

**Conflict or coexistence? A comparative analysis of  
depictions of human-wildlife interactions in the Kenyan  
media landscape.**



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## **Abstract**

This dissertation argues that whilst alternative discourses are emerging in the depiction of human-wildlife interactions in the Kenyan media landscape, their progressive capacity is limited by discursive practices and the dominance of Western ideology in contemporary conservation. Thus, despite pressures to portray human-wildlife interactions in a manner that accurately reflects lived experience and acknowledges the value and expertise of indigenous conservation methods, the majority of content produced either utilises simplified and ambiguous frames of conflict, or offer resolutions based on Western conservation ideology, such as the creation of protected areas and provision of financial incentives to protect wildlife. This dissertation analyses the depictions of human wildlife interactions in articles from the Daily Nation and Sunday Nation, and tweets from the Africa Wildlife Foundation, Ewaso Lions and Lion Guardians to ascertain what interactions were given salience, the frames used to depict them and the subsequent audience interpretations these strategies encouraged. In doing so, this dissertation highlights the necessity to continue to critically examine the ways in which human-wildlife interactions in Kenya are framed so that the content produced reflects the progressive efforts of those trying to develop the capacity for African leadership in the sector.

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## **Context: Kenyan Conservation and Africa's Media Image**

### **1.1 Introduction**

In a world of rapid population growth and increasing competition for natural resources, interactions between humans and wildlife are often reported as becoming more frequent, more conflictual, and deeply politicised. As such, the effective mitigation of conflict and promotion of coexistence between humans and wildlife is arguably one of the most complex issues currently faced by the conservation sector, reflected by the ongoing debates on how best to articulate it.

As this dissertation is focused on the impact of specific frames and language choices used to depict interactions between humans and wildlife in Kenyan media communications, it brings together distinctly different areas and disciplines that are rarely combined. It is therefore necessary to explore existing research within three key areas. Firstly, this dissertation examines the colonial legacy of the conservation sector and its impact on current conservation practice regarding the discussions about and management of human-wildlife interactions. Through a subsequent analysis of studies concerning Africa's image in the global media landscape, this dissertation interrogates the apparent dominance of single-story narratives and the implications of this on production news from within the continent. Finally, when combined with an evaluation of the debates concerning the politically transformative potential of NGOs' use of social media, this dissertation exposes the limitations of these studies when treated separately, the benefits of drawing them together and the gap in the research it seeks to address.

### **1.2 The Elephant in the Room: The Colonial Legacy and Narratives of Exclusion in the History of Human-Wildlife Interactions in Kenya**

Postcolonial scholars attest that "ideas, cultures and histories cannot seriously be understood without their force or ... configurations of power also being studied" (Said, 1978:12). Widely acknowledged as Earth's "earliest home to humans" (Steinhart, 2006:17), Kenya has the longest conservation history in the world, yet the efficacy of traditional methods predating the intervention of Western conservationists in the country are largely ignored. This, according to Mbaria and Ogada, is due to the colonial legacy at the heart of the conservation sector, which when examined, reveals unchallenged racism, exclusion, deceit and exploitation that naturalises the need for external intervention and erases the rights, expertise and competence of indigenous

practice (2016:16). To fully understand contemporary ideas and configurations of power within Kenyan conservation, it is therefore necessary to trace the sector back to its roots.

Kenya, like the rest of Africa, possesses a complex history of local knowledge systems about wildlife conservation and practices of coexistence (Metcalf, 1994; Kuriyan, 2010; Mbaria & Ogada, 2016). Whilst cultures such as the Maasai include consumptive traditions involving ritual hunting practices, the impact of this is negligible compared to their methods of conservation, including the sustainable grazing of livestock and tolerance for proximal wildlife (Mbaria & Ogada, 2016; Steinhart, 2006; Somerville, 2020:84). Similarly, the Samburu people believe that elephants are moral beings deeply connected to humans and as such shouldn't be owned, exploited or killed, positioning them as their natural protector rather than strongest adversary (Kuriyan, 2010:951; Mbaria & Ogada, 2016:98). Indeed, it is significant that killing for sport was unknown in precolonial Kenya, and it was only with the arrival of British settlers and their taste for recreational hunting that wildlife consumption in sub-Saharan Africa increased to unsustainable rates of degradation and destruction (Mbaria & Ogada, 2016; Steinhart, 2006; Somerville 2016, 2020).

Keen to develop the earning potential of its tourism industry, the colonial administration promoted Kenya as an exotic "big-game hunting destination," a reputation which grew rapidly after Roosevelt's famed trip in 1909 (Steinhart, 2006:3; Leakey & Morell, 2001:29). Wealthy tourists from Europe and North America flocked to the region to take part in luxurious hunting safaris, but as they were seeking trophies rather than sustenance, this meant that charismatic species were hunted at a far more destructive rate than any form of traditional Kenyan hunting methods (Somerville, 2020:84).

Seeking to mitigate the damage caused by this unsustainable practice, exclusive hunting ranches were established to farm, monitor, and repopulate Kenya's most sought-after species. Permitted by the colonial administration, these ranches denied the existence of indigenous ancestral land rights, which both excluded them from their historic grazing areas and erased all recognition of sustainable indigenous conservation practices (Mbaria & Ogada, 2016, Steinhart 2006:3). When it became apparent that these ranches did not address the ecological devastation caused by recreational hunting, many white professional hunters became conservationists instead. Keen to apportion the devastation caused elsewhere so they could continue to hunt for their own

enjoyment, indigenous hunting practices were blamed, establishing a racial demarcation between black and white hunting behaviour, with the former criminalised and the latter glorified (Steinhart, 2006:132). This resulted in the creation of a conservation sector distinctly and self-reinforcingly viewed as a white Western enterprise seeking to protect wildlife from the “black poachers of colonial imagination” (ibid:3).

The marginalisation and exclusion of rural communities caused by these developments were further reinforced through the introduction of North American preservationist conservation. Inspired by a trip to Yellowstone in 1938, conservationist Mervyn Cowie set up the National Park system in Kenya in 1945, in which land (often hunting ranches) was allocated to “provide special protection from human interference” (Brockington *et al*, 2008:1). The utilisation of a conservation model suited to an ecology vastly different to that of sub-Saharan Africa is deeply problematic, not least because of its ignorance of more effective (and much older) indigenous practices of protective conservation that accommodated the traditional migratory patterns of larger charismatic species and prevented the ecological devastation caused when they are not given freedom to roam (Western, 1997; Wittemyer, 2001; Brockington *et al*, 2008). By advocating an American model based on the “full protection of nature for its own sake” (Tsing, 2004:100), the land designated to protected areas was misrepresented as once being a pristine and uninhabited African landscape, and as such was effectively emptied of its people (Neumann, 1998:4). This portrayal not only erased the history of ancestral rights, occupancy and land use in the collective memory of conservationists, but also depicted any presence of rural communities in protected areas as disruptive and destructive “despoilers of nature” (Tsing, 2004:100).

Consequently, the foundations on which contemporary conservation initiatives such as private conservancies, protected areas and community-led projects are based on the “colonial reimagination of nature” (Steinhart, 2006:12) that erases the history of coexistence between wildlife and humans in Kenya, and assumes an adversarial existence in its stead that can only be mediated by the presence, protection, and funding provided by Western non-governmental organisations (NGOs). Whilst it is therefore unsurprising that the most common frame of reference used to categorise human-wildlife interactions is one of conflict (Woodroffe *et al*, 2005), the assumed narratives, challenges and solutions posed by this dominant discourse are



hindered by the continued misrepresentations and misunderstandings initiated by the sector's colonial legacy.

### **1.3 Overtly Negative and Dangerously Simplistic: Problematising Discourses of Conflict**

Broadly defined as “situations occurring when an action by either humans or wildlife has an adverse effect on the other” (Conover, 2002:8), “human-wildlife conflict” is a term applied to many different types of interactions, each with their own specific contexts, causes and scales of severity (Baynham-Herd *et al*, 2018). Whilst the term most commonly refers to instances of wildlife damaging crops, the predation of domestic livestock or the deaths of either wildlife or people (Fisher, 2016:377), there is a growing body of literature that criticises the problems caused by the widespread, imprecise and misleading use of this term.

Firstly, there are those who have criticised the semantic construction of the phrase for its overt negativity. Peterson *et al* argue that the way in which this particular frame or “terministic screen” is constructed causes its users to both envisage humans as separate from the rest of the natural world and assume the existence of a “conscious antagonism between wildlife and humans” (2010:75; see also Frank & Glikman, 2017). Consequently, wildlife is often perceived as an entity that threatens rather than supports human existence, a concern echoed by Fisher who argues that the phrasing of human-wildlife conflict “implicitly suggests both sides are consciously intent on interfering in the life of the other” and as such encourages the assumption that conflict is inevitable (2016:277).

