Threatened Forest, Threatened Culture:

- a case study of subjectivities, nature and resistance in Embobut Forest

Signe Larsen

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LUCSUS

Lund University Centre for Sustainability Studies

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Supervisors: Elina Andersson, LUCSUS, Lund University
Henner Busch, LUCSUS, Lund University

Abstract:

Forests are today recognised as vital for ensuring a sustainable world and today's initiatives to save them address everything from actual resource use to fictitious agendas such as carbon sequestration. Forests have become embedded in a "fog of greening", and in this process local forest become global spaces for saving the world. The fog of greening is dislocated from the ground but has both material and discursive consequences, when it interacts with the local level. Conflicts over forests are therefore often a result of global agendas interacting with local realities. Global programmes for forest use, for example conservation, have often been criticised for changing local peoples' access to forests, sometimes even by physical displacement. This is closely related to the conceptualisation of nature as being void of humans to ensure biodiversity of the forest. This research uses the case of Embobut Forest in Kenya as an example of a local response in a conflict over natural resources, by looking at processes that construct identity and hereby form opposition. The analysis is based on feminist work on subjectivities and focuses on intersections between socio-political relations, cultural practices and environmental processes, and how they are (re)neogitated and embodied by the local community, when it mobilises its indigenous claim to the forest. The study uses interviews, observations and a photography exercise to elicit how the local community's response functions in the locals' everyday life. It shows that the (re)negotiation of their subjectivities involves discursive as well as material changes in their relation to the forest, and that these restructurings draw on existing practices, as well as networks across scales. The focus on the intersections of above elements in the subject formation shows that the conflict is about cultural survival and not just territory. The risk of cultural extinction is thus higher than the risk entailed in their indigenous identity. This raises questions to the future of the fog of greening: in saving nature, it is important to ask *whose* nature we protect and open up for an acknowledgment of alternative human-nature relations.

Keywords: human-nature relations, conflict, local resistance, Kenya, post-structural feminism, indigenous

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List of abbreviations

CFA	Community Forest Association
FPP	Forest People Programme
GoK	Government of Kenya
ILO	International Labour Organization
IUCN	International Union for Conservation of Nature
KFS	Kenya Forest Service
NRM	Natural Resource Management (Project)
RA	Research Assistant
UN	United Nations
UNEP	United Nations Environmental Programme
WB	World Bank
WWF	World Wide Fund for Nature

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1 Introduction

The world's natural resources are being depleted with devastating consequences for the sustainable future of our planet. In order to preserve a healthy natural environment for generations to come, the protection of natural resources, such as forests, are prioritised on the global agenda. Big and small forests around the world hereby become global spaces for everything from biodiversity protection to carbon sequestration, but they are and will continue to be, simultaneously local places, where people live and die. When the global agendas "hit the ground, they interact with social groups within the state and in society" (Hall et al., 2015, p. 468). Sometimes this encounter is smooth, but there will always be friction (Tsing, 2005) between the aim of the global programmes and an undisturbed continuation of the local life. This encounter is not uniform across the world's forests and simultaneously, the reactions from below are different depending on the context (Hall et al., 2015). The most common narrative is the role of forest dwellers in the degradation of the forest resource (Rocheleau et al., 2011), but political ecologist have drawn attention to the role of international corporation, states and local elites. Despite this insight, in practise the encounter often results in a change in local people and communities' everyday practices and actions, and in displacement of local people either with forced evictions or constraints on resource access (Bosak, 2014; Büscher, Sullivan, Neves, Igoe, & Brockington, 2012; Fairhead, Leach, & Scoones, 2012; Li, 2000; Rutherford, 2007, rocheleau et al 2011). The global agendas are therefore highly productive in the local realities, as they are part of producing a conceptualisation of nature as void of human (Büscher et al., 2012; Nightingale, 2006a; Willems-Braun, 1997).

The aim of this study is to investigate the global connections with a local reality. I have chosen to ground my analysis *in concrete engagements* (Tsing, 2005, p. 267), a situated dilemma in Embobut Forest, Cherangany Hills in Western Kenya (Map 1, p. 5). The case of the Sengwer people in Embobut in Western Kenya is an example of a struggle between the state and an indigenous community. My aim is to identify and deconstruct the resistance from below and its use of an indigenous identity and subjectivity, which the Sengwer mobilise in their claim to the forest. The research focuses on the processes that construct identity and how the created opposition is immersed in a global and local network, in order to answer the main research question:

> *How do global agendas and local realities interact in conflicts over forests as well as in the indigenous response from below?*

In order to answer this question, the following chapter briefly presents the struggle of the Sengwer community in Embobut. Chapter 3 introduces my take on the interactions between the global and the local in natural resource struggles, highlighting global trends in natural resource management as well as local responses based on indigeneity. Chapter 3 ends with my theoretical framework and introduces my working questions, supporting the above research question. Chapter 4 presents my methodological considerations as well as outline, how my research has been conducted in practice, followed by the analysis in chapter 5, which shows the symbolic and material restructurings of the everyday activities. The following discussion (chapter 6) draws on the preceding chapters and presents a coherent take on the case, before chapter 7 offers my concluding remarks.

2 Presenting the case

- The Sengwer in Embobut Forest, Western Kenya

> *I: Walk me through a day in the forest at the moment? Just a normal day.*
>
> *[You] Get up early in the morning like 6 [o' clock], just milk your sheep, […] after you milk your sheep, you make tea, and after that you take the utensils in your house and go and hide them in the bush so that if it happens that KFS came, then he will not find the things and burn them in the house, so you'll just go and hide them in a nearby bush, then you come to hills to watch, to see if they are coming or not. And then you stay on the hills until noontime when you know that they are not coming, […] and you go and bring those things that you hid, and you make lunch, and then you go and look for your animals to get them into the enclosures, then after that you make supper and sleep. And that is the order of the day.*
>
> *I: And if KFS* [Kenya Forest Service] *come…?*
>
> *If they* [you] *are unlucky that KFS come by, so if they come, you go and see, and you hide yourself, you can even hide yourself in the grass, if you're unlucky that they come by your place and burn everything, after they are gone, you start making a new house at the place so that you can shelter yourself for the night, yeah.* (I.2a)

The above quote comes from an interview[1] conducted in March 2015 with two men from the Sengwer community living in Embobut. The quote illustrates several things regarding the struggle in Embobut: It involves burning of possessions and houses by Kenya Forest Service[2] (KFS) and it influences everyday activities and mobility of the Sengwer. Embobut is the place for a resource

[1] Quotes in boxes are sourced by (I.2) referring to the interview number in Appendix 1. The following letter is included if an interview is quoted more than once.

[2] KFS is a state corporation mandated to managed forests

conflict between the Government of Kenya (GoK) and the Sengwer people. The conflict is not new. The Sengwer in Embobut have experienced harassment, such as burning of houses, arrests and evictions, from the national forest authorities since the 1980's (see Figure 1), but recently the conflict has escalated, until it reached a peak in January 2014. Here a multi-actor eviction was carried out by KFS and the Administration Police (a government-controlled paramilitary security unit) and led to the burning of community schools, polling stations, shops, farms and houses, as well as arrests of community members. Following the eviction, the community is living dispersed and families are often divided, with some members living inside the forest and some outside. The people living inside Embobut[3] are still facing harassment from KFS, which involves regular burning of their houses, destruction of kitchen utensils and arrest of people for trespassing. Community members living adjacent to the forest also use the forest on a daily/weekly basis and are likewise being arrested for trespassing.

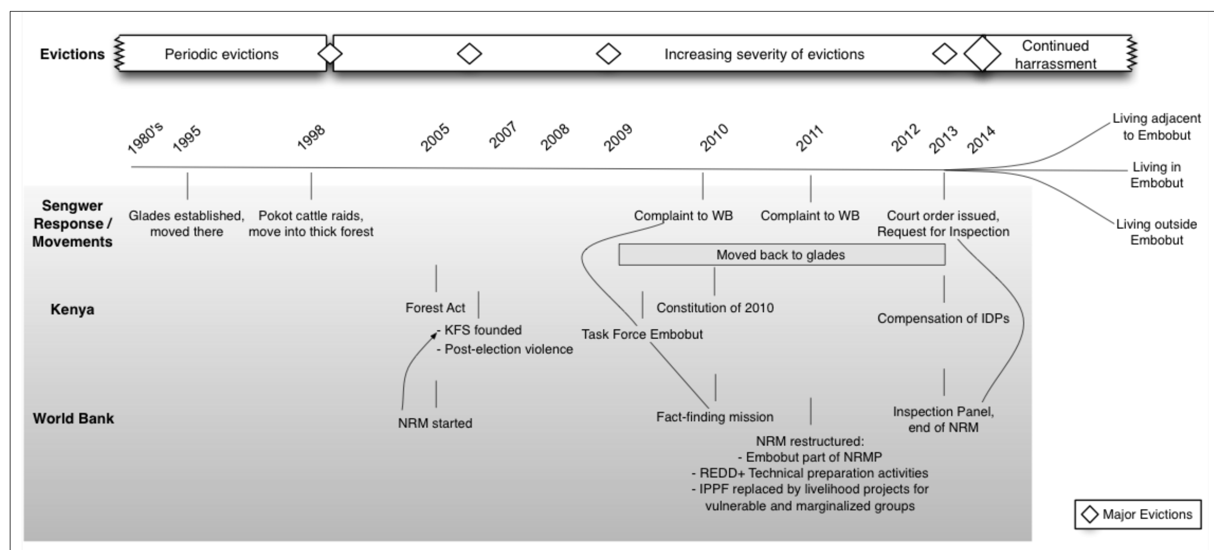

Figure 1 Time line over the major events in Embobut relating to the case study. The part above the time line indicates evictions. Below the time line, the first line lists some of the movements of the Sengwer as well as some selected responses. The second line, Kenya, represents relevant legislation, and major events affecting the case. The last line, World Bank, illustrates the Natural Resource Management project in Cherangany Hills, and selected events. The time line was developed from data gathered through different interviews and various documents (World Bank, 2013) and then confirmed through an informant.

Despite the asymmetric setup of the conflict (Ramsbotham et al., 2005), the conflict is embedded in the plural society of Kenya, and thereby in a colonially created state with culturally heterogeneous population (Hylland Eriksen, 2002). The conflict is not solely between the state and the Sengwer, but is set in a complex network of relations, including neighbouring tribes and communities (mainly

[3] It is estimated that 70% have moved back inside the forest (FPP, 2014).

Pokot and Marakwet, non-forest dwelling communities), and is especially influenced by the internal movements in the area (colonial and post-colonial). Prior to the major eviction in 2014, other communities (primarily Marakwet), landslides victims, and post-2007-election migrants were living in the forest with the Sengwer. However, after the eviction in 2014, the remaining people identify as Sengwer. Figure 1 also illustrates that the World Bank (WB) has been engaged in the forest through their Natural Resource Management Project[4] (see chapter 5).

Embobut is part of the Cherangany Hills Forest (Figure 2), which covers approx. 120,000 ha, rises to about 3500 m, is characterized by afro-alpine vegetation above 3300 m, and is home to the endangered De Brazza Monkey (Kenya Water Towers Agency, n.d.). The area is appointed as one of Kenya's five water catchment areas.

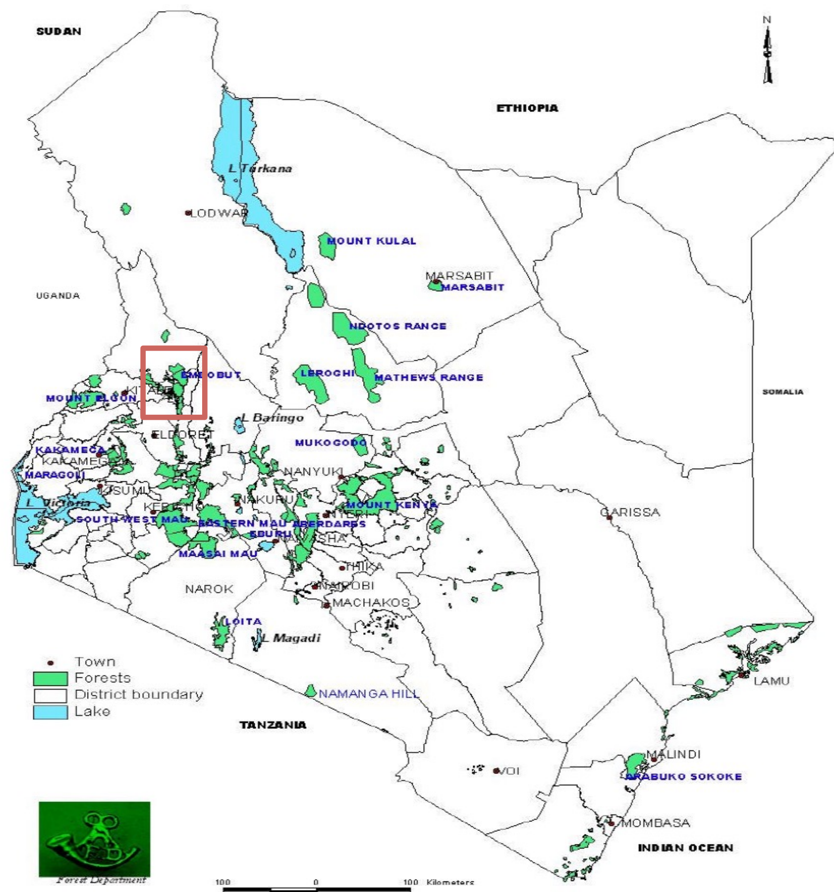

Figure 2 Map of case study location. Indicated by red square. Source: (Mathu, 2007)

[4] The NRM has a budget of USD 66.5 million and addresses the critical issue of water scarcity in Kenya by conserving the country's five water towers. Cherangany Forest was only included in the Project after the restructuring in 2011 (WB, 2014), but included in project activities earlier than this, for example the indigenous people-planning framework and boundary demarcation activities. As part of the restructuring of the project, the activities for Cherangany Hills Forest included technical assistance for preparation of REDD+ initiatives in the forest, following that Kenya became a UN-REDD+ partner country in 2010 (Lake, 2012).

