of paramount significance here, both politically and epistemologically, because it represents the Maasai vision of a complete life in which nature is perceived as intertwined with human society in relational terms. It manifests in Maa language, ecological knowledge and customary institutions, which I describe in the following.

Etymologically, the word *Eramatare* comes from the verb *taramata* which can be loosely translated as 'care', 'tend', 'heal' and/or 'restore'. It is a broad term within which specific knowledges and practices of husbandry and care are represented. However, while this knowledge is practical, it is more than that. It is part of an emotional bond and commitment to assemblages of animals and plant species as part of the living community which distinguishes *Eramatare* as a relational worldview from dualistic, colonial conceptions of human/nature. *Eramatare* enlarges the boundaries of community to include other non-human members of the earth like plants, animals, soils and spirits. Indigenous people's perceptions and relationships with nature are expressed through their mythical concepts, norms, ritual practices, proverbs, metaphors, folklores, stories, songs and art (Chilisa and Preece 2005). For instance, the innate society-nature connexion maintained by the Maasai is personified in the 'half-man, half-rock' creature called *Nena-uner* (masculine) / *Neme-feru* (feminine) in the Maasai folklore. The fact that the Maasai linguistic and cultural repertoire has high regard for nature is evidenced

by a tendency to attribute life, agency, intentionality and personhood to animals, plants and other natural elements like rocks and mountains.

For instance, the centrality of caring for and about livestock to Maasai pastoral identity, economic production and social organisation is rather evident. Anthropologist Melville Herskovits (1926) coined the term 'cattle complex' to refer to a system of values where cattle hold significant cultural and social importance, sometimes to the point of appearing irrational from an economic perspective. The metaphor 'cattle is the soul of man' is anchored to the concept of *Eramatare* which emphasises being Maasai (human) through cattle (nature). Cattle are so integral to Maasai identity that some think they would cease being Maasai in their absence. Schultz (2002) argues that the value people give to an object depends on the extent to which they include that object within their sense of self. In the Maa language, the term for cattle, *Ingishu*, also refers to the Maasai as a people. This relationality is also exemplified by livestock gifting to kin and friends. Social relations which are cemented by livestock exchanges are symbolised by special terms of address derived from the name of the animal given or received. For example, instead of referring to them by their names, it is respectable to address close relatives and friends by names of the animals you have given or received from them as a gift, like *Mong'i* (castrated bull), *Ngashe-ai* (my heifer), *Ngine* (my goat), etc.

I am not saying that the livestock gifting system described above excludes profit or desires for accumulation. Demmer and Hummel (2017) caution us not to represent Indigenous economies as solely based on altruism and anti-utilitarianism. This would amount to succumbing to the dualism of modern ontologies self-interest/altruism, gift/profit, etc. while reality is more complex. We should also pay close attention to generalisations that subsume in commodity forms. For instance, Sayre (2009, 706) contends that depending on the social relations in which they are embedded, livestock can take the form of 'capital, labour, commodity or combination of the three'. However, *Eramatare's* way of valuing animals transcends commodification and its forms of exploitation. The received animal becomes part of one's inner sense of self and a lens through which life and the social world is perceived and understood essentially in a convivial and communitarian way. Being a people-of-cattle carries a sense of connection to cattle and land that affects the way the Maasai perceive and act toward non-human nature which forms an important part of being Maasai. Seeing nature as part of oneself, a living being subject to relations of care, interdependence and empathy, contrasts with an ontological understanding of nature as resources or inputs and outputs that can be (mis)managed (Abbott 2021).