Alongside the unintended general pejoration of human-wildlife relations, analyses of conservation literature argue that its broad and imprecise use further complicates and obscures public understanding of specific situations. When surveying academic publications addressing human-wildlife conflict, Peterson *et al* found that the term was used to incorporate a broad range of interactions, with most tending to focus on “perceptions among people that wildlife threaten something they care about” rather than instances of direct conflict (2010:78). This suggests that in some cases, human-wildlife conflict is caused more by the perception that wildlife *could* do harm to human property than situations involving direct interaction. (Naughton-Treves & Treves, 2005:353).

Redpath *et al*'s later study of the use of "human-wildlife conflict" in conservation literature further complicates the term's use as it found that 97 of the 100 articles surveyed reported conflicts between humans rather than wildlife. The most common conflicts reported were between "those who sought to defend conservation objectives and those defending ... livelihood objectives" (2015:223), which would therefore be more accurately categorised as instances of "human-human conflict" (Young *et al*, 2010).

Whilst it may not seem necessary to specify the precise nature of the dispute being addressed so long as it is resolved, many suggest that the term's imprecise use limits the efficacy of conservation initiatives seeking to resolve conflicts. Indeed, Peterson *et al* go so far to say that rather than reflecting research addressing interactions between humans and wildlife, the dominance of the conflict discourse actively shapes it instead (2010:75). As such, the inaccurate categorisation of human-human conflict as human-wildlife conflict has the potential to "constrain the way problems are defined and limit the array of potential solutions available" (ibid:79).

Although seeming bold, the concerns expressed become more pronounced when applied to the example of the retaliatory killing of lions in a local community. When framed as an instance of human-wildlife conflict, the assumed explanation is that the lions had been feeding on community livestock, with their subsequent killing a retaliation to the losses incurred. Consequently, the recommended intervention would most likely involve technical solutions designed to alter the behaviour of community members and the strategies used to protect their livestock (Baynham-Herd *et al*, 2018:185). If, however, the retaliation was aimed at grievances over exclusion from protected areas, as was the case with the Maasai's decimation of the Amboseli lion population in 1993 (Somerville, 2020:139), its categorisation as an incident of human-wildlife conflict does not adequately reflect the political context of the situation, as it contains no reference to the human rights issues central to the conflict (Frank & Glikman, 2017:5). This therefore limits public understanding of the conflict and the efficacy of proposed solutions, as attention is diverted from "addressing conflicts within human political systems", causing their continued escalation until they are "much more difficult to resolve" (Peterson *et al*, 2010:79).

In acknowledgement of the power that language has in influencing both the perceptions and actions of those involved in conservation, many advocate the use of discourses of coexistence in the place of conflict. Given that Redpath *et al* argue that the prevalence of conflict frames may indicate an institutional tendency to “hide behind the wildlife” (2015:224) to avoid being identified as the antagonists of a situation and to achieve their ends without contestation, use of a more positive frame in its stead should be carefully examined. Whilst it could lead to a less problematic depiction of human-wildlife interactions (Peterson *et al*, 2010:80) and a transformation of common “mechanisms of coexistence” so that they represent a more positive and preventative approach than conflict mitigation (Frank & Glikman, 2017:10), the recommendation that future research should be designed to “showcase coexistence and tolerance” (ibid:14) runs the risk of replacing one problematic system with another.

Indeed, a focus on documenting successful coexistence in a reality where there will always be conflict risks using the same selective framing found in the sector’s colonial origins to silence and erase the voices and rights of indigenous communities. Rather than the removal of references to conflict, the language used to report interactions with wildlife should, in an ideal world, be neutrally framed so that it accurately depicts all actors and influences involved. This way, in an instance where conflict does occur, those involved fully understand its root cause and are therefore well positioned to facilitate its successful resolution (Baynham-Herd *et al*, 2018:186, Peterson *et al*, 2010; Young *et al*, 2010). Likewise, in instances of coexistence, the literature produced should seek to decolonise the conservation narrative by acknowledging all involved, with particular attention paid to “existing conservation ethics in communities that have lived with wildlife for thousands of years” (Mbaria & Ogada, 2016:151).

Most research concerning frames of representation used to depict human-wildlife interactions focuses on its use in academic literature rather than mass media communications. Additionally, whilst there is extensive research into the portrayal of humanitarian aid in Africa in mass media and NGO communications in the Global North, little attention has been paid to the depiction of human-wildlife interactions or to news production from within the continent. Despite this, an examination of frequently referenced frames used to depict “African” humanitarian news and NGO communications reveals similar issues regarding the use of simplified narratives that reinforce colonial assumptions and marginalise the voices and experiences of indigenous

communities. Moreover, given the “‘Northern’ media dominance over the global South” (Becker, 2017:103), it is useful to interrogate the assumptions established from existing research, as this provides insight into the discursive conventions with which African news production has to contend.

#### **1.4 Conceptualising Africa in the Global Media Landscape: Frames of Optimism and Pessimism, and the Transformative Potential of Social Media**

Existing literature about the depiction of Africa in the Western media landscape is predominantly concerned with the use of uncritical and polarising frames of representation that reproduce colonial stereotypes and Western hegemony. Research conducted from the 1970s to the 1990s identified the tendency to treat Africa as a “homogenous block” full of famine, disease, conflict and suffering (Hawk *et al*, 1992), a frame of representation widely referred to as “Afro-pessimism” (Bunce *et al*, 2017).

Laden with reductive colonial stereotypes highly dependent “on portrayals of an improvised, often savage, ‘Other’” (Bunce *et al*, 2017:1), Afro-pessimistic narratives produced by both news outlets and NGO aid campaigns have been criticised for their depiction of silenced suffering ‘victims’ in need of the support of benevolent ‘white saviours’ (Bunce *et al*, 2017; French, 2017:38; Nothias, 2017:79; Kennedy, 2009; Adichie 2009). Epitomised by the 1984 BBC coverage of the Ethiopian famine and subsequent LiveAid campaign, content of this kind focuses on the symptoms of suffering rather than their underlying causes, leading to the construction of what Calhoun calls “the emergency imaginary” (2010). Said to prioritise the immediate alleviation of suffering at the expense of explanatory context in order to generate more funding, this type of depiction fails to acknowledge the presence of grassroots aid initiatives and creates a damaging perception of its ‘victims’ as passive, powerless and voiceless (Orgad, 2015; Kennedy, 2009; Jones 2019).

In response to this criticism, scholars have more recently noted a distinct increase in the more positively framed “Africa Rising” narratives that focus on “tropes of optimism and hopefulness” by highlighting the “value of Africa’s human resources” (Flamenbaum, 2017:116-118). Categorised by the depiction of issues such as the “growing middle class, widespread technological innovation, and significant economic development” (Bunce *et al*, 2017:3), this more varied content has been praised for addressing the homogenous representation of Africa as

a singular entity (Bunce, 2017:18). Likewise, efforts to address the problematic depictions of the “distant other” in NGO communications are reflected in Save the Children’s 2017 report ‘The People in the Pictures.’ The report’s acknowledgement of the need to “invest in more collaborative and participatory content” (Warrington & Crombie, 2017:67) and to ensure “that human dignity is upheld in the [content] making process, not just in the [content] itself” (68) has been reflected in what scholars have argued is a significant growth in communications that construct a more “heroic” depiction of subjects describing their own experiences and “emergence from suffering thanks to personal agency” (Orgad, 2015:125), often facilitated through initiatives such as “Twitter take-overs” and the publication of blogs, vlogs and interviews (Cooper, 2015).

Whilst these changes are welcomed by some, this paradigm shift in both news and NGO communications suffers the same criticisms as that of the proposed changes to discursive practice in the conservation sector. Firstly, a combination of widespread budget cuts and the pressure to produce more positive content is said to have limited the critical capacity of news production, with journalists “only selecting positive events for coverage and utilising racialised stock characters” in a manner that merely tends to “invert Afropessimism” rather than actively challenge it (Wright, 2018:220). This is aptly illustrated in Wright’s examination of coverage of the Kenyan Paraplegic Organization’s 2012 ‘Bring Zack Back Home’ campaign to raise funds for a new rehabilitation centre. Found on social media by a Kenyan journalist interning at British newspaper *The Observer*, the story was published as part of the paper’s efforts to ameliorate their coverage of African news items. Unfortunately, an apparent lack of research caused a failure to notice that several other papers had already covered the story, that the campaign had no long-term plans to sustainably fund the clinic once built, and that the NGO had strong political links and had tactically launched their campaign in the run-up to a Kenyan general election (Wright, 2017:152).

Not only does this presence of positive bias cause journalists to fail to critically assess and evaluate the efficacy of aid efforts and initiatives, it has also been criticised for its perpetuation of neo-colonial frames of reference. Whilst the content is undoubtedly more positive than previous patterns of coverage, the focus on the continued search for wealth, development and innovation in Africa risks its presentation “as a site for international intervention and resource extraction” (Bunce et al, 2017:4). Consequently, far from challenging the stereotypical image of

Africa's dependence on the Global North for investment, such coverage may reinforce it instead (Bach, 2013).