2.1 Contemporary Sengwer

Traditionally the Sengwer were a hunter-gatherer community, moving between Cherangany Hills Forest and the adjacent plains. During the Colonial period, the plains were converted into agricultural fields and settlement areas, pushing the Sengwer to retreat to the Cherangany Hills Forest[5] and were assimilated into dominant tribes in the area[6], in order to dissolve their community identity (Sengwer Documents). As a result, the Sengwer are today primarily living in or adjacent to forests (Lynch, 2011, 2006, Sengwer Documents) in dispersed groupings. Besides Embobut, the Sengwer are found in Trans Nzoia, West Pokot and Elgeyo-Marawket Counties. Today they are keeping livestock and engage in sedentary activities such as farming. The standard of living differs within the community; basic social services, health care, sanitation, public elementary and secondary education are non-existent in some areas (such as Embobut).

Recent history of the Sengwer involve struggles with the government over the right and access to forest resources, in the 1990's over Kapolet Forest[7] (West Pokot) (Lynch, 2006, own data), which is still not resolved today, and more recently in Embobut (Figure 1). The struggles with the government center around land tenure issues, seeing as only the Sengwer in Talau and Kipsero have title allotments. In order to solve this, and to bring general development to the community, the Sengwer address national legislation, courts and international networks. On the national level, the most recent example is related to the mechanism of historical land injustices through the Commission on Land Injustices[8], claiming that their marginalization and identity loss date back to colonial times. Historical developments are actively used by the Sengwer to advance their quest for recognition through political mechanisms, which was also identified by Lynch (2006). This historical awareness and knowledge is a result from extensive search in colonial archives by community members in the 1990's, but is today still used in the articulation of identity loss and marginalisation (Sengwer documents.

[5] The Sengwer were not employed on the farms of the White Settlers, as they were deemed unfit to perform agricultural labour. This was therefore also the onset of the migration of other tribes to the area, as they were employed by colonial farmers to work on their farms (Sengwer documents).
[6] Sengwer in West Pokot were to assimilate with the Pokot, the Sengwer in Marakwet with the Marakwet and so forth.
[7] For a detailed description of the case of Kapolet Forest please refer to Lynch, 2006 and 2011. As an update, my findings are that today the Sengwer in Kapolet still only live in the area allotted for Phase I, but without official titles. Phase II is unoccupied.
[8] The Taskforce for Historical Land Injustices, under the National Land Commission, has the mandate to investigate and arbitrate historical claims for land injustices outside of the Court system.

The Sengwer have a unique cultural way of living and doing things, or in the words of one interviewee (6): *The difference between sengwer and other communities is this: we are Sengwer and they are not Sengwer. To be a Sengwer is the cultural activities.* Traditionally speaking, this includes distinct social organisations based on clans, age sets and traditional practices, such as an initiation ritual. This ritual entails circumcision, seclusion of the initiators in order to teach them a second language, how to behave and carry on the Sengwer way of life.

The focus of this case study is Embobut, but involves activists living in Embobut and from other places (Kipsero, Kitale, Talau). The struggle is as such networked across places, with the cultural identity forming "the glue". The Sengwer in Embobut were previously isolated from the other communities, but with the intensification of the conflict in the 2000's, individuals from the Sengwer community reached out to the Sengwer situated in Embobut and they are now actively working together to promote the cause of the Sengwer in Embobut, and in extension the case of the Sengwer at large.

Before analysing the struggle, the following chapter will provide the theoretical background and framework for analysis.

3 The local forest in a global fog of greening

– A process that constructs opposition and subjectivities

Before presenting my framework for investigating the case study, I present three key concepts that inform my theoretical approach to the global-local connections in the study: The social construction of nature, the fog of greening and local responses focused on being indigenous. Thus, the review provides a foundation for understanding of how global agendas for forests and local realities interact. Hereafter, I present my theoretical framework for investigating the processes that construct subjectivities and opposition.

3.1 Conservation or development: When the global meets the local

In order to investigate the response from the ground, it is necessary to establish an understanding of the global-local encounter, and how abstract, global ideas about the world "operate in the world" (Tsing, 2005, p. 6), and turn a forest into a place for contention. This is closely related to how nature is conceptualised: is it a resource for extraction, a place somebody lives at, encroached and degraded by humans, or is it the key to save the world in the looming environmental crisis? Discursive approaches in environmental studies have drawn attention to how these different ideas have material consequences (Harris, 2009). Political ecologists have shown us that nature is socially constructed, and with this, how appropriate uses and users are an outcome of social, historical, political and ecological processes (Harris, 2009; Robbins, 2001). Nature is not a distinct, defined entity, but gains meaning in and through our discursive construction, as well as through our engagements in practice (Robbins, 2001). When transferring this line of thought to conflicts over natural resources, the complexity, as well as the fact that different ideas and narratives about nature and society are mobilised in these conflicts, becomes evident. As the construction of the idea of the forest simultaneously constructs the physical forest, conflicts over natural resources are simultaneously conflicts over meaning (Fairhead and Leach, 1995; Li, 2000; Perreault, 2001). Political ecologists have investigated how local people, states and international institutions hold different normative ideas about the environment, for example a forest (Rocheleau et al., 2011). If a forest is experiencing deforestation, conservation and protection programs will be initiated and this will have a direct material effect, and quite often restructure local people's use and access to the forest.

There is not one overarching narrative or discourse informing all decisions on how a forest shall be managed, but fluid conceptualisations interweaving with each other and over time. The core element is the human-nature relation, and it is therefore both located within projects as well as academic literature on development and conservation (Brown, 2002; Nightingale, 2003). Traditionally speaking,

the conservation community and literature has perceived local development as a direct threat to biodiversity conservation, and development advocates have seen biodiversity conservation as stimulating natural resource conflicts and as directly displacing people from their livelihoods (Brown, 2002; Salafsky and Wollenberg, 2000). In essence however, the two areas are highly intertwined, as they are both concerned with structuring human-nature relations and by the fact that social and ecological factors intersect to direct ecological change and development outcomes (Nightingale, 2003; Pretty et al., 2009).

The long-term practice of protecting nature through conservation and protection has enforced an idea of nature as being void of humans (Rocheleau et al., 2011; Willems-Braun, 1997) or with restrictive regulations on use (Salafsky and Wollenberg, 2000) to preserve biodiversity. This has been the ground for many conflicts between local users and top-down implementations of nature protection areas. Conservation projects have thus been heavily criticised for restructuring local users access and rights to a certain forest and their active support for the removal of local users (Büscher et al., 2012; Rocheleau, 2015; Rocheleau et al., 2011; Salafsky and Wollenberg, 2000) as well as silencing dissident voices (Büscher et al., 2012). However, due to the above-mentioned recognition of a shared focus area, approaches based on indirect and direct linkages between human livelihood and forest protection have been introduced (Salafsky and Wollenberg, 2000), beginning in the 1980's. Often termed community-based conservation, it continued to expand in popularity and it "soon became the bandwagon onto which many organizations jumped" (Chapin, 2004, p. 18). The following decades proved a long range of failures within projects working with indigenous people (Chapin, 2004; Dove, 2006) as with the integration of conservation and development in general (Büscher and Fletcher, 2014).

Today these approaches are still around, but the global agendas for nature use have changed with the realisation that "green is hot" (Büscher and Fletcher, 2014, p. 2). With this realisation new actors and aims have emerged. The following will introduce these changes, and thereby provide a context for the case.

3.2 Forest use in the fog of greening

Recently, green critique of the present economic system (Fairhead et al., 2012) have moved from the margin to the inner circle, and are embedded in approaches towards nature, such as ecological modernisation, payment for ecosystem services, and the rise of the green economy. This is related to the fact that a forest is a cornucopia of ecological functions, which make it an ideal candidate in a variety of approaches to save our planet from the environmental crisis: They are a prime place for

protection of biodiversity, water catchment, carbon sequestration and resource extraction. These global narratives on forests are closely connected to crisis terminology, such as climate change and biodiversity loss, recognising the role of capitalist expansion in the depletion of nature, and simultaneously promoting market mechanisms as being capable of saving and repairing nature. Taken together, these approaches are named green grabbing (Fairhead et al., 2012; Nel and Hill, 2014; Rocheleau, 2008; Rutherford, 2007; Vidal, 2008), described as "the appropriation of land and resources for environmental ends" (Fairhead et al., 2012, p. 238) from the poor into the hands of the powerful and thus away from customary tenure systems and use. The core mantra is to sell nature to save it, and that the traded commodities are discursively constructed (Fairhead et al., 2012). These discursive commodities are appointing new value to nature, closely linked to the global discourse. However, this discursive commodity, which is created by the science-policy nexus, influences "material political-economic conditions on the ground" (Fairhead et al., 2012, p. 241). Furthermore, it has introduced new actors for protection nature (Fairhead et al., 2012; Nel and Hill, 2014; Rocheleau, 2015) and has in the process influenced existing approaches to nature, such as conservation, and changed the focus from how we use nature to how we conserve nature (Büscher et al., 2012).

Rocheleau (2015) has termed this new situation the "fog of greening", indicating the variety and complexity in actors and programmes for green ends, and notes that "this coalition of actors employs meta-strategies to redefine the terms of connection between people and land, often trying to sever those connections for some, while facilitating them for others" (Rocheleau, 2015, p. 703). The material connection in the discursive constructions of the green grabbing or fog of green is material appropriation, which removes land or resources from the hands of their former users/owners, or restricts access and user rights (Büscher and Fletcher, 2014; Büscher et al., 2012; Fairhead et al., 2012; Li, 2010; Rocheleau, 2015), as the green projects construct discursive notions of what and how appropriate "green" functions (Fairhead et al., 2012) and simultaneously declare traditional uses and users illegal. As such, green grabbing or the fog of greening is dislocated from the ground, but operates through place-specific processes with a material impact on the ground on the local people, who are the primary users or owners of the nature part in question.

Local people are not ignored, but global programmes interacting with local realities often refer to the latter as being "affected people and communities", and in terms of re-localisation, compensation and livelihood projects. When global projects result in dispossession of local people, it is often criticised. This critique is especially found in projects impacting indigenous group, that is cultural distinctive and ecologically sound (Li, 2010), and where the impact is on a more existential level than mere

livelihood activities. These groups are able to link into a global network on indigenous people and the environment and thereby gain support for their local case (Li, 2000; Perreault, 2001; Sundberg, 2004). As this is the focus of the case study, the following will introduce some key points from selected literature on indigenous responses and resistance.

3.3 The indigenous response

A local response centred on being indigenous is not novel and is based on a conceptualisation of local indigenous knowledge as valuable for conservation efforts (Chapin, 2004; Salafsky and Wollenberg, 2000) and on the recognition, that the nature we strive to preserve, is in itself not natural, but a result of previous human-nature engagements (Rocheleau et al., 2011). Benefits from the integration of human and nature in conservation projects slowly gained increasing awareness through the 1980's with the 1980 World Conservation Strategy from UNEP, WWF and IUCN (Dove, 2006) and UN's definition on indigenous peoples in 1986 and ILO's in 1989. The UN declared 1995-2004 the Indigenous People's Decade (Dove, 2006) and in 1996 the IUCN-WWF Principles and Guidelines on Indigenous and Traditional Peoples and Protected Areas were developed, stating the need for co-management and respect for indigenous people and their environmental knowledge (Chapin, 2004).