In the environmental and conservation literature, Maasai are often referred to as 'natural ecologists' because their pastoral culture forms a web with the environment (Berger 1993; Western et al. 2019). This relatedness is reflected in a Maasai vision for the interconnectedness of land, pastoralism and wildlife: 'livestock is akin to land; without it, life would cease to exist' (MISA 2024, 6). Mountains and hills like En'doinyo-Ormorwak (the hill of the elders) at the feet of Mt. Kilimanjaro and the Ngorongoro Crater are the settings for the major Maasai cultural events, that is, rites of passage. Three important rites of passage, namely

Enkipaata, *Eunoto* and *Olg'esherr*, were inscribed in 2018 on UNESCO's list of intangible cultural heritage in need of urgent safeguarding. *Enkipaata* is the induction of Maasai boys leading to initiation: it marks the beginning of a new age-set group. *Eunoto* is the shaving of hair ceremony marking a transition from junior *morans* to senior *morans*. *Olg'esherr* is the meat-eating ceremony that marks retirement from warriorhood and the beginning of eldership. Therefore, specific places like those mentioned here are perceived by the Maasai as intertwined with their society in relational terms making it difficult to imagine their life or cultural integrity without them. As one *Enkipaata*'s participant from Ngorongoro remarks:

The place where the government wants to evict people from is sacred. They are trying to move us from where they practice their traditional lifestyle, to another place that isn't even Maasai land. They want to move us to Msomera, in the coastal region of Tanga. It is a town; we can't practice our lifestyle there. In Msomera, there is no crater, there are no swamps. This is a threat to the Maasai culture.

(The Oakland Institute 2024, n.p.)

The Maasai of Ngorongoro still use the crater for *Enkipaata* ceremonies, but their life has become increasingly difficult, since the Ngorongoro Conservation Area (NCA) was inscribed as a natural World Heritage Site in 1979 (Ole Nasha 2012). Contrary to a sense of oneness and identification with nature exemplified by the notion of *Eramatare*, the government champions exclusionary conservation, which is often militarised and privatised. The notion of 'ecological togetherness' that is embedded in *Eramatare* is part of a more widely held Indigenous African worldview of the interconnection of all things in the universe (Murove 2009). Through the lens of *Eramatare*, nature is seen as an intricate web of life and not bio-mechanical matter to be controlled and used for economic gain. However, the non-monetary value that the Maasai ascribe to the ecosystems is solely ignored by the government over tourism revenues. From July 2021 to February 2025, the Ngorongoro Conservation Area Authority (NCAA) received 693.96 billion Tanzanian Shillings (USD 278,503,358.00) from 2.9 million tourists who visited the area (Daily News 2025). During the same period, the government intensified efforts to relocate the Maasai residents of Ngorongoro allegedly to improve tourism.

Arturo Escobar (2015) calls the persistent subordination of nature to economic interests the 'coloniality of nature'. This coloniality of nature is directly linked to violence against Indigenous peoples like the Maasai, whose land-based livelihoods and cultural practices are based on a different valuation of nature. Due to intimate relationships with nature, land loss is experienced as cultural dislocation. In the words of Moringe ole Parkipuny (1989, 94), a prominent Maasai land rights defender, the 'most fundamental rights to maintain our *specific cultural identity* and the *land* that constitutes the foundation of our *existence as a people* are not respected by the state and fellow citizens who belong to the mainstream population' (emphasis added). Attempts to change traditional livestock production systems to increase offtake and bring pastoralists into the commercial

networks of monetary market economies. In utter disregard of the Maasai rights, the colonial and later the post-colonial, state actively initiated programmes to grab Maasai lands for settlement, tourism and farming. Maasai communities have fiercely resisted forced evictions or conservation policies that ignore their historical ties with nature. For instance, during the 2022 protests, public prayer gatherings were held to seek divine intervention in halting the looming *emutai* (disaster). A song by Mary Lemburis, which widely spread through social media during the relocations, summarises the content of such prayers. The title of the song is *Engai Tasaru Iyiok* (God Rescue Us). It is appropriate to cite it here by way of translation:

God rescue us, the remnant of the minority Maa community,

We run unto you for refuge, shield us from oppression,

Defend and save us from oppressive hands, that are down-pressing us.

They are evicting us from our ancestral lands, the lands of our births,

The inheritance from our grandparents,

Behold we are made refugees!