More positive content shared by NGO communications is similarly criticised for its “reverberat[ion] of Western neo-liberal values” (Orgad, 2015:125). Orgad argues that whilst more positively framed aid campaigns “give voice” to those previously silenced, there is still a tendency to structure such content as a “narrative of individual transformation through self-discipline” (ibid) that adheres to Western notions of progress and development. Moreover, for such a transformation to be viewed as successful, those depicted in campaigns need to be seen to be becoming more like ‘us’ and in doing so, seek to mitigate difference rather than celebrate it.

Likewise, Cooper suggests that whilst NGOs acknowledge their need to use social media “to afford a voice to the previously voiceless” (2015), current efforts have done little to effectively facilitate real change. Whilst initiatives such as Save the Children’s 2012 #hiddencrisis Twitter campaign sought to raise awareness of more chronic problems faced in the sector, Cooper found that most campaigns generally promoted emergency fundraisers and as such reinforced the simplistic and decontextualized narratives of the “emergency imaginary”. This, alongside the utilisation of blogs, vlogs, and interviews, has done little in changing the perceived distance between marginalised groups and ‘developed’ onlookers, and has instead tended to emphasise the affective experiences of benevolent Westerners (2015). Thus, despite efforts to change, it would appear that current NGO practices that “give voice” to their beneficiaries is largely illusory, with NGOs acting as gatekeepers rather than mediators, and authentic indigenous voices “largely missing” from their communications (Orgad, 2017:129).

### **1.5 A Gap in the Discourse: Combining Conservation and Communications Studies**

Although existing research in conservation and media communications is rarely combined, both fields speak confidently about the colonial influence and pervasive dominance of Western ideology on contemporary configurations of power. Whilst evidence of this tendency is demonstrable in many studies, it is important to be mindful of the existence of the assumptions and presuppositions that drive these claims. In his survey of existing literature about Africa’s media image, Scott claims that it is “a subject area focused on exposing taken-for-granted assumptions [and] is in fact responsible for maintaining its own myth” (2017:40). This, he argues, is due to its intention to seek and emphasise “only the anticipated and problematic

aspects of representations of Africa [which] may inadvertently end up serving to reinforce the very same ideas that these studies often seek to challenge” (ibid). Essentially, Scott claims that the established assumption that US and UK media depict Africa problematically causes a biased approach to research that influences scholars to interpret data in a way that meets these dominant assumptions (47). These presuppositions therefore become self-reinforcing, a problem further emphasised by the indiscriminate use of the terms “positive” and “negative” to categorise media coverage, as this acts as a basis for “suggesting that there is consistency between the results of different studies, when they are often measuring entirely different things” (ibid:46).

These pervasive presuppositions are reflected in claims about the depiction of Africa in indigenous African reporting. Whilst it is generally suggested that such coverage frequently uses and replicates the same frames found in Western media outlets (Gathara, 2014; Scott, 2009:554; Bunce et al, 2017:9), research into this area is comparatively sparse and lacking in robust empirical evidence. Likewise, whilst existing research into the use of social media in Africa is both more common and more optimistic, it has tended to focus thus far on its capacity to empower individual users in political contexts rather than conservation organisations to create “African-driven counter-narratives” that address the problematic nature of dominant discourses (Nyabola, 2017:114; see also Flamenbaum 2017; Mkono, 2019; Dwyer & Molony, 2019).

This dissertation therefore seeks to draw these elements together to address the following research question: How are human-wildlife interactions depicted in the Kenyan media landscape and how do they interact with dominant conservation discourses? Rather than a broad and shallow analysis identifying general patterns of coverage across the country, the focus will be on a small cross-section of the Kenyan media landscape, including content gathered from Kenyan newspapers the Daily Nation and Sunday Nation, the American NGO Africa Wildlife Foundation (AWF), and two smaller Kenyan NGOs Ewaso Lions and Lion Guardians.

To facilitate the research, three supplementary research questions are addressed: 1) What type of human wildlife interactions are given most salience and how are they framed? 2) What referential and predication strategies are used to depict the humans and wildlife involved and what type of interpretations does this encourage? 3) What implications might this have on current and future conservation initiatives and the dominance of Western conservation ideology? In drawing together debates about the problematic presentations of indigenous agency in both the

conservation sector and media communications, and examining them within the context of a specific data set, the research presented seeks to provide initial insights into the ways in which indigenous African news and NGO communications interact with dominant conservation discourses, and the extent to which they reflect efforts to decolonise the sector.



## **Research Methods**

### **2.1 Approach Overview**

As this research seeks to conduct a detailed analysis of the discursive representation of human-wildlife interactions in a small cross-section of the Kenyan media landscape, the use of Content Analysis in isolation is insufficient. Instead, a mixed-methods approach was adopted that involved Content Analysis, Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) and Semi-structured Interviews.

Beginning with an initial Content Analysis provided a quantitative understanding of what was written about and how often (Bryman, 2006:275). This then informed the selection of the representative sample for the CDA, as it ensured that meaningful comparisons could be drawn between the newspaper and social media content collected. The CDA conducted focused on the referential and predication strategies used by content producers (Reisigl and Wodak, 2001) and enabled a deeper understanding not only of how specific individuals involved in human-wildlife interactions were presented, but how these presentations engaged with wider discourses, social practices and configurations of power within the conservation sector (Richardson, 2007; Fairclough, 2003). Whilst challenging to conduct within the context of a global pandemic, the inclusion of interviews with relevant academics, journalists and NGO practitioners further strengthened the overall understanding gained throughout this research, as it helped to both mitigate the presence of researcher bias in the CDA and develop a more nuanced insight into the ways in which these frames are produced, disseminated and understood by key stakeholders in the field.

### **2.2 Data Collection**

As Kenya is known both for its well-documented history of human-wildlife conflict (Western & Waithaka, 2005), and its diverse and increasingly digitised media landscape (Nyabola, 2018), it was an ideal choice of focus for this study. Initially, an analysis of different Kenyan newspapers was considered, but given the diversity of Kenya's media landscape and the growing use of social media to address misrepresentation in the aid sector (Cooper, 2015), a study comprising both of these mediums was chosen. In adopting this comparative approach, I felt better positioned to develop an understanding of the impact of specific audiences and contexts in the production of content about human-wildlife interactions.

To ensure that the data set was manageable and meaningful, the focus was narrowed to one print news outlet and the Twitter feeds of three prominent conservation NGOs. An initial search was conducted on LexisNexis for Kenyan news items containing ‘human-wildlife conflict and/or coexistence’ from January 1<sup>st</sup> 2018 to June 26<sup>th</sup> 2020 and in this initial sample, 78% of the results were from either the Daily Nation or Sunday Nation newspapers. As these independent newspapers are both published by the prominent Nation Media Group and are widely read across Kenya, these seemed the most suitable choice for analysis. All articles containing ‘human-wildlife conflict’ or ‘human-wildlife coexistence’ written between these dates were downloaded, with articles that either reported on events outside of Kenya, or that only mentioned them in passing being discarded. This left 73 articles and adequate material to provide both a general overview of the papers’ depiction of human-wildlife interactions over the past two years, and an appropriate selection from which to choose specific articles for CDA.

When selecting conservation NGOs for comparison, it was important to ensure the data set was broad whilst facilitating sufficient depth of analysis. There were various options available: to focus on one NGO and conduct an analysis of all content on their websites and social media accounts; to include multiple NGOs and look at multiple platforms of content, or to look at multiple NGOs and focus on one platform of communication. Each of these approaches would provide meaningful insights into the depiction and framing of human-wildlife interactions, but the inclusion of multiple authors and platforms would limit the clarity of the analysis. As such, the choice was made to focus on the Twitter feeds of the well-established American NGO, AWF, and the much smaller Kenyan-based NGOs Lion Guardians and Ewaso Lions. As AWF is “the oldest and largest conservation organisation [that] focuses solely on the African continent” (AWF, 2016) and works in and from Kenya, this felt an important voice to include in the analysis, especially as it is “committed to amplifying the African voice on wildlife and wild lands conservation globally” (ibid). The inclusion of two much smaller, locally based NGOs also committed to promoting coexistence and the amplification of African voices ensured a more balanced insight into the content collected and analysed.

The choice to focus solely on Twitter data, one of the more popular social media platforms in Kenya (Nyabola, 2018) as opposed to all social media platforms utilised ensured consistency in the analysis, as the data gathered were produced using the same tools and were located in the

same digital space, with the same potential audience. Each NGO's Twitter content was surveyed from the same dates as the newspaper sample to ensure that they would all be reacting to the same national context, with the initial intention of categorising all tweets posted between these dates. This was straightforward for both Ewaso Lions and Lion Guardians, but it soon became apparent that this was not appropriate for AWF. Firstly, AWF posted far more frequently than both Ewaso Lions and Lion Guardians, with a total of 14,897 tweets compared to 3,573 and 1,527 respectively<sup>1</sup>. Additionally, AWF often retweeted their own content, which the other two NGOs did not. As such, it was found that coding all AWF's tweets posted in 2020 and a day's worth of tweets every ten days in 2018 and 2019 enabled fair representation and a manageable data set whilst still attaining theoretical saturation (Bryman, 2008:542).