On a more local level, the rise of the transnational indigenous movement has been attributed to the realisation of different local groups of the similarities in their historical experiences and as being marginalised in their respective nation-states. As such, common factors have been the misrepresentation and limited recognition of the group in the formal institutions of the state and the following lack of power (Hodgson, 2002). The formerly domestic issues have been transformed into international claims and transnational networks for rights and recognition. The concept of "indigenous" is hard to pinpoint in an African setting, due to (among others) colonialism (Hodgson, 2002), which "tended to make all Africans 'indigenous' relative to the colonizing powers" (Sylvain, 2002, p. 1075). Recently, the concept has been employed in Africa as a concept for political and social mobilisation (Hodgson, 2002) and often focusses on cultural differences as well as being linked to a specific place (Sylvain, 2002).

Indigenous organisations therefore embed local actors within global networks of NGOs, development organisations and the state to gain recognition. Local indigenous movements use concepts and techniques acceptable to the global society (Perreault, 2001) to promote their claims for political rights, territory and traditional culture. Scholars such as Tsing (2005), Perreault, (2001), Li (2000, 2010) and Sundberg (2004) have looked at the way agency is exercised in the articulation of indigeneity, when used as a defensive response from e.g. small-scales farmers dispossessed from

their land. In this regard, being indigenous is often linked to a specific territory with a cultural attachment that makes them culturally distinct and draws on their unique environmental knowledge. Additionally, it is not applicable for individuals, but for communities (Li, 2010). Indigineity as a concept can thus be mobilised in relation to struggles, often over resources (Li, 2000), which opens up a room to manoeuvre that might otherwise be unavailable. In this process, parts of their identity become essentialised (Li, 2010; Perreault, 2001).

In summary, conflicts over natural resources are linked to how we conceptualise nature, and it is therefore important to keep in mind that the naturalised ideas of nature are a product of social, cultural, political and ecological relations and imbued in the operations of power. Addressing natural resource struggles as a negotiation over human-nature relations requires attention to the "array of power relations which mediate domination and resistance" (Perreault, 2001, p. 384). When the global connects with the local, there will be friction, (Tsing, 2005), for example between different human-nature relations in a forest. Often, the local response is regarded as coming from one homogenous, static group (Sundberg, 2004) and ignore that projects directing forest use are based on unequal power relations in the intersections of social, political, institutional and geographical locations of the actors involved (Sundberg, 2004). In this friction, the global ideas travel across scale and get re-structured in local encounters to fit existing practices and beliefs (Tsing, 2005) and vice versa. It is therefore necessary to ground the analysis in a situated context (Tsing, 2005). I follow this line of thought, but in order to investigate the functioning of the global discourses in a grounded case, it is necessary to outline *how* I will approach the situated setting. I employ a theoretical approach based on post-structural feminism in order to study the "local resistance" without referring to an essentialist understanding of the local. Instead I want to focus on the dynamics of the local level and its many and diverse global connections.

3.4 My theoretical approach: The local response as a process of subjectivity formation

Several studies investigate the responses across scales, but the spatialities, or the social relations involved on a local level are seldom referred to in the literature (Perreault, 2001). Reactions from below are complex, as they are tied into many and diverse global agendas (Rocheleau, 2015), such as the two presented in the preceding part of the theory chapter. My contribution to this literature is to look at resistance from below by looking at the processes that produce identities and form opposition (Li, 2003), by studying the conflict over the forest as a process of subject formation (Sundberg, 2004). In order to so, I hope to enhance the understanding of local responses by moving away from static generalisations, where the local group is regarded as being homogenous and fixed

(Sundberg, 2004). This means that I see the process of subjectivity formation as being precisely a process (Nightingale, 2006a, 2006b; Sundberg, 2004) and thus avoid that the "local group" in my case study has already been assigned fixed social relations prior to the conflict (Sundberg, 2004). Furthermore, drawing on political ecology, I see the local response as being closely related to the global level, and that people act upon and construct their environments in different ways according to their identity (Nightingale, 2006a).

In order to so, I draw on feminist insights into multiple subjectivities, which are in a constant process of (re)negotiation and production within power-laden contexts (Nightingale, 2006). Feminist studies have illustrated how subjectivities are not essential. The somehow stable categories arise due to performativity, which is the iterative process where people embody and perform a certain subject position through repetitive acts both materially and discursively (Bartky, 2003; Salih, 2002). Identity is closely related to subjectivities and can be regarded as a temporary "fixing" (Weedon, 2004, p. 19) of an individual's multiple subjectivities. Subjectivities focus on the making of the subject and are the way an individual makes sense of the world they live in. Drawing on poststructuralist thought, I reject the notion of a coherent subject, and instead emphasise the cultural and social-political relations that (re)produce the subject (Longhurst, 2003).

Following recent trends within feminist political ecology (Elmhirst, 2011; Rocheleau, 2008) I will not employ a specific focus on gender, but instead focus on the intersectionality and power differentials when investigating the forest use of the Sengwer. Intersectionality investigates the intersections, or intra-acting (Barad, 1998) of different socio-cultural categories, which together constitute the level of oppression of an individual (Collins and Chepp, 2013; Lykke, 2010; Nightingale, 2011). The focus here is on an individual's group membership as a core factor for the creation of their subjectivities and their corresponding position in the power-laden social relations and contexts. The community is thus a flexible process of changing social relations, seeing as "being in a place and being in community are basically forms of being in relation" (Rocheleau, 2001, p. 78). The situated position of individuals is contingent on the power structures and contexts that shape their very existence (Kaijser and Kronsell, 2013). The knowledge people possess thus originates in specific circumstances/in context. Particular types of knowledge are therefore a result of power differences in a certain setting (Collins and Chepp, 2013; Kaijser and Kronsell, 2013). I follow the thoughts of Harding, arguing that looking at women or other marginalised groups in society, will question the dominant strain of thought. However, in order to avoid essentialist arguments, I am not focusing on the situated knowledge of women, but on a marginalised group that is opposed to the dominant structures. How the community resists from below and how they collaborate with others are dependent on local and

national conditions, as different social and cultural relations enable people to draw on different aspects of their subjectivity to resist a certain kind of oppression (Rocheleau, 2001).

This means that it is possible to resist oppression and that there is a room for manoeuvre in a struggle (Li, 2000). Opposing the oppressing structure can provide hope for an alternative (Tsing, 2005) and a reframing of a problem, or the role of the actors becomes part of the solution (Jerneck et al., 2011). It is highly linked to the productive capacity of power, and therefore to the fact that social difference is not given beforehand, but is confirmed and changed through actions and discourses. This makes further elaboration of the processes of subjectivities and the operations of power necessary.

Subjectivities have three constituting elements: They are contextualised; emplaced; and embodied (Howitt and Suchet-Pearson, 2003; Longhurst, 2003). Contextualising subjectivities means to place them in their social-political relations and hereby to investigate how different subjectivities have more power than others (Weedon, 2004). This is closely related to intersectionality theory, which looks at the intersections of different socio-cultural categories that together constitute the level of oppression of an individual (Collins and Chepp, 2013; Lykke, 2010; Nightingale, 2011). Categorisations are closely linked to power and access as they "serve as grounds for exclusion and inclusion" (Kaijser and Kronsell, 2013, p. 419). Simultaneously, the context (or space) reveals social priorities (Alexander and Knowles, 2005) and differences (Kaijser and Kronsell, 2013; Nightingale, 2005). Contextualising subjectivities has a clear temporal part and is linked to the fact that a subjectivity can change, but that this change will always be based on existing social relations. Several subjectivities, and social relations for that matter, coexist in social contexts (Alexander and Knowles, 2005). As such, a 'certain context' can sustain multiple and contradictory meanings, uses and associations with different kinds of people – several subjectivities can exist simultaneously.

Daily discourses, practices and performances are productive of social difference, and not merely a reflection of these, which means that normative discourses are, through repetitive performances, embodied, and thereby social norms are being (re)produced (Salih, 2002; Sundberg, 2004). Thus, subjectivities are lived out through the body, which functions as an embodiment of subjectivities, i.e. it provides material acts to the subjectivity, as there is no distinction between doing and theorising a certain subjectivity – lived experiences and ideas are inextricably linked (Bondi and Davidson, 2003; Nightingale, 2011). Everyday actions are as such reproducing elements of subjectivities and hereby contest social difference. Closely related to the contestation of social differences, for example in a conflict, are cultural practices. Cultural practices are related to rituals and the meaning and beliefs attached to land (Nightingale, 2003). The cultural practices shape the response from below, by

shaping which kind of actions are considered, intersecting with social relations for example in regards to other actors.

Looking at subjectivities as a process is therefore looking at how socio-political relations and cultural practises are embodied, performed, (re)negotiated and contextualised, "by individuals who choose to be for some worlds and not others" (Sundberg, 2004, p. 47). The fact that the studied case is in a state of change makes this approach interesting as the assumable stable categories of identity (constituted for example through everyday tasks in relation to nature), become disrupted and thereby easier to locate in times of change (Harris, 2006).

3.5 My take on the theory: Bringing back nature

It is important not to lose sight of the place of the conflict: The forest, which provides the material basis for the struggle (Perreault, 2001). Traditionally this has been dealt with through a link between the indigenous and territory (Li, 2003, 2000; Perreault, 2001), the emplacement, or through social/cultural relations transforming the environment (Nightingale, 2011, 2003). The material dimension of power (materiality of power) is however not only found through emplacement or the materiality of embodiment (Howitt and Suchet-Pearson, 2003; Longhurst, 2003), but also in the materiality of space itself (Harris, 2006; Nightingale, 2003). The forest is in itself a material entity and subjectivities emerge out of social relations *and* human-nature (forest) interactions. This means that I add the relation to the environment/the material to the process of subjectivity, and hereby highlight the intra-action[9] of society and nature in constituting subjectivity (Barad, 1998; Nightingale, 2003). Accordingly, the movements of bodies in space, the material practices, for example found in the use of the environment (Harris, 2006; Nightingale, 2011), are important. The social relations of power have direct influence, both positive and negative, on environmental management (Harris, 2006; Nightingale, 2011, 2003; Rocheleau, 2008), but the environmental conditions (Harris, 2006), or the ecological space (Nightingale, 2003, 2011),simultaneously has a direct influence on social and cultural relations. Consequently, environmental conditions – and practices – are important to factor in, in order to understand the lived experiences of people (Harris, 2006). The intra-action of ecological, social, political and cultural processes means that changes in one, intra-act with the others and can therefore not be regarded in isolation. This also means that it is hard to draw boundaries between the entities (Nightingale, 2003), but it is still helpful in order to conceptualise the theory. The main

[9] Like intersectionality, intra-acting investigates the intersections, or intra-acting (Barad, 1998), of different socio-cultural categories, which together constitute the level of oppression of an individual. Intra-act constitutes that they are co-produced and not merely influencing each other.

point is that this dissolves binary and dialectical thinking, as the processes intra-act and therefore co-produce each other.

The creation of subjectivities is an internalisation of power dimensions (Bartky, 2003), but in practice it is impossible to separate the discursive (symbolic) from the embodied performance and vice versa (Barad, 1998; Harris, 2006; Nightingale, 2011). It is thus necessary to move between the discursive and material intersections of power (Nightingale, 2011), as subjectivities are closely related to both symbolic and material interactions of subjects with the environment (Nightingale, 2006a). The basis for my analysis is therefore an investigation of how this symbolic and material interaction is taking place, both discursively and embodied and how this ties in with culture. My focus will be on both the symbolic and the material; on the story being told, and on the embodiment through every-day actions.

I will therefore look at the processes of subjectivities, as they form the basis of the opposition of the Sengwer. My focus is the local level, and the everyday performances and embodiments in their struggle over Embobut. This means, that attention to the global level is limited. It is however still important to contextualise the subjectivities, also in the global sphere. In practice, I will contextualise the conflict and the processes of subjectivities in the socio-political setting by locating the struggle in the fog of green. This will identify the "official" classifications of the Sengwer in the national setting, which excludes/include them from Embobut. Based on this, I will look at the processes of identity formation, and more specifically the embodiment and (re)negotiation of a Sengwer subjectivity. Here, I bring in the relation between human-nature, exemplified by the culture-forest link the Sengwer articulate. I look at the *intersections* and *intra-actions* between social-political relations, cultural practices and ecological conditions, which are all areas, that have been addressed more in-depth, among others in the above presented theory. My approach will be based on the following supporting research questions:

- In what ways do the Sengwer mobilise and network their resistance in their everyday lives in the conflict over Embobut?
- How are the subjectivities of the Sengwer being embodied and (re)negotiated, discursively and materially, when the conflict is viewed as process of subjectivity formation?

4 Methodology

– A feminist in the forest

The following chapter outlines the methodology informing the theoretical and methodological approach to the case study. With the study rooted in social constructionism, actors constantly create and reinterpret the world in order to make sense of the world they live in – together (Bryman, 2012). This allows me to listen to the stories of my interviewees and thereby describe their perception of reality (Baxter and Jack, 2008), and their perception and position of/in the struggle. Social construction is a process and happens in a constant flux of confirmation and reinterpretation. As stated, I do not only focus on constructions of the world through human relations, but also on the interaction and co-production between the social and the natural. As such, nature, in line with social relations and the world itself, is a social construction, but is simultaneously providing a material context to the social construction. The social and natural are co-produced and thus inseparable.