It is we, the Maasai who safeguarded these lands for centuries for our livestock,

From the Serengeti to Masai Mara, Ngorongoro to Embusel [Amboseli],

From Mkongonero in Kimotorok to Njapai and Kitwai,

We the Maasai protected all of them, in coexistence with wildlife from time immemorial:

The lions, giraffes, and zebras, but also elephants, buffalos, gazelles, and kudu

We have always been together on grazing lands, herding together in harmony

But we are now being separated.

Here is an example of music being used as a tool for environmental activism: celebrating Maasai interdependency with nature and how that coexistence is being inhibited by a modern nation-state. It is expression of fear and pain at the marginalisation that the Maasai community continue to face from the Tanzanian state. However, Maasai music often references the natural world including deep connection with animals and landscapes. Wild animals are revered as ancestors and classified as kins in line with Maasai clans (for details, see Melubo 2020). The relationship comes with duties, taboos and responsibilities. Those who

share a totem are considered bound by blood to mutually respect the species by refraining from harming as well as protecting them. Under neoliberal conservation, wildlife is valued primarily for its market value. In this context, nature is 'secularized and 'atomized'—existing as a 'resource' rather than as part of an interrelated system of being' (Shaw et al. 2006, 269–270). As Sippel and Visser (2021, 279) rightly point out, societal struggles that are fought over land are rooted not only in the often-competing interests and projects of what people seek to do with land, but also in the diverging understandings of what land can or ought to be in society.

Today, a combination of demographic, market and climatic pressures is leading to even more impoverishment and marginalisation of the Maasai pastoralists. Despite the retention of collectively held systems in most parts of Tanzanian Maasailand, livelihood diversification among the Maasai in neoliberal Tanzania has been the subject of many studies (Baird and Hartter 2017; Gardner 2016; Homewood et al. 2009; McCabe 2003; McCabe et al. 2014). Climate change-related disruptions are also making pastoralism (as a livelihood) less tenable (Goldman and Riosmena 2013; Nnko et al. 2021; Oxfam 2008). Tuck and Yang (2012, 5) discuss how 'the disruption of Indigenous relationships to land represents a profound epistemic, ontological, cosmological violence'.

Undoubtedly, tensions between misled development efforts and Maasai knowledge and practices remain. Though constrained by a wider structural political economy that conditions what is possible (to whom), the Maasai traditional lifestyle remains valued and desirable among many Maasai. The Maasai operate in the capitalist system, but they do not necessarily embrace capitalist extractive logic in the way they raise livestock. Schareika et al. (2021) have used the term 'cattle logic' to convey the idea that among some pastoralists decisions and all social processes are defined in terms of cattle. Even if the Maasai participate in livestock trade, the goal is not production for the market per se or profit maximisation. Rather, their production system is geared towards long-term continuity of the herd and the household. For instance, natural growth of the herd is more common than deliberate investment to scale up. This is evidenced by hesitation to adopt productive technologies like modern breeds (König 2016; Pissarskoi and Singo 2024). In pastoral settings where land, labour and the raising of livestock are increasingly commoditised, the cattle logic is replaced by a capital logic (Schareika et al. 2021).

A transition from cattle to capital logic is observed among West African (Bassett 1994; Moritz et al. 2011, 2015; Vanvanhossou et al. 2021) and Kenyan pastoralists who have, since the 1980s, established private ranches indicating a shift to a more capitalist production system (Little 1985; Yurco 2017). A similar transition is not seen among Maasai pastoralists in Tanzania. The cattle logic and dependence on family labour are still predominant there, meaning social and ecological considerations carry more weight in the raising of livestock. Preference for indigenous breeds is informed by tradition and practicality: their ability to thrive in challenging conditions reduces the need for costly inputs, that is, supplemental feeding and veterinary care. Under capital logic, the quest for growth, productivity and efficiency takes primacy. For example, research shows that absentee

herders, those who rely on salaried herders, prefer to keep their animals close to markets (Little 1985; Moritz et al. 2015). Thus, it can be said that Maasai pastoralists are only partially integrated into national or global markets. Their selective market engagement is intentional and seeks to avoid capture by state and markets.