### **2.3 Social Media Ethics: Public or Private?**

Social media data is notoriously problematic with regards to ethics, as its fluidity of users, purposes, content, and terms of agreement render it difficult to categorise (AoIR, 2019; Samuel *et al*, 2018). Whilst other types of data are easy to identify as either 'public,' and therefore freely accessed for analysis, or 'private,' requiring informed consent before use, social media is more complex, as the distinction between public and private is harder to define (Taylor and Pagliari 2018, p.3). Additional debates about the use of social media data include issues such as the difficulties of obtaining truly informed consent (Swirsky *et al*, 2014:61; ESRC 2015:12); the use of data taken from closed group chats and discussion forums (ESRC, 2015: 10) and the use of personal status updates (Beninger 2017:64).

Fortunately, the ethical concerns of this research are much simpler as the data set is gleaned from organisational rather than individual accounts. As such, the content collected does not represent that of an individual unaware of how their data is being used and accessed, but of an established organisation actively seeking exposure and public engagement. Additionally, the content gathered can confidently be identified as 'public' through the conditions of use outlined by Pace and Livingston (2005:38). As the data collected are "publicly archived and readily available" without being a registered user or account follower, and as the material "is not sensitive in nature" or its use prohibited by Twitter's policies, it was permissible to both quote and analyse

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<sup>1</sup> True at point of data collection (26/06/2020)

content without consent (ibid), although each organisation was informed of the research intent and was invited to participate. To ensure transparency and compliance with Twitter's terms and conditions, they were informed of the research being conducted through the registration of a 'Developer' account, and their policies were referred to regularly throughout. As such, it was ensured that the data collection process was ethical, robust, and replicable.

## **2.4 The Complexities of Comparing Contrasting Data Sets**

As there were significant differences in the content of the articles and tweets collected, separate coding manuals were created using the more flexible approach afforded by Ethnographic Content Analysis (Appendix 1.1 and 1.2). This ensured a "systematic ... but not rigid" (Altheide, 1996:16) approach to the categorisation of data and provided a clear overview of content from each media outlet.

To enable a clearer comparison of the content of newspapers and tweets sampled, the codes used were subsequently condensed to general groupings (Appendix 2.4). This allowed for an easier identification of the key similarities and differences in the events reported and frames used, and as the findings of the Content Analysis demonstrated clear differences in the depiction of specific humans and wildlife involved in interactions, this became the focus of the CDA and informed the choices made when selecting texts for further analysis.

There are many approaches to Discourse Analysis (Bryman 2008, p.500), but for the parameters of this research, Fairclough's model of CDA is most appropriate as it combines an engagement with the "social theoretical issues" typical of the social sciences with a close examination of the linguistic features of texts (2003, p.2). As with the Content Analysis, a detailed set of instructions were followed throughout the analysis (Appendix 1.3), but as an examination of the referential and predication strategies used in each text proved to be most fruitful, this became the primary focus. Consequently, particular attention was paid to the language used to identify specific groups involved in human-wildlife interactions and the strategies used to depict their experiences and behaviours.

## **2.5 Positionality and Isolation: Mitigating Challenges During a Global Pandemic**

Whilst CDA provides clear insight into how audiences are *encouraged* to interpret and perceive events, no textual analysis can tell you how audiences actually interpret them (Fairclough

2003:16). Consequently, I had to be mindful of my own potential biases as there is “no such thing as an objective analysis” (ibid:14). With my background as an English teacher, my interest in conservation and the fact that the analysis was necessarily conducted remotely, measures had to be taken to ensure that I was approaching the texts as objectively as possible (Haider, 2019).

The use of pre-written instructions ensured that my approach to each text was consistent, but given that most CDA examining journalistic practice focuses on news produced in the Global North, (Fairclough, 2003; Richardson, 2007; Hawk et al, 1992; Bunce et al, 2017) it could not be assumed that the discursive practices of Kenyan news production were the same of those in the Global North. Additionally, it is important to acknowledge that the remote data collection was limited to English sources readily available on LexisNexis, and so cannot account for possible counter-narratives published in Kiswahili, or that are circulated from localised sources like local radio stations.

To minimise the impact of researcher experiences, beliefs, and assumptions, interviews were conducted with various stakeholders in the conservation sector. This facilitated a more objective and nuanced understanding of the impact of relevant contexts underlying the production of content, and further consolidated the understanding of how particular items were *intended* to be interpreted.

Conducting interviews remotely proved to be one of the more challenging parts of the data collection, resulting in the procurement of participants at institutional rather than grassroots level. Whilst I was fortunate in that I was introduced to key contacts in the field, the fact that I had not met nor built a rapport with my interviewees still had to be overcome. I was aware that my identity as a British International Development student would potentially cause reluctance to participate, and indeed encountered some organisations that declined my request for interview due to negative past experiences. Consequently, every effort was taken to make participants as comfortable as possible: questions were sent in advance to those who requested it, all interviewees were made anonymous to protect both their right to anonymity and professional reputation (Taylor and Pagliari 2018, p.25) and interviews were not recorded. This was a deliberate choice to mitigate the impact of ‘The Observer’s Paradox’. Whilst Labov’s theory refers specifically to sociolinguistics, his assertion that participants modify and moderate their language choices through fear of being judged whilst under observation (1972) demonstrates a

palpable impact on content when participants know they are being filmed, one that would be compounded when interviewed by someone that they have not met.

It is for this same reason that verbal rather than written consent was gained from interview participants, as the use of official forms would create a prohibitively formal atmosphere that would discourage more candid responses. Instead, consent was sought informally in initial email communications, and again at the beginning of each interview, with a reminder of the right to withdraw included in follow-up communications. This approach was considered carefully, and as the individuals included were used to being quoted for research and press purposes, it was felt that fully informed consent could be ensured, and a relaxed and comfortable atmosphere maintained.

Alongside the obstacle of building trust remotely, the global pandemic further complicated the interview process as all participants were working from home and regularly using Zoom or Skype both for professional and personal purposes. Consequently, some of my participants expressed reluctance to use video calling technology as they were experiencing ‘Zoom fatigue’ (Armstrong, 2020; Sklar, 2020, Sander & Bauman, 2020; Jiang, 2020). To attempt to mitigate this, I ensured that I was available at times that suited participants, and offered WhatsApp, email, Skype and Zoom as options to conduct the interviews. Approximately half of the respondents chose to conduct the interviews via email, which impacted the amount of questions asked. Despite these difficulties, the interviews conducted provided vital insight into the text production process that would not have been gleaned from CDA alone and further enabled the mitigation and monitoring of the presence of researcher bias in the textual analysis.

## **2.6 Insights or Representative Samples? Acknowledging Parameters of the Research**

Although every effort has been taken to ensure that the analysis conducted is as objective as possible, it is important to ensure that the parameters of the research are clearly defined to avoid the drawing of unwarranted conclusions. Whilst the choice to focus the analysis on one print newspaper and three NGOs’ output from one social media platform effectively facilitated the methods used in this dissertation, the data selected are not sufficient to be considered representative of the depiction of human-wildlife interactions in the Kenyan media landscape. Likewise, it should be noted that as the analysis conducted consulted stakeholders at institutional

rather than grassroots level, it provides possible interpretations of the content included rather than actual responses.

What this study does provide is initial insights into the depiction of human-wildlife conflict in the Kenyan media landscape intended to prompt further research and discussion. In turning the focus away from news production in the Global North and examining the ways in which these specific news outlets engage with dominant discourses in the conservation sector, the findings of this dissertation offer possible patterns of current practice and what this might mean in relation to its engagement with the broader aims of the conservation sector.

## Analysis

### **3.1 Overall Patterns of Coverage**

Before conducting detailed CDA, it was necessary to first ascertain the general patterns of coverage when reporting instances of human-wildlife interactions in Kenya. This involved determining what kind of interactions were given most salience and the common tones conveyed when depicting them.

Overall, the Daily Nation prioritised conflict-fuelled interactions rather than promoting instances of coexistence. Of the data gathered, 78.67% reported the negative impacts of humans and wildlife living in close proximity, such as loss of life, property or livestock, (see Figure 1) with most stories depicting humans as the victims of interactions with wildlife (see Figure 2). The term ‘human-wildlife conflict’ was used frequently and indiscriminately, referring both to incidents involving wildlife, such as attacks on humans and retaliatory killings, as well as disputes between people, particularly between rural communities and the institutional bodies from whom they sought compensation. Whilst 21.33% of the sample focused on more positive interactions, such as the development of community strategies and innovations designed to mitigate and prevent conflict, the term ‘coexistence’ was only used once in the 73 articles surveyed, and this was in passing in an article about the growing number of people being killed by wildlife (Daily Nation, July 3, 2019).