My analysis is based on an understanding of different worldviews, or understandings of the world as being a social construction, but I also see them as co-constructing. This is related to the operations of power with regards to worldviews and how they can include or exclude groups and individuals. This co-production acknowledges "the presence of alternative truths" (Collins and Chepp, 2013, p. 3) leaving room for disagreement and contention. Drawing on post-structural feminist work on epistemologies, I regard knowledge itself as being entwined in power relations. Knowledge is situated and our position shapes what we can know and imagine and thus also our experience in society (Collins and Chepp, 2013; Harding, 1991). This means that different ways of knowledge, or epistemologies, exist across time, space and culture (Collins and Chepp, 2013; Grzanka, 2014; Harding, 1991). My analysis acknowledges that epistemologies exist and how, in combination with power, the dominant knowledge system has oppressive social structures, institutions and inequalities (Grzanka, 2014).

Drawing from discussions within post-structural feminism, I am reflexive to my role of constructing knowledge as a researcher (Doucet and Mauthner, 2006). Power influences the process of knowledge production both during the interview situation (Caretta, 2014) and in the writing of my thesis back home: I become the voice of the Sengwer, although I can never *know* the culture and context of the community I study (Doucet and Mauthner, 2006). My approach to dealing with this challenge has been to leave room in my analysis to the voice of the interviewees through quotes and concrete examples. My subjectivity and relation to the informants/interviewees are central to the production of knowledge in the research process (Pink, 2007). Different elements of my subjectivity

can therefore influence the research process at different times (Pink, 2007), i.e. that I am fairly young, a woman and white. This did have a direct effect during the fieldwork period, as people regarded me as a person of authority and being there “to check on my forest”, as I as a white person was regarded as the owner (from the World Bank) of the forest. I learned a few key words in Sengwer (hello, thank you), which I always used in the beginning of my interviews. My RA actively encouraged this introduction, as the interviewees got a feeling of me being genuinely interested in their life and customs and helped to diminish the power distance. I was furthermore often introduced by my Sengwer name, given to me by my RA, as Signe was hard to pronounce and placed me as a (white) outsider to the community (Caretta, 2014). This was helpful, as I already did not fit into local categories: I was an unmarried woman without children, and I was therefore often regarded as a child.

4.1 Methods

4.1.1 Case study

The case study is chosen in order to study a complex phenomenon: The local-level response in struggles over natural resources in its context (Baxter and Jack, 2008) and hereby to ground the discussions in concrete engagements instead of abstract concepts of power and knowledge (Tsing, 2005). The case is a community and thereby open; but it is likewise a (social/indigenous) movement and thereby closed (Bryman, 2012). I gained access through a gatekeeper, who put me in contact with individuals from both inside and outside Embobut, who functioned as “supporters” and vouched for me when I met community member (Bryman, 2012). These individuals have proven to be key informants for my data collection. Particularly my research assistant (RA) in Embobut proved to be a valuable key informant, both with organising interviews and focus groups, but likewise with eliciting information during the interviews, for example regarding illegal activities among community members. As such, he functioned as a RA, a translator, a cultural broker and a gatekeeper (Caretta, 2014). This was very helpful, but there is the overarching risk of seeing the situation through his eye and not through the interviewees. However, I used other supporters and translators. In return for their help, I offered to share my findings.

4.1.2 Data Collection

My approach to the case is based on qualitative data collection and the use of visual ethnography. My research strategy is influenced by ethnography, as I investigated the social life of the community it is however nothing more than a micro-ethnography (Bryman, 2012). The data was collected during

a three weeks fieldwork period in March-April 2015. In this period, I stayed in Kitale and visited Embobut two times, totalling 8 days. During the whole period I conducted 9 qualitative interviews[10] of varying lengths, 2 gender-separated focus groups (5-10 participants), 3 group interviews and a photo-voice exercise including 5 interviews (see following paragraph). I furthermore participated in a two-day seminar organised by the Sengwer, with the topic on the future of the Sengwer in Embobut. See Annex 1 for further details. In addition to the interviews and the photo-voice, I base my analysis on observations and everyday conversations, as I lived with the Sengwer people, both in Kitale and on the outskirts of Embobut[11]. I kept field notes on a running basis and wrapped up every day with writing down my observations and reflections.

Some interviews were conducted in English and some with a translator, primarily the same translator, except with the focus group and group interview with women, where I had two different female translators. Translation was conducted simultaneously with the interviews; only the strategy meeting was translated after the meeting ended using audio recordings. The quotes in the analysis are therefore either a translation or originally in English. The use of a translator bound the knowledge production process in a "triple subjectivity" (Caretta, 2014, p. 490) of me, the RAs and my interviewees, and I relied on my RAs to bridge both the cultural, knowledge and language gap between me and my interviewees.

The topic investigated through the fieldwork is how the Sengwer relate to the forest. The data collected is qualitative and illustrates ways of thinking, relating and acting about the forest and the current conflict, depending on the intersections of environmental, social and cultural power positions and uses of the forest. I had prepared themes for different interview types, and they served as interview guides. They were rolling discussions guides, to allow for changes after each interview (and especially after the photo exercise) and as my understanding of the situation changed dramatically. My interviews had the purpose of understanding the cultural knowledge from the interview and I asked questions according to the principle of use, meaning that my questions were about how the forest/trees/etc. were used and not what they meant (Christensen, 1994). My interviews resembled open-ended interviews, but were built up around some specific themes, which allowed for a deeper investigation of the meaning systems and concepts of the interviewee (Christensen, 1994).

[10] I conducted interviews with 9 participants, but they were spread over different days. The number of actual interviews is therefore higher.

[11] Practicalities made it impossible to live inside Embobut itself. First and foremost, there was considerations regarding the security of the situation (as the KFS burns the houses and arrest people on a regular basis) but additionally, there were no tents to buy in the area, and as rain season were approaching, it was necessary with sufficient shelter. Instead I stayed at the outskirts and hiked in every morning to conduct interviews.

Photo-voice

Additionally to the data collection techniques mentioned above, I used a technique based on photographs, called photo-elicitation (Bryman, 2012), participants-employed photography (Castleden et al., 2008) or photo-voice (Bosak, 2014; Pink, 2007). I handed out 4 disposable cameras to 5 participants (see annex 1). The participants were asked to photograph their relations to and use of the forest. After the photographs had been developed, I conducted interviews with the photographers, guided by the photos, to elicit their cultural and experience-based knowledge around the subject of the photos, allowing the photographer to determine both the content and the meaning of the photographs (Castleden et al., 2008) as people use their own cultural frames (cultural and experienced-based knowledge) to add meanings to pictures (Pink, 2007). I asked for the story behind the photographed scene, what it depicted, along with follow up questions exploring deeper meanings behind the photographed item. As an example, one picture of a tree elicited stories about the tree as a place for a cultural livelihood activity, beekeeping, as well as its importance for medicinal purposes. My follow-up questions would in this example focus on beekeeping, honey use and the generational passing down of medicinal knowledge. This gave insight into the socio-cultural perspectives of the photo (Castleden et al., 2008), which I would not have been able to elicit from looking at the picture myself. In order to illuminate political/cultural influences behind *what* the participants chose to photograph, I asked questions on how they chose the photos and if there was anything they did not want to photograph. Answers were often related to very sacred, and thus secret parts of their culture.

The photo exercise gave me a good understanding and insight into the processes of the Sengwer living in the forest. It is however difficult to report on these findings in a written format, as the photos and the interviews are to be understood in combination, and strict classifications of the photos take away the multiple meanings behind one photo. However, the photos functioned well in decreasing the power distance between me and the participants (Bryman, 2012) and empowered the participants to show, and not only tell, about their struggles as well as their unique way of life[12]. Equally important, it gave me the opportunity to gain insight into their relation to their material surroundings (the forest itself), which is part of my theoretical framework.

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[12] Photo-voice was developed as a participatory approach aiming to empower the photographers, to engage with a powerful counterpart/opponent (Bosak, 2014). This can for example be done through a photo varnishing, where the photographer can display and talk about their photos. Unfortunately I did not have time and resources to take the photo-exercise to this stage.

4.1.3 Boundaries – and limitations – to the case and data collection methods

The study only investigates the resistance from the ground and leaves out the national and international scale as an area for investigation in itself. This means that I did not conduct interviews with officials in Kenya. Furthermore, the role of the World Bank has been criticised heavily (Kenrick, 2014; Kushner et al., 2005), but I did not look into these accusations. Moreover, I did not collect any ecological data, and there is therefore no assessment of the ecological status of the forest, as my focus was on the social construction hereof.

Some interviews were conducted in Sengwer or in a mix of Sengwer and English. Thus, a translator was a necessity in this cross-cultural, cross-language research. However, the use of a translator adds another component in the process of knowledge production. The knowledge production, as stated above, is related to one's social location. Language is tied to local realities, and there is therefore a chance that some meaning has been lost in translation, regarding semantics and cultural meanings. Furthermore, the translation and the quality of the translation excluded discourse and semantics as an analysis technique. My primary translator was also a key informant, which opened up for good discussion on differences in perspectives (Temple and Young, 2004), both in our private discussions, but also during the interviews.

4.1.4 Ethical considerations

I conducted interviews in Embobut to gain an insight into the struggle, and in the wider Sengwer community to enhance my understanding of 'being Sengwer'. This also meant a high internal difference among my interviewees with regards to education, employment and 'type of engagement' with the struggle. I have chosen not to demarcate the groupings too much, as they are fairly small and this would thus limit the anonymity of the participants. This was a recurring consideration, as my fieldwork investigated an on-going struggle.

5 Being Sengwer

- How the Sengwer (re)negotiate and embody their identity

The following chapter focuses first on the classifications of the Sengwer in the Kenyan society and the opposing voice presented by the Sengwer. Hereafter, I analyse how this is being embodied and performed in Embobut and how it alters material and symbolic practices.

5.1 Re-classifications in the fog of greening

The first part of the analysis of the case focuses on the contextualisation of the struggle in the social and political context and locates the processes of subjectivity formation in the social relations and categorisations, which mediate access and exclusion to forests. Practically, I do this by relating the struggle to national legislation, specific events in Embobut and the role of KFS and the WB. It is related to Figure 1 and gives an overview of recent and historical developments, which the Sengwer regard as important to their present situation.

5.1.1 Forest legislation and struggles in Kenya

Kenya has a long tradition for state-led forest management and a conceptualisation of humans as degrading forests through everyday use[13], leading to a history of repressive management (Ongugo, 2007). This is related to the fact that the forests of Kenya are under pressure: The degradation of forests is on-going, with a forest cover in 1895 at 30% of the total landmass, down to 3% today (Klopp and Sang, 2011), or 6.99% (Ministry of Environment, Water and Natural Resources, 2015). Most of the major forest blocks were gazetted in 1908 as forest under central state control (KFS, 2015; Klopp and Sang, 2011; Ongugo, 2007) and this status was uphold after independence in 1963. The state-led management, both in Colonial and Post-Colonial times, disregards the right of forest dwelling communities and the forest policies limited, and limit, local custodians' access, control, and use (Borona, 2014), leading to conflict. Embobut is furthermore located within one of Kenya's five water towers (Cherangany), which are special ecosystems of indigenous forests, recognised for their crucial role in the national water supply. The water flow has in recent years declined, and the GoK identified encroachment and environmental degradation caused by humans as the major causes (Kabukuru, 2009; World Bank, 2013). This has led to a campaign for restoration at all water towers

[13] The conceptualisation of people living outside of forest in post-colonial Kenya is historically illustrated with the establishment of the Nyayo Tea Zones in 1986, established in order to withstand encroachment from humans in the gazetted forests (Nyayo Tea Zones Development Corporation, 2014) and illustrates how the central government envisioned forest as being void of humans.

(Fela, 2010) and has resulted in conflicts with communities living in the water towers, starting with the Ogiek at Mau Forest Complex (Ayoo, 2013; Klopp and Sang, 2011; Lynch, 2011). Similar conflicts are ongoing with the Ogiek at Mt Elgon (Lynch, 2006), and at the site of this case study, the Sengwer at Cherangany Hills Forest.

5.1.2 Actors in the struggle in Embobut

The national legislation is today enforced on the ground by KFS, which was established with the Forest Act No. 7 of 2005 (Borona, 2014; World Bank, 2013) as the main body to *conserve, develop and sustainably manage forest resources* (KFS, n.d.). This Act was the first revision of the forest laws after Kenya's independence. KFS is a state corporation and was established in February 2007 under the Ministry of Forestry and Wildlife, succeeding the former Forest Department.