Using the metaphor 'small is powerful', Göran Hyden (1980) introduced the concept of uncaptured peasantry to describe African peasants' autonomy vis-à-vis the state. His thesis about what he calls the economy of affection explains the social logic guiding human interaction in African societies (Hyden 1983). According to Hyden, the economy of affection has nothing to do with fond emotions per se. It points to features of non-exploitative kin-based economies that inhibit capitalist development. On the one hand, one may disagree with Hyden's conceptualisation given that African peasants have actually been 'captured' or integrated into global agricultural value chains to their own disadvantage. On the other hand, one cannot deny that existing kin-based features of peasant economies, for example, Maasai pastoralism, do inhibit capitalist development. Kin-based elements are most strongly developed and preserved among those at the margins, 'in part because they are kept from participating in a significant portion of the market economy' (Porter 1987, 3). As bell hooks (1990, 341) articulates '[t]o be in the margin is to be part of the whole but outside the main body'. However, marginality here is viewed as much more than a site of deprivation; it is a 'site of radical possibility' (ibid.), 'spaces of hope' (Smith 1984, 4).

Following the above, I approach the margins as spaces for production of counter-hegemonic discourses. It is empowering to approach pastoralists not as helpless victims of history but as active actors resisting their marginalisation and dispossession. I regard the traditional Maasai lifestyle with its nature relatedness, that is, deep cultural and spiritual connection to land and animals, as constituting an oppositional worldview to neoliberal worlding or production of nature. Historically, the traditional Maasai way of life has provided both material and ideological tools for resisting colonialism and capitalist relations of production (Hughes 2006; Rigby 1989; Tignor 1976). What insights can this relational worldview—focused on socio-ecological interdependence—offer for a decolonial socio-ecological transformation?

5 | Insights for a Decolonial Socio-Ecological Transformation

Maasai struggle for land rights and cultural identity is a typical example of a decolonial quest to rectify historical and ongoing socio-ecological injustices of colonialism. I agree with West et al. (2024) that a transition to just socio-ecological transformations requires alternatives to the paradigms, practices and policies that have generated social-ecological destruction and the Anthropocene. Articulations of alternatives to capitalist socio-ecological configurations by those at the margins are increasingly on the rise (Blythe et al. 2018; Feola et al. 2021; Jackson 2021). An increasing shift toward relational ontologies (Gould et al. 2023; West et al. 2020) is a symptom of the crisis of the modernist-colonial episteme. It is a recognition

that efforts to transcend capitalism in any egalitarian way and broadly sustainable fashion will be hampered so long as the political imagination is captive to capitalism's organisation of nature (Ferdinand 2022; Moore 2011; Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2021b; Richter 2019; West et al. 2020). We can avoid reproducing coloniality of nature by engaging with Indigenous ethico-onto-epistemologies such as *Eramatare*.

Rooted in radical relationality, *Eramatare* offers critical insights for a decolonial socio-ecological transformation embedded in ecological justice, local autonomy and multiple knowledge systems. Alongside modern state institutions, the Maasai run a parallel political system to govern themselves and exercise authority over their lands and cultural practices. Institutions of this political system are informed by and nurture *Eramatare*. Institutions here refer to 'taken-for-granted, organized system[s] of roles and interactions' (Ocasio 2023, 2). Maasai institutions, namely *Engigwana*, *Oсотwa* and the Maasai age-set system (*Alaji*), promote a convivial lifestyle that prioritises wholeness, harmonious coexistence and sharing arrangements (*Oсотwa*). My lived experience of these institutions is what motivated my attempt to link *Eramatare* to debates on socio-ecological transformations and future-making. Practices, processes and relations associated with these institutions unsettle the nature/society binary and private property relations through communitarian and collective commitments.