	Positive (eg community strategies and innovations)	Negative (eg fatalities or damage to property)	Neutral (statement of fact)	Neutral (seeking engagement from followers)
Daily Nation	78.67%	21.33%	0	0
Twitter	21%	11%	44%	24%

**Figure 1:** Overview of tone of the newspaper and social media data sets

Content	Daily Nation	Twitter
People affected	56.01	9.82
Wildlife affected	12	42
Solutions to conflict	18.67	24.36
Audience Engagement	0	20.84
Other	13.32	2.98

**Figure 2:** Percentage coverage of content in Daily Nation and Twitter data sets.



In contrast to the Daily Nation’s focus on the human costs of conflict caused by living alongside wildlife, within the 1750 tweets sampled use of the phrase ‘human-wildlife conflict’ was rare. Instead, references to specific types of conflict were used, with 12.48% of the sample comprising of references to issues such as poaching, retaliatory killing, loss of crops or livestock and land disputes (see Figure 3 below). Of this 12.48%, only 0.55% referred to conflict in which humans were the victims, focusing instead on conflict fuelled by wildlife trade.

	Ewaso Lions	Lion Guardians	AWF	Total
Facts about relevant animals/landscapes	26.36%	16.83%	34.72%	30.07%
Pledge your support	5.66%	2.48%	4.74%	4.91%
Caption this photo	0	0	5.03%	2.69%
Question/poll	0.21%	0	6%	3.29%
Buy this product	0.51%	2.97%	2.96%	2.02%
Donate	0.93%	2.48%	3.26%	2.3%
Event	9.37%	8.91%	2.44%	5.63%
Vision/mission statement	2.16%	3.96%	1.7%	2.06%
Work done by NGO	34.19%	35.15%	8.88%	20.72%
Land/habitat	0.21%	0.5%	5.48%	3.05%
Tourism	0	0.5%	1.04%	0.59%
Covid-19	1.85%	2.48%	2.74%	2.38%
Poaching	0	0	8.66%	4.64%
Livestock/crop raiding	0	1.49%	0.81%	0.55%
Wildlife trade	0	0	6.66%	3.57%
Retaliatory killing	0.51%	0.99%	0.74%	0.67%
Coexistence	0.93%	4.46%	1.63%	1.58%
Work with community	17.1%	16.83%	2.52%	9.27%

**Figure 3:** *Percentage coverage of topics within the Twitter data set*

Whilst this apparent prioritisation of the welfare of wildlife over people may not be surprising given that that is what the three NGOs surveyed are all designed to protect, a more detailed comparison of their posting patterns exposes some interesting differences between the two smaller Kenyan NGOs and their larger American counterpart. Neither Ewaso Lions nor Lion Guardians make any reference to poaching or the international wildlife trade in the tweets sampled, and whilst Lion Guardians mention losses to crops or livestock in 1.49% of their

tweets, Ewaso Lions do not refer to this at all. As such, followers of these two accounts learn little about instances of human-wildlife conflict encountered by the two NGOs, but given that 17.1% of Ewaso Lions' and 16.83% of Lion Guardians' tweets refer to the work they do with local communities (compared to just 2.52% of AWF's), the data suggests that rather than excluding rural communities' interactions with wildlife from their communications, they may instead be trying to change the dominant discourse of conflict to one of coexistence as advised by the literature (Peterson *et al*, 2010).

An examination of the tone of the tweets further illustrates this, as is evident in Figure 4. Categorising the tweets by overall tone was a more complicated process than with the newspaper articles, as 68% of the sample was decidedly neutral. This comprised of tweets either stating facts about the animals and habitats under the NGOs' protection without reference to conflict or conservation successes, or those that encouraged follower participation through the inclusion of hyperlinks to polls, petitions, and donation sites. Of the remaining 32%, more were positively framed (21%) than negatively, but when examined separately again there are some stark differences between AWF and the two smaller NGOs. Both Ewaso Lions and Lion Guardians posted very few negatively framed tweets, comprising of less than a percent for each NGO. Conversely, AWF posted more negatively framed tweets than positive ones, which correlates with their topic choices listed above.

	Positive	Negative	Neutral (statement of fact)	Neutral (seeking engagement from followers)
Ewaso Lions	23.19%	0.41%	65.21%	11.19%
Lion Guardians	26.87%	0.75%	47.01%	25.37%
AWF	18.79%	21.87%	26.31%	33.03%
Total	21%	11%	44%	24%

**Figure 4:** *Tone of social media data set separated by NGO*

Whilst this data does not offer insight into the specific methods used to depict human-wildlife interactions in Kenya, the patterns discussed thus far provide some interesting indications warranting further exploration. Initial analysis implies that content in the Daily Nation is most likely to focus on interactions involving conflict with wildlife in which humans are the victims, or to draw attention to where rural communities are not adequately being supported by the

government and Kenya Wildlife Service (KWS). Conversely, content posted on the Twitter accounts sampled appear more likely to focus on the wildlife they protect, with comparatively few posts referencing conflict. When conflict was mentioned, it tended to focus on instances in which wildlife were framed as victims, such as the consumptive wildlife trade. AWF posted the most negative content out of the three accounts, and produced the least content that included reference to communities living alongside wildlife, whilst both Ewaso Lions and Lion Guardians placed far more emphasis on positively framed tweets about their success in training community wildlife guardians and other methods promoting coexistence.

To ascertain how exactly different groups affected by human-wildlife conflict are presented in the different media outlets surveyed, a representative sample of the data set was examined using CDA. As the initial content analysis indicated that humans and wildlife were treated differently depending on the outlet producing the content, I chose to focus the following CDA on the referential and predication strategies (Reisigl & Wodak, 2001) used to describe participants involved in human-wildlife interactions. By examining the depiction of human and wildlife behaviours as well as the proposed solutions to the conflicts being discussed, I both expose the value judgements of writers and how they reinforce or challenge discourses of conflict and coexistence when writing about human-wildlife interactions.

### **3.2 Devastating Invasions or Tolerable Inconveniences? Strategies used to depict wildlife living alongside rural communities**

As would be expected, references to wildlife were common across the four media outlets included in the data set, but the referential and predication strategies used to depict them varied significantly. One of the most common topics reported in the Daily Nation data set was instances of wildlife attacking humans, and when doing so there was a tendency amongst journalists to refer to the wildlife involved in a way that presented them as aggressive and antagonistic. In two articles about a growth in poaching published in 2019 ('Human-wildlife clash spurs poaching, illicit trade in game meat' by Diana Mutheu, Daily Nation 11/07/2019; Poverty, invasions by wild animals fuel poaching in Tsavo' by Lucy Mkanyika, Sunday Nation 21/07/2019), both writers opened with references to the "deaths, injuries [and] crop destruction" (Mkanyika, 2019) caused by wildlife that left Taita-Taveta villagers "angry" (ibid) and "poor"

(Mutheu, 2019).<sup>2</sup> It is interesting that both articles begin in this way given that the headlines appear to focus on a rise in poaching rather than the negative impact of living near wildlife. Whilst the headline may indicate the type of content considered most likely to attract readers, opening the articles in this way gives salience to the risks suffered by rural communities rather than the culling of wildlife, which guides the reader to view the poachers sympathetically. Rather than criminals, they are known first for the losses they have incurred, and therefore their actions are framed as an inevitable consequence of the poverty caused by “frequent invasions by wildlife” (Mkanyika, 2019) rather than ruthless greed and ambition.

This interpretation is further encouraged by using distinctly negative predication strategies used to refer to a particular pride of lions. Mutheu and Mkanyika refer to the lions as “marauding” and “roaming” respectively, with both premodifying adjectives implying that the pride’s behaviour was the cause of unpredictable and uncontrollable destruction. In addition to this, Mutheu’s categorisation of both the lions and other wildlife encroaching on farmland as “enemies to many locals” and Mkanyika’s negated definition of them as “not... a spectacle to behold... for residents” establish wildlife as adversarial to humans and the source of the antagonism in their interactions with people. This is further exacerbated through the aggressive and militaristic verbs used to describe their actions: they “destroy”, “invade” and “attack” the livestock that “falls prey” to them. Such references to wildlife encourage readers to view them as the source and cause of conflict, destroying everything in their path and leaving the communities they encounter in a desperate situation with no other way of supporting their families than crime.