It [the World Bank] *is the main body binding the government to evict people so that they can sell the forest; the entity that gets the government to evict us through KFS. Before the WB, they were coming once every 3 years, and then KFS said: "the government have no money, so they cannot protect the forest, let's go and search for money from somewhere else, so that we can have the energy to protect the forest". Then we heard that the government of Kenya had sold the forest to the World Bank* [...] *Proof that the government has sold the forest: 5 years ago the KFS had no aeroplanes, motorbikes or anything. But since they evicted the Sengwer in the forest they have aeroplanes, cars, busses, sophisticated guns, so that is one proof that they have sold the forest.* [...] *Government are not the owners, it is internationally. WB has given them equipment. The sources come from outside, from the WB.* (I.10a)

KFS is the institution, which on the ground harasses the Sengwer. As stated in the background, the conflict is asymmetric: It is between a minority and a majority; the Sengwer and the state, but it includes other local actors from neighbouring communities to global actors for forest use and conservation. The former makes the situation very complex, as other communities were living in Embobut prior to 2014, but I focus on the articulation of the Sengwer regarding the events in the following. The latter makes it firmly located within the fog of greening, where the actions on the ground are linked to processes on a global level. In Embobut this takes placeprimarily through the WB's NRM project, which had the purpose of enhancing "institutional capacity to manage water and forest resources" (World Bank, 2013, p. 2), among others by supporting KFS, as one part of moving from government-led conservation to joint management. The Sengwer regard this project as being responsible for the harassment, see box 1.10a and state that the World Bank and other global actors own Embobut. No matter how this assessed, the NRM did fund KFS, which has actively been evicting the Sengwer (Kenrick, 2014).

During the time of implementation of the NRM, the Sengwer experienced an extensive re-classification. I will briefly sketch developments related hereto, as they illustrate the motivations for the continued evictions of the Sengwer, when the situation is viewed, as is the case here, from the situated position of the Sengwer[14]. The NRM was restructured in 2011 (see Figure 1), which removed the assistance to solving historical land disputes, introduced Cherangany Hills Forest as a place for REDD+ technical preparation activities, and replaced the terminology of indigenous people with that of vulnerable and marginalised groups. The project involved an Indigenous People Planning Framework (IPPF) from the outset (World Bank, 2013). The re-classification was done to align the project with national guidelines (World Bank, 2013). This re-classification has according to the Sengwer delegitimised their claim, as indigenous forest dwellers with a right to community land (see later paragraph).

The Sengwer complained consecutively during the project to the WB about their burned houses and arrests. This resulted in a Fact Finding Mission in 2009 and a Request for Inspection in 2013, both denying the WB's responsibility (World Bank, 2013). It however created international attention on the conflict, and in 2009 the GoK implemented a task force to address the problems of people living in Embobut and the burnings of property (World Bank, 2013). Despite the task force's recommended solutions, the Sengwer were addressed through the settlement scheme for Internally Displaced People (IDPs) in 2013. IDPs cover the internal displacement of people following the 2007-2008 post-election violence, which had resulted in internal migration (IDMC, 2015) and among this, "outsiders" moved to Embobut. IDP compensation was intended to cover cost related to rebuilding of houses and transport back to people's original place. The Sengwer did not receive the compensation as a community, but individuals received 400,000 KSH. This compensation was part of classifying the Sengwer as being internally displaced and thereby not in their original place.

The Forest Act does entail one participatory mechanism for joint forest management: Community Forest Associations (CFAs), which is co-management between KFS and people living adjacent to forest. The Sengwer in Embobut have chosen not to participate in the CFAs (although with internal differences), as they regard this as being an erosion of their rights. If they join CFAs they will be regarded as living adjacent to the forest, not *in* the forest, and they will legitimise that non-Sengwer can participate in the management of the forest and that they, if proved unsuitable to conserve the forest, can be replaced by a new CFA. Joining a CFA will therefore take away their right, as well as the recognition as being the indigenous community.

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[14] As such, I do not make any investigation or judgement into the role and responsibility of the state or the WB.

The classification of the Sengwer as marginalised, vulnerable, internally displaced and squatters (KFS, 2014) is thus functioning as a mechanism for legitimising the evictions of the Sengwer from Embobut, as the Sengwer do not have the right to reside in Embobut, nor use the forest outside of the mechanisms of the CFAs. Rocheleau defines this type of reclassification as "dispossession by delegitimation" (2015, p. 704). This recasting of the Sengwer as non-indigenous and out of place, justifies the removal of the people inside Embobut (Rocheleau, 2015) and robs them of their dignity and pride (Chapin, 2004), making their culture and traditions unworthy for saving.

> *We are found in Cherangany hills, we are the indigenous, we are found in Embobut, we are the indigenous people, although the government cannot recognise us, that we are not indigenous people because of the interests they have in our land, they want to call us IDPs and squatters, so they wanted to justify us, justify us, according to the Constitution of Kenya, so that we cannot be claiming our land.* (I.11a)

5.2 The counter-narrative: The indigenous Sengwer community of Embobut

> *We want the land as community land; it is written in the constitution that hunter-gatherers' land is the land for hunter-gatherer communities. It is only the forest that they* [we] *will claim as community land.* (I.11b)

The counter-narrative presented by the Sengwer centres around their position as an indigenous and ecologically sound community with a distinct culture. The quote on the left comes from a strategy meeting, which I attended with the title "What is the future for the Sengwer of Embobut". Although the topic was the Sengwer of Embobut, the participants came from both inside and outside Embobut (see Figure 3), and identified themselves as being activists, fighting for the rights of the Sengwer community at large. The conflict thus builds on existing structures within a community that has been fighting for recognition for decades[15]. The recognition as an indigenous hunter-gatherer community is mobilised to gain a political outcome[16]: While I attended said strategy meeting, one of the Old Men handed me a hardcopy of the 2010 Constitution of Kenya and directed my attention to §63, which states that ancestral lands and forests traditionally occupied by hunter-gatherer communities[17] shall be managed as community land (National Council for Law Reporting, 2010). Thus, the status as indigenous hunter-gatherers is used politically, in so far as it is articulated to gain rights and benefits.

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[15] The first international participation was in the early 90's in UN conferences.

[16] The Forest Act has been criticised for violating the principles of the 2010 Constitution of Kenya. It includes community rights to hunter-gatherers, which is not acknowledged in the Forest Act.

[17] Communities are in the constitution "identified on the basis of ethnicity, culture or similar community of interest" §63(1) (National Council for Law Reporting, 2010)

To further this claim, the Sengwer culture is strategically used, for example in the display of cultural artefacts in courtrooms and at conferences and in the performances of their dancing group.

This strategic aspect of the struggle is, as previously mentioned (chapter 2), functioning across the whole community, as illustrated in Figure 3. The figure also illustrates the link to other non-Sengwer actors, who are supporting the struggle. The Sengwer identify with other indigenous hunter-gatherer[18] and forest dwelling communities in Kenya. Specifically, there is a strong connection with the Ogiek of Mt Elgon, both culturally and in regards to the struggle. The Sengwer's articulation of an indigenous claim is closely related to the Ogiek at Mt Elgon, who provide a tangible example of a solution to a similar problem, where local ecological and social knowledge are coupled with conservation science. The Sengwer are furthermore part of a global network, primarily by working closely with the Forest People Programme (FPP)[19], and their participation in the UN Panel on Indigenous People. Lynch regards this global network as being an outcome of the fact that Sengwer "leaders have consciously employed the 'global discourses' of 'marginalisation', 'minority rights', 'indigeneity', and 'environmental protection'" (2006, p. 57). FPP is an international NGO promoting the rights of forest people (FPP, 2015) and provides assistance to Embobut, both financially and in terms of exposure to an international audience. The Sengwer rely on FPP, and other NGOs, to expose their issue to the government, *because the government will not listen to us, because if they would have listened, they would have listened long time ago* (I.2b).

[18] In addition to the Ogiek, the Sengwer have relations to the the Yaaku of Mukogodo, the Aweer/Boni of Lamu District, the Sanye of Lamu District, and to some extent the Ogiek of Mau (Forest Dwelling Communities Position Statement, 2014).

[19] The Sengwer also address international institutions to gain support. They have written statements and letters to the World Bank and the President of WB, Jim Yong Kim has personally reached out to the President of Kenya, Uhuru Kenyatta to resolve the conflict (Vidal, 2014), resulting in a WB financed 3-days Colloquium in March 2015, organised by the Ministry of Environment, Water and Natural Resources, in order to deepen dialogue among forestry stakeholders in Kenya. The figure does however not show the WB, as it is depicting supporters in their struggle, and not all actors.

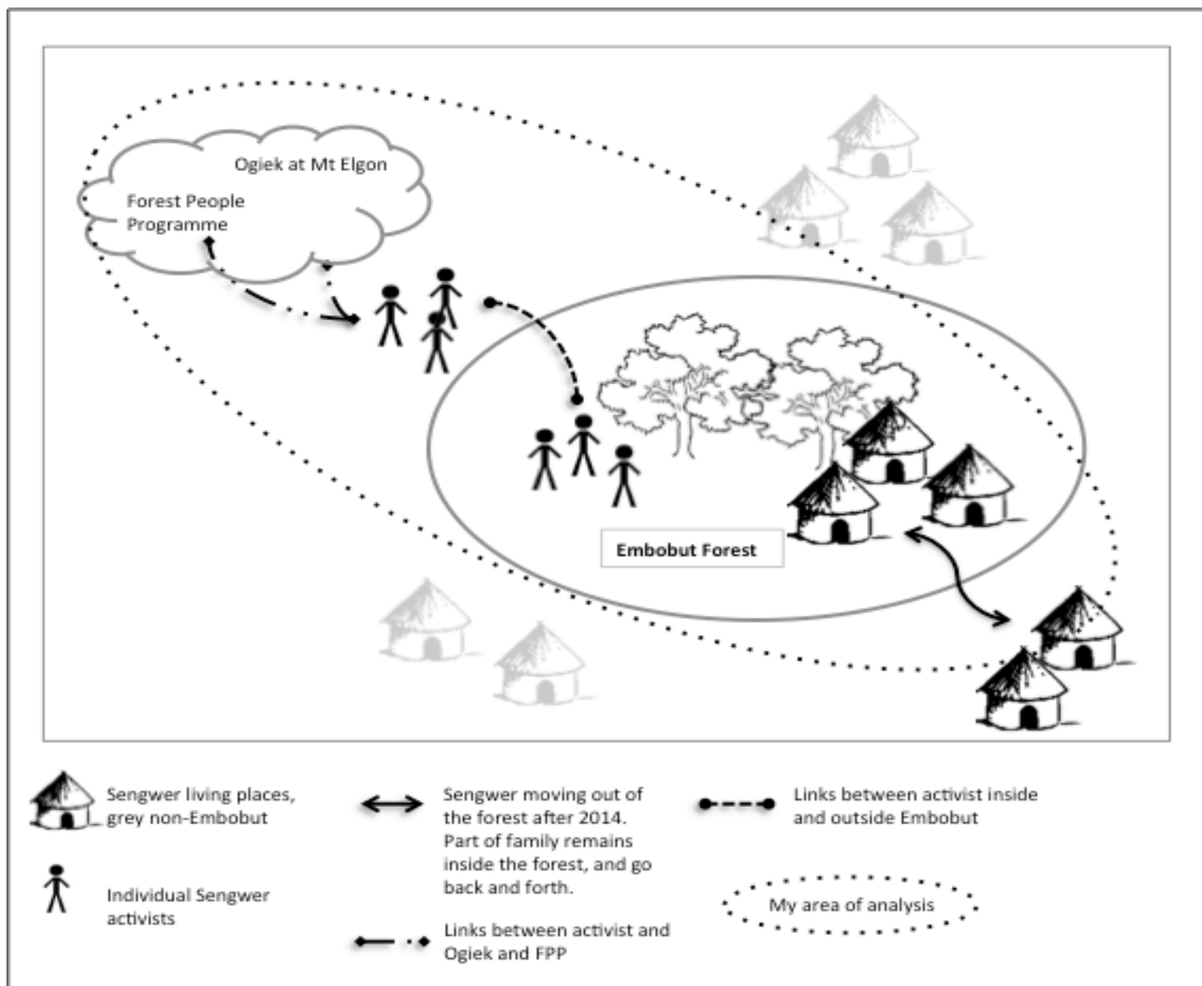

Figure 3 Organisation of the struggle. The figure shows how the Sengwer in Embobut are working together with Sengwer outside of Embobut, and how they are linked to other actors, primarily FPP and the Ogiek of Mt Elgon. The grey houses illustrate Sengwer living outside of Embobut. The illustration of the activists as people means that they live inside the houses, and thus that they are not dislocated from the community at large.