Engigwana (oral forum and structured dialogue) is the primary institution for decision-making within Maasai society. It centres Indigenous Africans' traditions of collective problem-solving through community-led approaches. It is storytelling in the performative sense that is open and non-linear and normally conducted under a particular tree (neutral ground). *Engigwana* is often an opportunity for mutual learning, where community members can freely and meaningfully share knowledge and perspectives, leading to shared understanding on a particular issue under consideration. All-important topics regarding the welfare (and conflict) of the community, livestock, land and wildlife are deliberated collectively at *Engigwana*. There are principles that guide this deliberative process. First, the discussion is opened by naming only the problem at hand. There is no mention of possible solutions within the problem statement itself or by the person who opens the meeting. Second, everyone at an *Engigwana* has the freedom to speak and to be listened to; there are no rules constraining his or her contribution. Third, a meeting is finished when, and only when, a consensus has been reached. The final agreement may not necessarily reflect the wishes of all, but it is acceptable to all.

Engigwana legitimises Indigenous governance structures, such as community forums or village councils, as essential actors in managing socio-ecological issues. For example, some (non-Maasai) scholars have suggested that *Engigwana*'s ideals and guiding principles can form the basis for building decolonial conservation dialogues (Goldman 2020; Western et al. 2020). This would ensure that conservation or development plans are aligned with Indigenous interests and perspectives by guaranteeing free, prior and informed consent (FPIC) on all matters affecting their lands and resources. *Engigwana* continues offering space for critique of Eurocentric land management models in favour of the fluid land-use systems. In *Engigwana*, issues

like communal stewardship and adaptive grazing that align with ecological variability are deliberated upon in everyday life. Recognising such Indigenous resource governance and knowledge(s) is essential to epistemic justice in decolonial socio-ecological transformation. A harmonious relationship between humans and nature is preserved by institutions that promote collective values, non-anthropocentric perspectives and social responsibility, that is, *Alaji* and *Oсотwa*.

Social scientists have conducted thorough research into *Alaji* (Maasai age-set institution)—broad age-bands that determine the permitted roles and activities of their members (Morton 1979; Spencer 2014). Male members are divided into stratified age-grades (*Ilayiok*, *Ilmurran* [warriors], junior elders, senior and retired elders). Age mates are initiated together at around the age of 14, assigned a group name, a group spokesperson and a father figure. They pass through each phase of life together, creating a strong and life-long bond. Relations between age mates involve general and permanent obligations of cooperation, sharing, egalitarian solidarity and communalism. For example, it is one's responsibility to provide shelter, food and company to age mates when they are in need. In fact, it is forbidden for *Olmurran* (warriors) to take any meal alone; everything is to be consumed with colleagues. The aim of this food taboo (*enduruj*) is to ensure that those without food are not left unfed. It encourages equality, companionship and group solidarity. As such, food as a cultural object is a fundamental tool for not just nurturing the individual's body but also for reinforcing the intangible body of society.

Ideals and practices of the age-set system seem to align with the ideas of decolonial solidarity that are grounded in equity, inclusion and a commitment to dismantling oppressive systems that exploit and disempower others (Karmakar 2025; Rodney 1969; Tuck and Yang 2012). *Alaji*'s insistence on unity, working and learning together outside of the modern-colonial system and state structures, can be a model for decolonial socio-ecological movements. Interconnectedness between humans as well as humans and nature is central to *Eramatare*'s ontology. For instance, Maasai refer to their kin as *Oсотwa lai* (my umbilical cord), acknowledging their interconnectedness as part and parcel of one another. *Oсотwa* is a cooperative and sharing system based on need, often without an apparent expectation of reciprocity. Support and aid in the framework of *Oсотwa* extends to other-than-human kins, that is, animals, as explained in the preceding section. The focus on flourishing of all our relations is what *Oсотwa* seeks to sustain. Viewing life as a cosmological interconnectedness nurtured and sustained by an 'umbilical cord' is antithetical to the 'One-World World' (Escobar 2016; Law 2015) of 'Man' (Wynter 2003). This relational ontology inspires a pluriverse where all life-forms matter. Listening deeply—by attending to the ontologies and epistemologies of those with long histories of resisting colonialism and capitalism—can reveal strategies of endurance, resistance and community organising for decolonial socio-ecological movements.