Likewise, in the articles that reported situations in which wildlife had attacked humans, the incidents were framed in a way that exacerbated the violence of the attacks, portraying the problem animals involved as intentionally antagonistic and dangerous. When reporting a hyena attack in February 2019, Njuguna’s headline ‘Hyena mauls boy to death, injures father’ immediately presented the hyena as violent and vindictive. The use of the savage verb ‘mauls’ is particularly effective as it implies a vivid sense of the hyena’s barbarity, further emphasised by the fact that the hyena attacked a vulnerable and defenceless young ‘boy’. Njuguna adopted a similar strategy in December 2018 when reporting a death caused by an elephant attack. The

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<sup>2</sup> See Appendix 1.4 for a full list of articles analysed.

headline “Rogue elephant kills man in Laikipia” is constructed in a way that anthropomorphises the animal, as the premodifying adjective ‘rogue’ frames the elephant as deliberately rebellious, and the use of the active voice and present tense in the verb phrase ‘kills’ implies that the action was premeditated. The framing of wildlife in the articles analysed therefore suggests a journalistic tendency to frame humans and wildlife as adversaries, with the wildlife often portrayed as a deliberately violent and aggressive antagonist bent on causing harm to vulnerable communities.

Whilst referential and predication strategies used in the NGOs’ tweets analysed also sought to humanise the animals depicted in their communications, this was done for different reasons. In tweets posted on January 19<sup>th</sup> and February 22<sup>nd</sup> 2020, AWF referred to both lions and elephants as “neighbours” that can both be “bad” and “difficult” to live with.<sup>3</sup> The repeated use of the noun “neighbours” humanises the animals and aligns more with discourses of coexistence than those of conflict, as it suggests that both wildlife and humans are permanent residents of the area. Additionally, the adjectives “difficult” and “bad” are both commonly used to describe the behaviour of unpleasant human neighbours, which makes them seem more of a nuisance than a danger. The way that the elephants’ behaviour is depicted also appears to be intended to subliminally alter audience perception so that the damage they cause is seen as infrequent, as reinforced by the use of the verb phrase “*can be* bad neighbours,” which implies peaceful coexistence is just as likely. They are also later described using the adjective “hungry,” a predication attribute with far less aggressive and antagonistic connotations than any of those used by the Daily Nation and one that encourages the reader to view the elephants’ behaviour as inconvenient, but tolerable.

Whilst the tweet about lions is more explicit about the dangers of living alongside wildlife, acknowledging that they “prey on livestock,” the use of verbs again appears to minimise the consequential damage of these attacks. Though the destructive verb “decimate” is used to describe the impact on rural livelihoods and food security, its strength of meaning is limited when combined with the modal auxiliary verb “could,” as the perception of the scale of risk to rural communities is minimised, inferring an understanding that violent interactions are not inevitable. Additionally, the referential strategies used in the final sentence appear to further

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<sup>3</sup> See Appendix 4.1 for screen captures of all tweets analysed.

reduce the blame apportioned to lions, as they state that AWF assists local farmers with protecting their livestock from “predators”. This generalised noun choice suggests that lions are not the only wildlife guilty of preying on livestock, and by stating that such assistance reduces “the retaliatory killing of lions” the implication is that the perception of them as ruthless killers is the result of being blamed for loss of livestock caused by other predators.

Lion Guardians also frame human-wildlife conflict involving livestock loss in a way that intentionally minimises its antagonism by removing blame-laden statements and specific details of the conflict from their content. In a tweet posted on January 14<sup>th</sup> 2020, both the verbs and nouns used lack the specificity and value judgements present in the predication strategies used in the Daily Nation articles. Rather than depicting wildlife as ‘invading’ rural communities’ land, conflict is attributed to livestock getting “lost in the bush.” This verb phrase does not place blame explicitly on any party, as livestock are “lost” rather than escaping, and also implies that they are only killed when they stray out of community land, rather than being ambushed by predators. Interestingly, the tweet does not reference predation specifically, but implies it indirectly through the complex noun phrase “a chain of events that leaves livestock owners worse off, makes communities angry, and puts lions at risk.” The use of a triadic structure creates a sense of objectivity, as it lists the losses incurred by all interested parties, and frames all as victims. The lack of blame is further emphasised by rearticulating the conflict as “an unfortunate sequence of events.” Far from portraying the wildlife involved as deliberately antagonistic as was the case in the Daily Nation articles, the omission of any wider context and the use of the vague premodifying adjective “unfortunate” arguably oversimplifies, depoliticises and minimises the nature of the conflict, suggesting that whilst not preferable, the loss is circumstantial and one that should be tolerated.

Although no parties are blamed directly in this tweet, it is arguably the local communities mentioned that are subtly framed in a more negative manner than that of the wildlife depicted. Firstly, the fact that communities are described as “angry,” implies an emotive response to the “unfortunate” loss of their livestock and that they may feel inclined to seek vengeance as a result. Additionally, the inclusion of the hyperlinked video titled “The Importance of Good Herding” suggests that the resolution of this type of conflict is the responsibility of communities rather

than wildlife, with the premodifier “good” suggesting that it is poor herding that allows livestock to “get lost”.

Ewaso Lions seems to adopt a similar strategy when referencing conflict involving the wildlife they protect, as they provide little detail about its nature and severity. In a tweet posted on March 24<sup>th</sup>, 2019, there is only a brief mention of conflict in the syndetic list detailing the itinerary for that day: “Mama Simba school, team digging water holes in river, research strategy being revised, Rangers from Kalama taken on safari by our team and conflict attended to.” The lack of determiners, articles or modifiers make this reference particularly ambiguous, as it is not clear whether the conflict was widespread or an isolated incident, and there is no indication given as to the scale of the damage caused. The placement of this reference is also effective, as its positioning at the end of a long list implies that it was not a priority of the day, nor was it of particular importance. Any negativity connoted by the noun “conflict” is further mitigated through the use of the verb “attended,” as it suggests a definitive and successful resolution to whatever problem the conflict caused.

Whilst details of conflict are generally avoided, there were instances where more detailed information about wildlife encroaching into community land was provided. Though this appears to encourage the reader to view the content as a more objective depiction of wildlife, a closer inspection of the strategies used to do this reveals that the values and interests of the content creators are still present. In a tweet posted by Lion Guardians on June 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2018, an anecdote about five “lazy, roadblocking lions inconveniencing passers-by” is cited as an example of the increase of lion-human encounters caused by lions “burgeoning on community land.” As with the other tweets analysed, the language used here is interesting, as it is placed after the mentioning of “a rough few weeks of conflict”. No further details are provided regarding these “rough weeks,” so the inclusion of an instance that is devoid of violence encourages a less severe perception of the conflict mentioned previously. The use of the adjective “lazy” and verb “inconveniencing” is a far cry from the “marauding” pride depicted in the Daily Nation article and heavily imply that they pose no danger to residents. Additionally, the use of the noun “passers-by” to refer to people further distances audience perception from notions of violence and danger, as it implies that the lions and local community do not come into direct contact, creating an environment of peaceful coexistence rather than life-threatening conflict.

There are clear differences in the depiction of wildlife in the newspaper articles and tweets analysed, and although approaches vary between the three NGOs, all seem to employ referential and predication strategies that seek to ameliorate audience perceptions of damage caused by wildlife. Contrastingly, the Daily Nation regularly employed referential and predication strategies that sought to demonise wildlife and highlight the scale of the damage they caused, which suggests the continuing use of frames of conflict rather than coexistence.

### **3.3 In need of protection, education, or acknowledgement? Strategies used to depict communities living alongside wildlife**

As with the depiction of wildlife, there was also considerable variance in the strategies used to frame and portray rural communities affected by the presence of wildlife and the levels of visibility afforded to them. Within the Daily Nation data set, referential strategies used to depict victims of human-wildlife conflict often focused on emphasising the vulnerability of local communities. This was most prominent in articles reporting human deaths, such as Wanyoro's article about the death of a young girl in August 2018. In the headline, "10-year-old girl is killed by crocodile in Kiambere Dam," the girl's age is foregrounded, emphasising her youth and vulnerability. Elsewhere in the article she is referred to as "the Class Two Karura Primary School pupil," a noun phrase which again denotes her youth and vulnerability, encouraging the audience to view her as fragile and with sympathy.

Alongside the depiction of the girl killed, descriptions of her community's conditions of living reveal important value judgements about the wider issues seen to be the cause of the girl's death. The article states that the girl was killed because the residents of her village "do not have piped water [so they] have to fetch the precious commodity from the crocodile infested dams." The referential strategies used for water in this sentence significantly guide the reader's understanding of the incident. Firstly, stating that the residents "*do not have piped water*" implies the futility of the girl's death: if the government provided adequate access to water, she would not have encountered the crocodile. Likewise, the use of the premodifying adjective phrase "crocodile infested" not only makes the dam seem dangerous and wholly unsuitable for a child, but describing it as "infested" implies that the dam is overrun by unwanted pests and in need of KWS intervention. The implication of these referential strategies is therefore that the community needs adequate protection from wildlife, but that protection does not currently exist.



This interpretation is reinforced by the decision to refer to the KWS through a decidedly concise indirect quotation: “KWS officials said rescue operations could only be done during the day.”