The link between the Sengwer and the Ogiek/FPP[20] is evident in the Sengwer's activity on writing down their bylaws. The bylaws are a written account on how the Sengwer environmental knowledge and traditional social organisation will protect Embobut. Traditionally speaking, the social organisation of the Sengwer is built up around Clans as the primary organisation for structuring spatial boundaries, as well as regulating resource uses within clan territory[21]. However, these

[20] The Forest People Programme has been involved with the Ogiek at Mt Elgon through the Whakatane Pilot Assessment in Mt Elgon initiated in 2011. The purpose was to be a pilot study for community control over Cheptikale forest.

[21] Although the Sengwer were previously both living at the plains and in the highlands (before Colonial time), the environmental knowledge preserved and (re)invoked is related to forests, which have been their primary home during the last century. The social organisational structure is however dating back before Colonial time, but is being re-invented and modernised to fit outside demands. This reflection shows the selective process of identity-formation as well as a temporal aspect to changes. The symbolic meaning attached to the plains are not actively articulated and the thickness of the forest, as a place to hide, is highlighted as having higher cultural value than the plains

organisations are not actively used in Embobut today, nor before the evictions, with the exception of beekeeping and cultural activities. The bylaws draw on a combination of traditions and on the bylaws of the Ogiek of Mt Elgon, which the Sengwer have used as inspiration. The bylaws include a novel social organisation for the Sengwer: The Council of Elders, which is included because the Sengwer anticipate that the government will ask for this kind of overarching social institution, to be the utmost, central institutions for the conservation of the Embobut. The Council of Elders, however, builds on existing hierarchies, where Elders are respected and listened to, but it shows an active re-negotiation of the Sengwer traditions and subjectivity.

The following investigates the embodiment, processes and practices that (re)construct this Sengwer subjectivity, building on my theoretical understanding of subjectivities, and focusing primarily on Embobut Forest (demarcated in Figure 3 by full-line circle).

5.2.1 Embodiment: Being indigenous Sengwer

Every day, embodied activities (re)produce certain symbolic meanings of certain spaces, practices and bodies (Nightingale, 2011). In this way, the embodied activities on the ground are part of maintaining the Sengwer identity. The following introduces the embodied experiences of the creation of subjectivity, based on the understanding that subjectivity is performed though rituals of everyday existence.

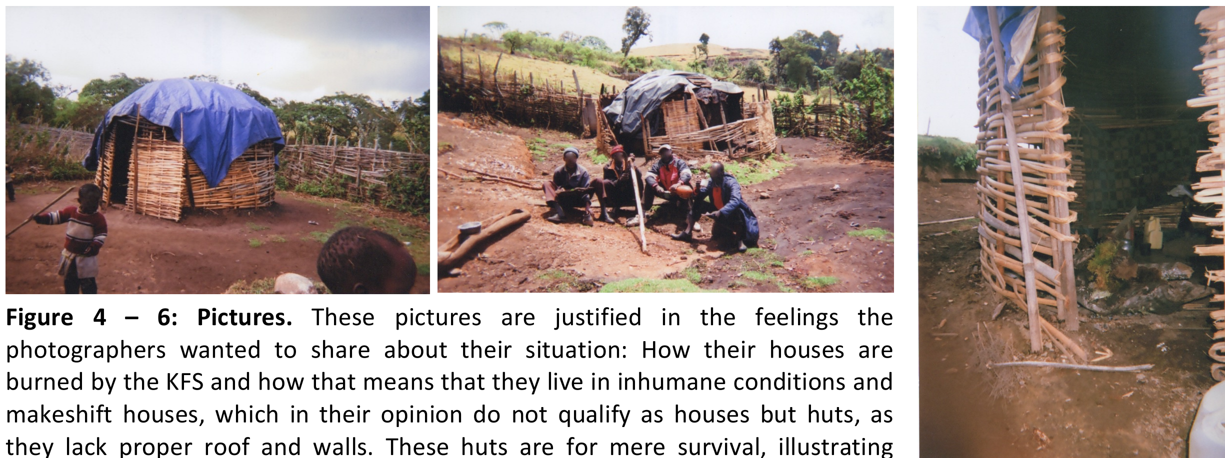

Figure 4 – 6: Pictures. These pictures are justified in the feelings the photographers wanted to share about their situation: How their houses are burned by the KFS and how that means that they live in inhumane conditions and makeshift houses, which in their opinion do not qualify as houses but huts, as they lack proper roof and walls. These huts are for mere survival, illustrating resistance (*because were else shall we go)* and their determination to stay in the forest despite the insecurity in their living conditions. Source: C2, C1.1, C.1.2

The embodied level of the Sengwer subjectivity is the level, which is subjected to direct violence, i.e. the burning of their houses, the destruction of property as well as the arrest of people found inside

the forest[22]. By withstanding this, the Sengwer in Embobut embody the subjectivity of fighting for their rights, which (re)produces the symbolic meaning of Embobut as the land of the Sengwer and illustrates both the material and symbolic meaning of being Sengwer, which is to be right, but harassed, marginalized and displaced. The Sengwer get a possibility to contest and resist the subjectivity as being squatters, intruders and illegally present, by continuing their everyday activities in Embobut.

The photovoice interviews clearly showed this as a choice: As a conclusion to each interview, I asked for the participant's motivation for taking these specific photos, and all answers centred on their wish to show me their daily lives and its relation to the forest, as well as the importance of showing that they are still there.

> *I choose the things, because you can't live somewhere without having anything, and this is a community land. The pictures are the way the community is living, it is their life.* […] *The way we took, these things will be taken to the government or even outside to see, that these people are living in the forest, so that one day they will recognise us, and they know that there are people in the forest there in Marakwet, in Embobut, the Sengwer indigenous.* (C1.2a)

The everyday activities of the Sengwer in Embobut are closely related to their surroundings, as they live from and in the forest. Everyday activities are characterised as Sengwer practices, here illustrated by the hanging of beehives to produce honey, an activity *they took pride in* (I.3a) and *is important to us, because it is our fathers' activity* (C1.2b). Honey is used in cultural rituals and beekeeping is mentioned as a distinct marker of Sengwer identity. When combined with the related quote, the picture is not only about honey, but illustrates how the practice becomes an embodiment of their relation and struggle over the forest.

> *This one now, is just climbing a beehive to harvest honey. This is the livelihood of the Sengwer, so that he is resisting to stay inside the forest, it makes him stay inside the forest, because he cannot go out, because there is no trees to hang their beehives, you can't get bees outside the forest, this is one of main livelihood projects inside the forest.* (C1.1a)

Figure 7 Picture and quote. Source: C2b

[22] According to one informant, indirect force is also used outside the forest: The government has threatened, and effectively silenced, one community member, who used to be active in the struggle.

The interviewees did thus not refer to abstract notions of being Sengwer, but more to everyday Sengwer activities, based on production and consumption (medicinal plants, honey, livestock keeping) and Sengwer cultural practices, especially the circumcision ritual, which is regarded as important for the Sengwer for the continuation of their way of life.

5.2.2 Embodiment and (re)negotiation: Sengwer are environmentally friendly

The Sengwer articulate a strong awareness of their environmental knowledge and often use normal bamboo as an example. Bamboo is important for both material and cultural purposes but does not grow in the same quantities as before the eviction. This decline represents a material example on environmental degradation, and simultaneously symbolises the lack of community control of the forest. Growing bamboo requires careful management to prevent animals and people from the outside to eat/harvest the bamboo. Additionally, re-growing bamboo is a symbol of the environmental knowledge of the Sengwer, as they, and not KFS, know where it naturally grows.

Keeping outsiders out of the forest is thus a vital part of the forest protection for the Sengwer. Equally important is their regulation on the use of the forest resources, which is based on an understanding of dependence between use and continued growth. As the quotes I.10b and I.12a show, conserving the forest for the Sengwer is about protecting the trees[23], as they are the source of everything. This translates into regulation on use, enforced through taboos and norms for correct behaviour: Clans demarcate one's area; taboos ensure that medicinal herbs are collected from multiple sources, that firewood is dead wood, that trees are not ringed and that only patches of bark are taken. This means, that there is a connection between culture, protection and use of the forest, or between Sengwer livelihood activities and the forest. In a focus group, I conducted a ranking exercise but instead of ranking activities in the forest, this led to discussions on how all activities were interlinked, and all part of (1) the forest as their great-grandfathers' place and (2) the protection of the forest.

> *When you use trees you should also conserve them. Trees are the source of everything. Conserve the trees to get water, honey, flowers,* [and] *shrines.* (I.10b)
>
> *Conserving the forest is protecting trees. If certain trees flower, there will be plenty of honey, and plenty of foods, so we don't allow the cutting of these trees. They value the indigenous trees, give them herbs and flowers for honey.* (I.12a)

[23] Follow-up questions confirm that bushes, shrubs and other plant types are equally important.

Q: What does it mean to be Sengwer?

It means a lot: like Sengwer is just related to the forest. That is their way of life, they coexist with the trees, […] our ancestors live here, they were Sengwer, and we get their name. These names are linked to the forest and to being Sengwer. (I.2c)

As an example, the discussion on ranking firewood or honey as most important triggered a discussion on how smoke, and thus firewood, is used for honey gathering and in extension, how you, when you collected firewood, protected the forest. Another example is the ancestral connection to Embobut, which is strong, and being removed from Embobut means to be removed from your ancestral spirits. The initiation ritual is a good example, as this honours the ancestors and passes down the norms for forest behaviour to new generations, ensuring that both the forest and the culture continue.

Top left: shows the Sengwer ancestral land, the forest. (C3)

Bottom left: This picture illustrates the importance of protecting the forest. The water level is increasing, because the (external) environmental degradation has stopped. Trees bring water and an undisturbed forest is a healthy ecosystem. (C1.2)

Bottom right: Government exotic plantation. "*Indigenous means it is friendly with everything, the whole system, but the exotic tree is not friendly with* [the] *surroundings.*" (C4b)

Figure 8 – 10 Pictures

5.2.3 *The careful story of being Sengwer and the changing material practices*

The protection of the forest is strongly articulated, but the material practices are not always following suit. There are internal discussions on whether or not conservation activities should be initiated now, in a time where their right to the forest has not been acknowledged or upon granting of community rights. This clearly shows the strategic deployment of the environmentally sound indigenous, as the main reason for conserving the forest now, is to have material substances to their claim. Coupled with this, the (re)negotiation of being Sengwer has material and discursive outcomes. The following illustrates this by investigating the role of agriculture.

Before the evictions, the Sengwer and other communities living in the forest at the time, were farming potatoes and pyrethrum for selling at the market, which resulted in environmental degradation (felling of trees to make space for a field, donkey transporting goods to the market, killing of bees from using pesticides), but this activity has stopped after the evictions. Besides the impossibility of maintaining farming activities during constant harassment from the authorities, the Sengwer also voice that no farming will take place after they achieve the community rights to the forest. This is a result of an active (re)negotiation of their community identity, as being beekeepers, gatherers and to some extent livestock keepers, contrary to farming, which is introduced by outsiders and not regarded as *part and parcel of being Sengwer* (all interviews). This (re)negotiation thus changed material practices (no more farming). Simultaneously, the symbolic meaning of agriculture changed and is now attributed to others and seen as environmentally degrading, and thus as being a non-Sengwer activity.

Interviewees confirm previous farming activities, but are still articulating that environmental degradation is due to actions of non-Sengwer. Environmentally degrading, non-Sengwer activities are likewise responsible for the decline in bees and the corresponding honey production. The Sengwer describe reasons such as Shamba-

> *Q: Did they admit to destruction* [of the forest] *before I asked the question?*
>
> *They didn't, you see, people are afraid to be victimised over things, but if you see their faces you can see that they know that the forest is being destroyed. They call it indirectly: we do admit that we have destroyed the forest, we didn't do it with intention, but other factors compelled us to do it, that added to this destruction.* (I.11b)

system plantations (where the smoke from the burning of the area scares away the bees), farming of pyrethrum[24] and pesticides used for potato farming. One interviewee (C1.1) was carefully avoiding to admit that he contributed to the declining of bees (although he had previously said he had farmed), and had during the interview asked my translator: *How do I tell her about the decline in the bees without telling her about my own role in their decline?* I was as such met with a very selective performance of the Sengwer subjectivity (see I.11b).