Marginalised social imaginaries can reimagine pathways toward better, more just, sustainable and decolonial futures (Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2021b; Paradies 2020; Tuck and Yang 2012; wa Thiong'o 1986). The fact that the Maasai lifeways and practices have survived decades of colonialism and post-colonial

scoff speaks volumes to its efficacy and resiliency. Their endurance provides a living critique of imposed Western notions of private property, individualism and fixed settlement—root causes of socio-ecological crises today. A recurring tendency that exemplifies Maasai traditional pastoral lifeways as static traditions of the past deny its agency in imagining socio-ecological futures. For example, in the context of neoliberal gender rights, Maasai women are presented as lacking both economic and political power for the management of natural resources and their own lives (Hodgson 1999, 2001; Kipuri 1989). These women then become a target of neoliberal empowerment and entrepreneurship interventions. However, it is important to give more attention to how development and conservation-driven dispossession of the Maasai continues to produce and perpetuate colonial-like gender inequalities. Without historicising processes which reproduce systemic injustices, empowering women in dispossessed communities remains an unrealistic ideal. In his classic *The Wretched of the Earth*, Frantz Fanon (1963, 44) contends that '[f]or a colonized people the most essential value ... is first and foremost the land ... which will bring them ... dignity'. First things first, decolonisation demands the returning of stolen lands to Indigenous peoples and respecting their right to self-determination (Tuck and Yang 2012).

6 | Conclusion

A diverse set of socio-ecological movements is emerging out of a disenchantment with the policies, practices and promises of development and capitalism. These movements are envisioning alternatives including but not limited to post-growth, post-development, post-capitalism, Indigenous rights and rights of nature, as radical ways of inhabiting otherwise. Our task to achieve socio-ecological transformation requires a dual approach: we must actively challenge prevailing social imaginaries while also bringing to light and using the already existing alternatives that the mainstream cultural-political system ignores. The motivation behind this contribution is a hope that Maasai nature relatedness enshrined in *Eramatare* may serve more generally as an inspiration for those seeking a decolonial ecological transformation. I have mobilised the phrase 'inhabiting otherwise', which is the main title of this article, to visibilise an oftentimes obscured ontological dimension of Maasai environmental politics. The Maasai vision of a complete life enshrined in *Eramatare* is a relational mode of habitation, inhabiting lands in contrast to and in contention with the colonial mode of habitation. Its institutions and practices are the living critique of modern-colonial understandings of nature, knowledge and development.

I have shown that Maasai pastoralists serve as an example that people are already living lives and (re)producing moral and material worlds that prioritise holistic well-being, reciprocity, sustainability and care rather than expansion, destruction and domination. Socio-ecological movements seeking decolonial transformation may draw from *Eramatare* ontologies to re-imagine non-extractive relationships with nature. Given their rich historical understanding of human–nature relations, cultivated over thousands of years, traditional societies like the Maasai are uniquely positioned to play a critical role in guiding upcoming societal, economic and political shifts. Thus, we

should constantly ask whose ontology is privileged and whose is invisibilised in imagining alternative socio-ecological futures. Centring relational ontologies is essential for the cultivation of a pluriverse. But how much of the traditional Maasai lifestyle remains? One may ask. I have grappled with this question throughout the paper, and it has helped me to remain reflective of the implications of economic, political and ecological changes the Maasai are confronted with. What is clear is that coloniality of nature, embedded in modernising development projects and green grabbing, is to blame for the deepening precarity, marginalisation and dispossession of the Maasai.

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Conflicts of Interest

The author declares no conflicts of interest.

Data Availability Statement

The data that support the findings of this study are available from the corresponding author upon reasonable request.

Endnotes

¹ Following Michael Jennings (2009), the phrase “development as a coercive utopia” describes an attempt by the state to create a new form of society and forge a new identity oriented towards the vision of that state.

² See <https://udadisi.com/> and <https://rpubc.com/> (last accessed 27 November 2025).

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