The fact that this quotation is not attributed to an individual at the KWS and contains no condolences conveys a distinctly negative perception, as they are presented as an impersonal institution that does not care for Kenya’s people. The fact that no reasons are provided for the inability to conduct rescue operations at night further encourages the audience to condemn the KWS’ lack of action, as it implies that they felt they could not be held accountable for the girl’s death purely because the attack took place outside of their working hours.

There are other examples present in the Daily Nation sample that appear to link government and institutional inadequacy with community vulnerability. In both previously discussed articles about poaching, an interview with a Mwakitau farmer named Davis Mwachia is included to illustrate the ongoing issue of a lack of adequate compensation from the KWS after losing livestock to predators. Both writers frame Mr Mwachia’s situation sympathetically through a description of his “temporary fence built from thorny acacia trees, which have been tied together to secure the house, a small granary and a livestock shed” (Mutheu, 2019). The use of the premodifying adjective “temporary” and the verb phrase “tied together” highlight how ineffectively they are protecting his property from marauding wildlife, echoed by the fact that his pens have “remained empty” since his livestock was eaten by lions – a loss caused by the KWS “failing to contain wildlife in the park” (ibid).

Beginning with this specific and decidedly negative account of living in close proximity to wildlife serves to legitimate his assertion that it is this widespread poverty caused by failures of the KWS that have “driven many young men to poaching.” This is illustrated through the subsequent inclusion of an anonymised account of a poacher in which they state that they had no choice but to turn to “illegal hunting” using “snare, bows and arrows” to hunt “only small animals” so that they may “feed for their families” and “earn money for... school fees”. The language used by both writers here is significant, as they challenge the common framing of poachers as armed, large-scale, opportunistic hunters fuelling the illegal wildlife trade. The weapons listed, alongside the use of the determiner “only” to assert that they are not to blame for hunting larger endangered species seek to differentiate the hunters from the stereotypical perception of poaching, further emphasised by the refusal to use the provocative term and opting

for the noun phrase “illegal hunting” instead. Likewise, the included reference to families and school fees further humanise those being discussed, framing them as young men doing what is necessary to provide for their families when they have no other viable means of earning a living. Consequently, it would seem that within the articles analysed there is a concerted effort to encourage the government to provide more adequate support to rural communities. Clear focus on the plight of specific individuals through the inclusion of first-hand accounts and the utilisation of referential strategies that heighten their fragility and vulnerability facilitates the framing of crimes such as poaching as being done by those with no other choice, and highlights the dependence on governmental and institutional support that currently does not exist.

Whilst rural communities were present across the three twitter feeds analysed, there was significant variance regarding the salience afforded to them. AWF mentioned communities least often, and when they did, it was through indirect references that pointed to a collective rather than named individuals. More positively framed content involving communities focused on the work done by AWF to support them, such as a tweet posted on February 12<sup>th</sup>, 2020 stating that “AWF works with communities to help them construct bomas ... that protect livestock from predators” and another posted on April 29<sup>th</sup>, articulating AWF’s belief “in empowering communities to engage in sustainable natural resource management” through the creation of programs that “incentivize conservation”. Whilst this content focuses on providing financial benefits for those living near wildlife, it is the actions of AWF rather than the communities themselves that are given salience. The choice of preposition when stating that AWF “works with” communities implies a collaborative relationship of equals, but the fact that they “help” communities construct bomas suggests that they are incapable of doing so themselves. Likewise, as it is AWF “empowering” communities to “engage,” it is implied that without financial incentives and support from the NGO, community members would continue causing unsustainable damage to natural resources. This somewhat paternalistic framing of the NGO’s community support is further emphasised in a tweet posted on March 6<sup>th</sup> 2020, as the employment opportunities created by the NGO are framed as “helping [communities] to understand that #wildlife can truly improve their livelihoods.” The use of the verb “understand” is of particular importance in this instance, as its meaning is ambiguous. Whilst it may be intended to imply that the NGO is in a position to share strategies communities have not been exposed to before and build on current practice, the lack of reference to the existing expertise of

the communities involved encourages the audience to perceive a situation in which NGO assistance is needed to address a cognitive deficiency, rather than the lack of governmental and institutional support suggested by the Daily Nation. The decision to hashtag wildlife rather than communities is also interesting, as it suggests that it is the interests of wildlife that are prioritised rather than those of the community when providing this support.

When actions of rural communities are mentioned, it is often done in a disembodied way that removes them from the frame entirely. Numerous posts detailing the conservation status of endangered species cite the threats posed by “hunters” or “poachers” such as the tweet posted on March 5<sup>th</sup>, 2020: “Poachers kill up to 35,000 elephants every year”. The use of the statistic is intended to be shocking by stating the highest possible number of deaths recorded, further emphasised by the tweet’s brevity in which no further explanation is provided. This unexplained and all-encompassing use of the noun “poachers” is reminiscent of the colonial criminalisation of all indigenous hunting practices (Steinhart 2006), and whilst it is not explicit, the use of a historically racialised term in this way could be said to encourage followers to assume that the poaching referenced is caused by “Black Africans” rather than those involved in the international wildlife trade.

The notion that poaching can be attributed to rural communities is further emphasised through the negative presentation of traditional wildlife consumption. In a tweet posted on June 18<sup>th</sup>, 2020 about the hunting of kudu, it states that their horns “have long been prized in Africa for use as musical instruments, honey containers and symbolic, ritual objects.” The justification for hunting here is vastly different to that in the Daily Nation articles, as instead of referencing the need to support their families, community members engaged in hunting are presented as materialistic, seeking “prized” animal products for trivial use. Indeed, the ambiguous reference to “symbolic, ritual objects” is interesting, as it evokes the stereotypical image of a primitive and spiritual African more concerned with ritual consumption than conservation science.

Contrastingly, Ewaso Lions and Lion Guardians both created content that granted far more visibility to rural communities, an unsurprising trend given the fact that both NGOs employ Lion Guardians, Mama Simbas and Warriors from local communities to design and deliver their projects. Ewaso Lions regularly posted content about individual team members, such as a tweet posted on July 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2018 about a female employee named Munteli. Described as “a traditional

Samburu woman... driving around, saving lions,” the tweet focused on community perceptions of her rather than her specific role and duties. The tweet paid particular attention to the fact that “ladies from Wambu in Samburu,” telephoned Munteli to “confirm that she really existed” and that her “driving fame” had grown to “mythical levels”. The framing of this anecdote encourages a positive perception of the NGO and its employees by demonstrating the efficacy and inclusivity of their capacity building initiatives. It also creates the impression that collaboration with the community is fully realised in the work Ewaso Lions does, as the reference to multiple women telephoning Munteli implies that lines of communication between the NGO and local communities are open and frequently used. Additionally, the exclamation punctuating the statement that the women wanted to find out if Munteli “really existed!” and that they had talked about her skills until they had attained “mythical” levels portrays a level of excitement about the conservation work being done by Ewaso Lions and the suggestion that there are many other women who would wish to follow in her footsteps.

The NGO’s commitment to sustainable community involvement and autonomy is reinforced by frequent references to Jeneria, the Director of Community Conservation, who “conceived the Warrior Watch Programme in 2010 and has since been responsible for engaging dozens of Samburu warriors in lion conservation” (Ewaso Lions, 2020). A tweet posted on May 31<sup>st</sup>, 2020, including a link to a speech made by Jeneria at the Global Biodiversity Festival, explains how he is “transitioning from a warrior to an elder and mentoring a new generation of warriors in conservation.” The reference to Jeneria becoming an elder demonstrates both the longevity of the work done by Ewaso Lions and the mutual respect felt by both the NGO and local community members. Likewise, reference to the NGO’s investment in the community is made explicit through the verb choice “mentoring” as it implies a form of trainee-centred guidance and personal development. Likewise, the use of the noun “warriors” to reference the community members employed to monitor and protect lions denotes a strength, nobility and wisdom regarding their knowledge of conservation practices that is not present in tweets that reference communities being helped in a more general and nondescript way.

Lion Guardians employ similar strategies when creating content about local communities, often profiling individual Lion Guardians when they join the team, as was the case in a tweet posted on April 1<sup>st</sup>, 2019 about Lankoi. Described as “an age-set leader with lots of energy and a passion

for conservation,” the predication strategies used highlight the drive and motivation of community members, framing them as an essential asset to the NGO, rather than a group that need to be financially incentivised in order to protect wildlife. Of particular interest, however, were posts shared by Lion Guardians that explicitly referenced the value of Kenyan methods of conservation. A tweet shared on March 27<sup>th</sup>, 2019 highlighted the traditional “knowledge [and] expertise” of Maasai warriors as one of their “greatest assets.” The language used here not only recognises that ‘African’ methods of conservation both exist and predate contemporary initiatives driven by conservation NGOs, but that an inclusion of these methods makes current conservation practice more effective.