5.2.4 Sengwer conceptions of nature and culture

> *Indigenous person cannot live where there is no indigenous trees, he coexist with the trees […] The Sengwer indigenous person: they existed in forest because of nature, their life just rotated with nature, they depend only* [on] *environment for survival, and that is why we fight for rights in the forest because we don't know other things.* (I.11c)
>
> *Q: What is indigenous for you?*
>
> *He understands the term indigenous people as being of the origin of the place, he was born here, this is my place inside the forest. Indigenous equals owner of the land equals Sengwer* (I.10c)

The close connection with nature, both in culture and livelihood activities is strongly articulated in the Sengwer understanding of being indigenous. In the photo-voice, the photographs included both the built environment and the grazing of animals, which shows that the Sengwer relation to the forest is entwined in their everyday activities, also illustrated by (I.11c) and (I.10c) The boundaries between the Sengwer and their environment is constructed as if the forest is part of being Sengwer and the Sengwer are part of the forest. They, nature and culture, are co-produced and can change together as demonstrated by the following example. At the strategy meeting it was proposed to introduce Giant Bamboo to illustrate the conservation capacities of the community, although Giant Bamboo is not currently growing, nor has been growing in living memory, at the Cherangany Hills. However, the fact that the Sengwer will introduce the Giant Bamboo makes it natural and indigenous, showing a conceptualisation of nature as capable of changing. However, external changes, such as exotic plantations, are not acceptable, as they are not indigenous to the forest (see Figure 10).

Nature itself plays an active role in the struggle and in the Sengwer traditions and myths. Nature has a direct influence on social relations, for example is the Oath of our Soil the highest way of passing judgment in a dispute. Likewise, nature is part of the present claim of excluding outsiders from

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[24] The interviewees say that the flower cultivated for pyrethrum production kills bees. I have not been able to authenticate this, but the pyrethrum insecticide is poisonous to bees (Gunasekara, 2015). I did not press this point any further, as I am more interested in the Sengwer understanding of what is happening. The important point for my argument is that the Sengwer believe that the flowers that produce pyrethrum kill the bees.

Sengwer land (see C4a). This is also found in stories from old time, where nature itself excludes outsiders[25]. The latter recurs in the Sengwer articulation of their struggle; the ancestral spirits have removed a KFS camp on the Sengwer sacred mountain and in case the Sengwer is removed from Embobut, they will pray for the ancestors to make the forest very dry, so that a forest fire can easily catch on and burn it down.

We believe our trees will talk for us, and the soil, talks in different languages […] *Elders are telling us: other communities are dying with diseases, but Sengwer are not affected. If you go to Sengwer land, HIV and AIDS is very bad, but Sengwer not much. The ancestors are telling us that our soil is cursing them, because they are staying our land and we didn't even invite them. The curse is coming through diseases, sickness. In our forest, there is a lot of things that talks on our behalf, but we are not hearing them, it comes out in activities - activities as for example HIV, statistics say that Sengwer people are less affected, the soil is giving the other people a lot of problems, because they are occupying our land that was from our ancestors and ancestors and so on.* (C4a)

The on-the-ground performances show an inability to perform the Sengwer cultural rituals due to the disturbances from the outside. In discussing their relation to the forest, the Sengwer focus on the cultural and natural interdependence, and the fact that without both aspects, the Sengwer culture would cease to exist. The narrative arising out of the interviews focuses on cultural and environmental degradation, which is closely related to the lack of recognition. The forest itself, their activities in the forest and their ancestral ties are regarded as central to their cultural rituals and the Sengwer cannot continue to exist culturally, if this nature-human relation is severed.

Q: What is the most important of all that we discussed today?

Our culture is so important, because eroded culture cannot easily be brought back like planting trees and conserving forest, because if the culture is eroded, it is eroded, so that is an important factor, and also, the sacred sites inside the forest is the most important thing. When you have destroyed culture you have destroyed people. (I.10d)

The following chapter discuss how the above presents an example of the (re)negotiation of the Sengwer subjectivity as a process with internal differences and meanings. Concluding, I will reflect upon this understanding of the 'resisting community', as being formed in the process and thus not having a static, predefined identity and how this is relevant for further studies on similar struggles over natural resources.

[25] One informant told me the story of how "outsiders" (who were degrading the forest) were once excluded by the forest: An old man had prayed to the forest to exclude him from the forest, if he were trespassing in the forest, or to exclude the "outsiders", if they were trespassing on Sengwer land. The "outsiders" hereafter left the forest.

6 Is there any hope?

– Risks and opportunities when articulating Sengwer identity

The processes outlined in the previous chapter, (re)negotiate the Sengwer subjectivity and can be regarded as "contingent products of agency and the cultural and political work of articulation" (Li, 2000, p. 3). The self-identification as indigenous is (1) used to mobilise their claim for community rights to the forest and (2), as the analysis has shown, drawing on existing practices and understandings, and not thought up anew as a response to the conflict. However, it is also not an essential or natural continuation of said practices (Li, 2000). There is a mutual dependency within the scales in the Sengwer community (Figure 3): The struggle to advance Sengwer rights and recognition would not be possible without the people still living in Embobut despite the on-going harassment. The actions on ground are necessary for giving substances to the claim in the national and international arena. Simultaneously, the people in Embobut are articulating the dependence on the Sengwer members working to further their cause in national and international spaces. The everyday activities in Embobut are thus an embodiment of the Sengwer subjectivities used to articulate their claim for recognition. Thus, it is an emplacement of a struggle that goes further back in time. This emplacement makes the struggle fit into global discourse on indigeneity and conservation. With this I do not want to make the argument, that their indigenous response is "false", but, along the lines of Perrerault (2001), rather that subjectivities are constructed and (re)negotiated by socio-political relations, cultural practices and ecological processes, and that they are mobilised, and (re)negotiated when mobilised strategically. This emerges as a response in the friction when the global meets the local (Tsing, 2005), but friction likewise arises in the process of (re)negotiating the Sengwer identity itself. It is not a homogenous and smooth local process but instead there are internal differences in the community. This difference is found with regards to farming, where some community members are explicitly against future farming, while others would like to continue, as well as in the discussion on whether or not to start conservation activities within Embobut now.

The strategy of the Sengwer is non-violent. The threat towards the government is not the Sengwer using violence, but the mere fact that they insist on dignity and justice, and "will not go quietly" (Rocheleau, 2015, p. 715). In this regard the local response is reliant on their network, which allow them to tap into existing campaigns for indigenous rights, predominantly the FPP, but also the fact that international journalists and one film-maker have visited them to expose their situation to a global audience. The conflict resembles other examples, where global attention is drawn towards conflicts, "especially when it pits the locals against the state" (Li, 2000, p. 22), and where the indigenous connections are articulated and therefore easily found.

I myself became a channel for reaching the outside and was asked to take their grievances to the government and beyond (see I.3b and C1.1b): I was named an "ambassador abroad" for the Sengwer community. As such, my role was recast from researcher to messenger in the context I was investigating. My own subjectivity was actively (re)negotiated through and by my relations to the people I interacted with. I did not oppose this recasting of my role, nor did I actively try to enforce it, as I found the situation interesting and telling for the strategies of the Sengwer. Coupled with their very guarded answers regarding environmental degradation, I was left with an impression on how aware people inside Embobut and "outside activists" are of the importance on how they are framed in the global sphere.

> *We were discussing about these issues and your research, she is saying, hopefully it will pass this relationship we have with this forest in general. We were discussing that it might one way or another, as you do your research and even come out with your research work, it might end up even educating those who don't know Sengwer, because you are here now, you have known our life, you have known our little, then your research may end up being read by many people, they understand and maybe it will make our grievances heard and then us being assisted by one way or another.* (I.3b)
>
> *Go and tell, take our problems, our grievances, take them to the highest level. Our cultural activities and language will fade. In time, we shall be losing our origin. We don't want to lose our origin as Sengwer. We just want to be Sengwer in our land.* (C1.1b)

6.1 Global-local encounters and cultural survival

The Sengwer subjectivity taps into global actors fighting for the right on indigenous people and thereby also the global discourse on the environmentally friendly indigenous (see Chapter 3). In others words, the possible positions are limited and prefigured by "the conceptual frame or 'place of recognition'" (Li, 2000, p. 15) others provide. It is a feedback loop, where the global discourse on indigeneity and biodiversity conservation shapes the belief and practices of the Sengwer (Dove, 2006; Li, 2002). The processes embed the local community within the global space for integrated conservation and development, and the response is hence an outcome of the interactions between the global and the local, or the processes of 'glocalization' (Swyngedouw, 1997).

Other networks than the global is mobilised in the struggle, illustrated by the by-laws, which draw on Sengwer organisations outside Embobut (the clan organisation is in effect in Kipsero) and on their long-term connection to the Ogiek at Mt Elgon. The by-laws of the Sengwer of Embobut shall illustrate to the GoK that they are capable of conserving the forest, based on their environmental knowledge vested in the social organisation such as taboos, rituals and clans. These were not followed in Embobut prior to the evictions, but it is still presented as the basis, even though it has and will alter material practices.

The local cultural and environmental knowledge of the Sengwer is not separated and distinct from for example scientific knowledge, on both conservation and development, but co-created in a process. Critics of indigenous knowledge claim that it is not indigenous, as it is developed in close connection to scientific, western knowledge, (Dove, 2006). The Sengwer articulate that they possess a unique environmental knowledge related to Embobut, but they are simultaneously aware that they need to manage the forest in collaboration with outside environmentalists/biologists to ensure a sustainable use. The environmental knowledge is situated in the process of (re)negotiation their position in the political economy (Li, 2002), and not in isolation, but in interaction with a diversity of actors, such as me, FPP and the Ogiek of Mt Elgon. It is an example on how "alternative understandings of human/nonhuman entanglements have been articulated as critiques of mainstream conservation practice" (Büscher et al., 2012, p. 259).

The concept of the environmentally friendly indigenous has thus travelled from the global to the local and back again (Tsing, 2005), in the process of the Sengwer positioning themselves in the struggle. I argue that in this jorney the Sengwer have (re)negotiated their position in the struggle over Embobut to include existential recognition, as cultural and natural aspects are highly intertwined in their claim. Cultural continuity is linked to obtaining recognition as an indigenous community and thereby to gaining community rights. Their concern centres on outsiders' recognition of their "very existence and unique knowledge of the world" (Graham, 2005), as this will ensure survival of their culture. The resource struggle is therefore not only about ownership and access to Embobut, but about survival of the Sengwer culture. The narrative articulated in the interviews is focusing on environmental and cultural degradation as intertwined and both caused by the marginalized and oppressed position of the Sengwer, which simultaneously prevents them from protecting the forest and performing their cultural rituals. Continuation, or cyclicity (Graham, 2005), is a recurring theme in the Sengwer cultural rituals, and the (re)negotiation of Sengwer social organisation (Council of Elders) as well as plants growing in Embobut (Giant Bamboo), illustrate a willingness to change in order to ensure continuation. Both are concrete examples on how subjectivities are formed in a process, building on existing practices and structures (both examples are 'of indigenous origin'), but without being essentialist and static. The forest and Sengwer are co-produced and change together in their shared fight for community land and recognition, and the opportunity for cultural survival is therefore closely related to their claim to Embobut.

I talked with Peter, who identified as Sengwer. As a follow-up, I asked questions relating to his clan totem, which traditionally is passed down from your father's side. Peter's father was a Marakwet, so he had to revise his statement, and say that his identity was Marakwet, but his life was Sengwer. He has lived in Embobut for more than 20 years and he where related to the Sengwer through his wife. However, when leaving him (he was building a new house, as KFS had burned his 8th house), my RA contended that it would have to be discussed, whether or not he would be allowed to stay in Embobut upon granting of community rights.
(Own field notes)

This strategy is not without cost, both in terms of burned houses and destroyed property, arrests and divided families, and with regards to the energy and time used on survival that could have been used differently (Rochelea 2005). Likewise, when, or if, the Sengwer are granted the community rights to Embobut, the process of (re)negotiating Sengwer will have to address who is Sengwer and who is not. The question is important as the "losers" will not gain any benefits (Li, 2000) and highly relevant, as illustrated in the box to the right.

The positioning as indigenous opens up for some alliances and possibilities (Li, 2003). The Sengwer are contesting the discourse on them being marginalized, displaced and environmentally degrading, and instead advocating a competing subjectivity. By doing so, they have to accept both the restrictions and possibilities of the new subjectivity. As indigenous they will get the community right to the forest, but simultaneously they will be subject to outside actors in the conservation of the forest. They accept the risk of their strategic changes in local identities, which are necessary to enter a global discussion. The Sengwer are accepting that this subjectivity will not give them sovereign rule over the forest, but establish an institution/relation for the co-management of the forest by the Sengwer and the government. This leads to the realization that it is possible to resist one form of oppression, only to be engaged in a new form of oppression (Longhurst, 2003): The Sengwer resist their present oppression and willingly take on the oppression of being an environmentally-friendly indigenous people – with outspoken acceptance of government intervention in their conservation efforts. This goes beyond the national scale, as conservation efforts are situated in the fog of greening. Especially in regards to the REDD+ activities in the forest, their activities in the forest will be subjected to scrutiny and restructuring according to global REDD+ programmes. Hereby the Sengwer become embedded in the global fight against climate change and biodiversity loss, so that their everyday actions become accountable to the global community.

These "risks" are acceptable, as losing would lead to cultural extinction. This realisation would potentially have been lost in a framework with no explicit focus on the forest/materiality of space as a co-producing factor in subjectivities. Future studies should therefore include this in order to hear what the local response is: It is not "this is our land and therefore we should stay" but rather "this is

our land – and culture, and our culture will be extinct if you take us away". Bringing back nature is necessary to overcome binary thinking on human-nature relations, especially when the researcher (me) comes from the western perspective. I would not have been able to articulate the response of the Sengwer if I had imposed my conceptualisation. In order to understand a local response, it has to come from the respondents and be an articulation of their subjectivity as a process and not impose mine. Future studies should therefore pay attention to the local level's reframing of the struggle, but also the reframing of the researcher's subjectivity in the knowledge production process. When addressing conflicts over natural resources, one addresses different human-nature relations and in order to solve such a conflict, it is necessary to acknowledge this and keep in mind that the local response is a process and not a pre-defined entity.

7 Conclusion

My investigation on how the Sengwer make sense of their situation and of their relation to Embobut Forest has brought to light how Sengwer identity is actively (re)negotiated and constructed both through strategic mobilisations and through everyday actions of people living in Embobut. It is a story of a conflict over access to resources and the mobilisation of an indigenous subjectivity. I investigated how this is a process by looking at embodiment and everyday practices and processes, and how they are changed and (re)negotiated both materially and symbolic. Indirectly, this is entwined in a broader story of marginalisation, rights and lack of recognition for an indigenous community in Kenya's multi-plural society and it directly builds on the existing structure in the community fighting for this. The everyday practices and performances, and the careful articulation of their environmental impact, form an embodied subjectivity focused on survival. The performances from the individual members are directed towards the survival of the Sengwer in Embobut, with their distinct forms of livelihood activities and culture, such as beekeeping, as well as the environmental protection of the forest.

Their claim is inscribed in several global discourses on appropriate human-nature relations. This study is therefore of how abstract global claims operate in the world an engage with the local. First and foremost, the fog of greening represents the many and diverse global and national interests that are part of restructuring the forest and creating the conflict in the first place. This translates into national legislation and classifications of the Sengwer as being a marginalised and vulnerable group, and thus delegitimises the Sengwer's indigenous identity and claim to Embobut. This identity is however mobilised by the Sengwer, to gain recognition and stop the on-going conflict and harassment. The claim of the Sengwer is constructed in the context of the forest struggle and

involves (re)negotiations of the Sengwer identity that are closely linked to who the forest is for: Them or the international community. By bringing in nature in the process of subjectivities and identity formation, I have illustrated how this is driven by a wish for existential recognition and not by identity politics. This should be regarded in future studies, as it is possible that parts of the meaning will be lost if we make indigenous struggles only about territory. It is a necessary, and natural step, in sustainability science to not only focus on "the dynamics of social, political and economic processes in relation to nature" (Jerneck et al., 2011, p. 78), but also on the co-production of all four elements. Nature is not only an outcome of human interactions, but can change, and will change (sometimes slowly), by its own accord (Nightingale, 2003). If the forest is just a background when analysing natural resource conflicts, we risk losing the real dynamics between human-nature relations.

The Sengwer's intertwined conceptualisation of human-nature influences their forest use and management (Bosak, 2014; Nightingale, 2003). It can however not be generalised to mean that local responses in other places are based on the same conceptualisation of human-nature relations, and I do not propose to change the existing understanding of the static, homogenous group when encountering the fog of greening with another static conceptualisation. Instead, I want to advance an understanding of the processes that transform global discourses in the encounter with the local level and the existing, and historically contingent, social relations, cultural practices and ecological conditions human interactions. Future development and conservation projects should build on this acknowledgement, and move away from the large-scale implementation of uniform projects without regards to the social, political, cultural and ecological context.

The case of the Sengwer has showed how the fog of greening can be resisted, or at least questioned, through practices and presence between networked actors (Rocheleau 2015). They refuse to be absorbed into the structures in the fog of greening, which will leave them struggling to find work in another sector and outside their ancestral forest. By doing this, they contest the tale about who is degrading the forest and threatens biodiversity and show an alternative to conservation efforts for pristine nature devoid of humans. The claim of the Sengwer is thus an alternative to the prevailing human-nature relations as "dictated" in the fog of greening. It is an attempt to recapture nature from the control of the market logics behind the fog of greening (Fairhead et al., 2012) and as such it can be helpful in recasting the debate: We *shall* protect nature, but whose nature do we protect, from whom and how? Pretty et al. (2009), have proposed to reframe diversity as being about cultural and biological diversity simultaneously. The case of the Sengwer shows how this conceptualisation of

diversity is already there, unheard, but there, when you dissolve the binary understanding of human-nature relations.

The costs and risks associated with voicing this alternative interpretation are clear: Burned houses and property, families living divided, people being arrested and all energy and time used on mere survival. This resistance is however also their source of hope. The aim is to gain community rights to their forest and thus sustain their livelihood – and their cultural existence. The question remains however: how long can and will the Sengwer have to pay this price?

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2015: Sengwer of Embobut Governance Structures and By-Laws: For Sustainable Conservation of Forests and All Other Natural Resources

2014: HISTORICAL LAND INJUSTICES: THE INJUSTICES, CLAIMS AND REMEDIES

2014: Ref: World Bank Pledge to Resolve the Land Issues of the Sengwer Forest Indigenous Community

2014: Forest Dwelling Communities Position Statement: Securing Our Rights, Our Lands and Our Forests. To the National Land Commission Task Force on Historical Land Injustices

Appendix 1: Qualitative data collection

Interview overview

Number / Type of interview	Date	Type of interview, language	Living Place
I.1 / Interview, 1 man	4/4	Individual interview at interviewee's house in Embobut. Walk around the compound. Both in English and Sengwer with translator. Wife and young kids[26].	Embobut
I.2 / Interview, 2 men	3/29	Interview in Embobut Forest. Both men have wife and young kids living outside the forest.	Embobut
I.3 / Interview, 1 woman	3/29	Interview in Embobut Forest. Old woman.	Embobut
I.4 / Interview, 1 man	3/28	Interview in Embobut Forest, while interviewee was re-building his house after KFS had burned it. It was around the 8th time that they had burnt one of his houses. Married.	Embobut
I.5 / Interview, 1 man	3/29	My primary RA in Embobut, specific interview at his old house, otherwise on a running basis. Wife and young kids.	Embobut
I.6 / Interview, 1 man	4/10	Interview in Talau, about the Sengwer and their relation to the forest. Older man.	Not Embobut
I.7 / Interview, 1 woman	4/10	Interview in Talau, about the Sengwer and their relation to the forest. Older woman.	Not Embobut
I.8 / Interview, 1 man	3/24 4/10	Several interviews. Respected elder and has been active in the struggle for recognition since the early 90'es. Old man.	Not Embobut
I.9 / Focus group women	4/5	Focus group with women from Embobut Forest. Ranking exercise on forest activities. In Sengwer, female translator. Mixed in ages.	Embobut
I.10 / Focus group men	4/5	Focus group with men from Embobut Forest. Mapping exercise on actors with interest in the forest. Both in English and Sengwer with translator. Mixed in ages.	Embobut
I.11 / Strategy meeting	11/4 12/4	Two days strategy meeting with Sengwer active in the struggle. The purpose was to agree on the way forward and strategy to gain recognition to their claim for community land. 10 participants, only men. Women were invited, but none participated. In Sengwer, sometimes	Not Embobut

[26] Traditionally the Sengwer do not count, (such as years or children) and I have therefore no age for my interview persons, but introduce them in the same manner as they were introduced to me: Either old man, older woman, or younger with children.

		translated, otherwise translated after the interview by listening to a recording. Mixed in ages.	
I.12 / Group interview	4/7	Group of men and women (1) gathered to talk about their relation to the forest. 50 participants. Sengwer community living adjacent to Kipsero Forest. In Sengwer, male translator. Mixed in ages.	Not Embobut
I.13 / Group interview, men	3/25	Group interview with 5 men living in Kapcherob, but with livelihood activities in Embobut. Mixed in ages.	Moved away from Embobut last year
I.14 / Group interview, women	3/25	Group interview with 7 women living in Kapcherob. Mixed in ages.	Moved away from Embobut last year

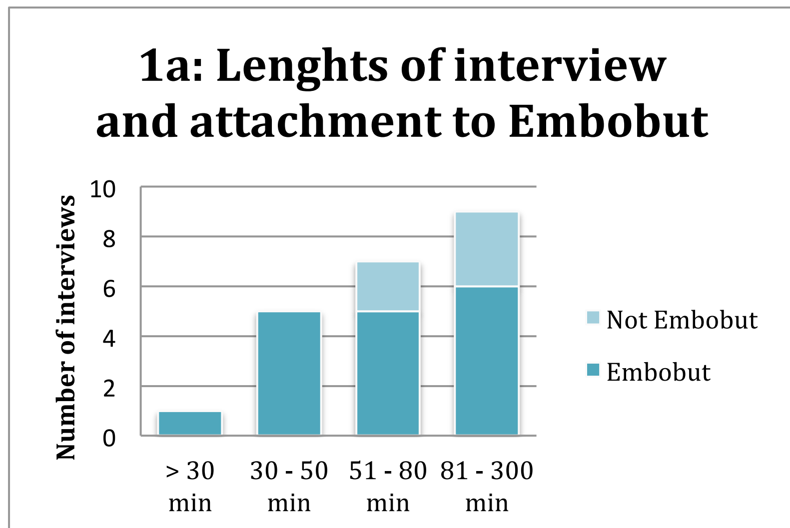
Photovoice interviews

Camera, interview code		Living place	Language	Gender	Number of photos	Minutes, follow-up interviews	Date for interview
Camera 1	C1.1	Inside Embobut	Sengwer	Male	9	48	4/4
	C1.2	Inside Embobut	English	Male	15	109	4/6
Camera 2, C2		Inside Embobut	Sengwer	Female	20	64	4/4, 4/6
Camera 3, C3		Just outside Embobut, activities in the forest	English/Sengwer	Female	28	39	4/5
Camera 4, C4		Kipsero Forest	English	Male	29	126	4/11
Total					*101*	*386*	

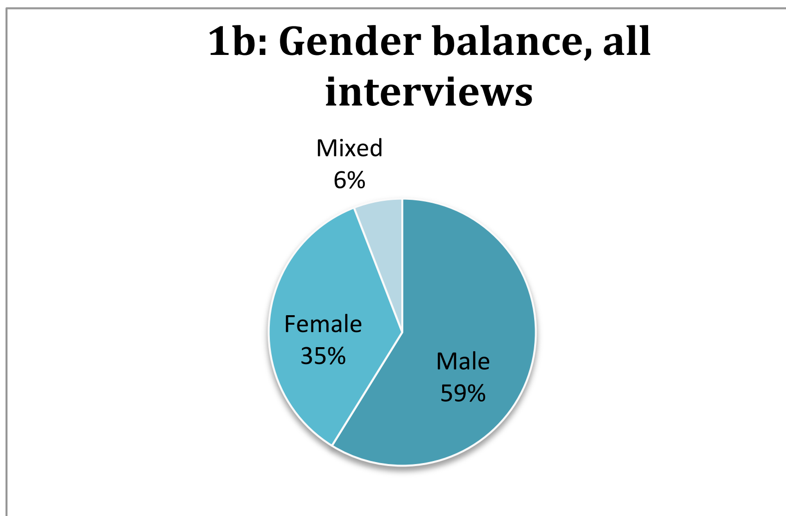
Reflections on data sample

In the following, I have divided the interviews according to the their attachment to Embobut, meaning that Sengwer who live, or have lived, in Embobut are referred to as Embobut and the others are non-Embobut. I have chosen this division as my investigation of the Sengwer response is focusing on Embobut, but has important ties to Sengwer outside of Embobut. Interviewees outside of Embobut were mainly interviewed to gain a better understanding of their cultural heritage and self-identification as Sengwer. Another important focus area, which

were located both outside and inside Embobut, was the long-term struggle of the Sengwer and their strategy to advance their claim in Embobut. In 1a, the lenght is calculated per interviewee, which means that some times indicate the total number of minutes of a particular interviewee, despite the fact that it happened over several days.



I strived towards a gender balance in my interviews, but as they were based on snowballing technique and introductions of my RA. I was also bound by willingness and availability. In general, the outward face of the struggle is male, so they were most willing to talk to me. Furthermore, the men are traditionally speaking the ones who engage in deliberations with outsiders and the mobility of the women centres around the compound and livelihood activities in the forest.



Prior and informed consent

I had prepared consent forms for all interviews, but used them only twice. Afterwards I recorded the consent. Initially I wanted to use consent forms, as I knew that the community had already complained about WB involvement in Embobut without prior consent of the community. However, the use of consent forms started a long debate on why and how I was conducting research. To use the limited interview time more efficiently I chose to audiotape the consents.