The desire to ensure that Maasai knowledge is adequately recognised and acknowledged is further emphasised in a tweet posted on October 16<sup>th</sup>, 2018. The post includes a retweet from another account that attributes the Lion Guardians’ conservation model to Dr Leela Hazzah alongside their correction: “Lion Guardians was co-founded by Dr Hazzah and Dr Dolreny based on an idea from the Maasai warriors themselves”. The fact that they stress that their approach is “based on” Maasai knowledge challenges the common depiction of local communities being reliant on support from NGOs and the assumption that they need to be taught how to mitigate conflict with wildlife. By choosing to instead promote an approach firmly rooted in traditional knowledge, culture and practice, the content shared encourages followers to value and promote the need for authentic collaboration in which community members are given the space and opportunity to articulate their needs rather than be taught how to live alongside wildlife.

As with the depiction of wildlife, the various referential and predication strategies used to depict rural communities living alongside wildlife indicate the existence of specific value judgements and intentions of those creating the content. The choice to portray people as either vulnerable, dependent or valued assets integral to the success of conservation significantly alters both the way that intended audiences perceive human-wildlife interactions in Kenya and the subsequent strategies that should be used to mitigate conflict and promote coexistence. It is important to note that thus far, the analysis of this small snapshot of the Kenyan media landscape reflects my own interpretations and understanding, and whilst the frames identified may not be surprising given the common purposes and discursive practices of these different media forms, it is vital to mitigate any elements of researcher bias in my analysis. To facilitate this, I conducted

interviews with relevant academics, journalists and NGO Communications Officers and used the content of these interviews to illuminate the discussion of the implications of my findings.<sup>4</sup>

### **3.4 Stakeholder Insights into the Discursive Practices Underpinning the Framing of Human-Wildlife Interactions**

Although focused on journalism, Richardson's assertion that the study of the social practices of news discourse assumes "a dialectical relationship between society and journalism... in which both affect each other" (2007:114) is one that is equally applicable to the production of social media content. This would therefore suggest that both the work of journalists and NGO Communications Officers is shaped by elements of society such as dominant ideologies, power structures, and "the values and preferences of the target audience" (ibid) whilst also having the capacity to either reinforce or challenge the opinions of those who read it (ibid:115).

Whilst Richardson's work focuses on British newspapers, all interview participants made at least passing reference to the impact of relevant contexts, pressures, and expectations of their assumed audience in the creation of both news and social media content. Most participants signalled the potentially transformative role of newspapers in Kenya as community watchdogs and agitators for change. A prominent Kenyan conservationist interviewed articulated a tendency for newspapers to often publish stories "designed to jolt governments into action" by exposing their weaknesses and "acting in advocacy to bring accountability." With regard to the Daily Nation specifically, a journalist and conservation academic attested the paper's relative but not unlimited freedom afforded by the owner's close links to the Kenyatta family, compared to tougher restrictions and interference felt in smaller media outlets. As such, they stated, the Daily Nation commonly reported on instances of serious damage caused by wildlife, and were free to do so, as long as specific individuals close to the family were not openly criticised. The apparent focus on more negative news items therefore seems fitting, as it would suggest that Daily Nation journalists actively seek to encourage their readers to both see the failings of governmental and institutional bodies (rather than named individuals) and to hold them to account when they do not meet the needs of communities.

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<sup>4</sup> A full list of interview participants and the dates conducted can be found in Appendix 5.1

Whilst there was consensus regarding the transformative potential and good intentions of newspaper content, the extent to which this is realised in Kenya was debated by a few interview participants. One interlocutor, a Kenyan journalist, stated the limitations posed by the need to write what sells, with little space granted to incidents either seen as commonplace or lacking the drama needed to be “newsworthy”. Another participant, a conservation NGO Communications Officer with prior experience as a journalist, expressed their frustration with the prevalence of “shallow” reporting caused by significant budget cuts. From experience, the participant felt that diminishing resources led to a rarity of investigative journalism, with writers having to rely on press releases as their main source of information. Likewise, with reduced staff and pressures to publish content daily, the participant felt that fact checking processes were insufficient, and lacking critical analysis.

These sentiments were echoed in an interview with another prominent conservationist in Kenya, who criticised Kenyan newspapers for mirroring the same “external Western” views of African conservation as the “BBC, Discovery Channel [or] National Geographic.” This may account for the apparent tendency of the articles analysed to refer to conventionally Western conservation conflict resolution strategies, even when they do not directly address the problems being explored. In the two poaching articles, for example, references were made both to the apparent need for local communities to “benefit [financially] from tourism for them to be involved in conservation” (Mutheu, 2019) and to initiatives that “work with locals... through awareness programmes to sensitise them on the importance of wildlife” to “empower them to stop the illegal trade” (ibid). Such initiatives do not address the reasons why those interviewed claimed that they turned to poaching and thus illustrate Peterson *et al*’s concerns that misunderstanding the roots of conflict prevents its successful solution and future prevention (2010).

The issues raised here are interesting, as they suggest that whilst the Daily Nation content clearly seeks to challenge institutional inefficiencies impacting the welfare of the people of Kenya, the conventional style and content of such reports currently falls short of their perceived potential to transform contemporary conservation. According to this view, therefore, whilst the Daily Nation demonstrably seeks to better the welfare of Kenyan people by holding the relevant regulatory bodies to account, its continued inclusion of conventional conservation methods and narratives of vulnerable communities that need the financial support from KWS compensation or NGO

incentives fails to promote a fully decentralised, African-led conservation model in which rural communities and traditional conservation methods are given effective acknowledgement, inclusion and autonomy.

Interestingly, similar views about the gap between the potential and actual capacity for transformative change prevailed in discussions about the use of Twitter in conservation NGOs' communications. Both interviews with NGO Communications Officers from larger, international conservation NGOs explained that the majority of content produced on their platforms were for marketing purposes, and were often designed in a way to encourage individual donors to support the work being done by the NGO in question. Most participants assumed that such content was designed for followers from western Europe and North America, which, they generally agreed, accounted for the tendency to produce wildlife-centred content.

The perceived tendency to create content aimed at followers in the Global North exposes what seems to be one of the main challenges facing the conservation sector. Most of those interviewed with experience in conservation NGOs explained the importance of the colonial legacy present in conservation, as it was (and continues to be) seen as a foreign enterprise for the benefit of tourists, and as such should be externally funded rather than be the focus of Kenyan philanthropy. The persistent need to appeal to the Global North for donations therefore forces NGOs to continue to use what one participant called a "problematic rhetoric" encouraging emotive and affective responses to wildlife whilst alienating and erasing the presence of rural communities. This was echoed in an interview with a conservation and journalism academic familiar with the work of the three NGOs surveyed, as they argued that the approach of larger NGOs such as AWF favoured simple messages that did not acknowledge local communities as effectively as smaller NGOs, as it was felt that this was more likely to keep both the interest and potential donations of their intended audience.

Whilst this certainly seemed to be the case with some of the content shared by AWF, numerous participants also acknowledged the ways in which NGOs are using social media more tactically to change conservation discourses so that they move away from the "foreign ideology of the Western conservation model" and towards one that is African led and based on the principles and ethos of indigenous conservation methods (interview with journalist). This participant also discussed how the paternalistic connotations of terms such as "community empowerment" and



initiatives designed to “teach” communities how to deal with conflict are being challenged in these online spaces. They argued that the use of language and content that promoted “knowledge sharing” encouraged a perception of the relationship between NGOs and local communities as mutually beneficial, rather than that of aid provider and beneficiary. This more inclusive approach was clearly present in some of the content analysed from both Ewaso Lions and Lion Guardians’ accounts, as content that included, acknowledged and celebrated community involvement in their projects’ inception, design and delivery was far more frequent than that of AWF.

Whilst such discursive practices were praised by interviewees as being clear evidence of attempts to change conservation discourses, and whilst social media was hailed as the best space in which to do this work, participants acknowledged that the way in which some content is framed still requires further attention, particularly with regard to the depiction of conflict. As mentioned in the prior analysis, when instances of human-wildlife conflict were discussed in the NGOs’ tweets, it was done so in a way that either minimised the severity of the conflict being discussed, or victimised the wildlife involved, often by removing rural communities from the frame entirely. In one interview with a participant with expertise in both journalism and NGO communications, they argued that the reason for this detached tone and ambiguous phrasing when reporting conflict is that NGOs cannot directly condemn specific parties. If they were to do so, they would either criticise the wildlife that they are intended to protect or imply that the welfare of communities living alongside wildlife does not matter. The brevity of tweets was also discussed by the conservation and journalism academic as a further challenge, as it is difficult to adequately inform and update followers on the daily goings on of the NGO whilst ensuring that the content shared remains positive enough to keep the interest and support of their followers. According to one of the conservationists interviewed, this pressure to meet the anticipated expectations from intended audiences forces content creators to focus on framing content about conflict in a way that focuses on instances of successful resolution, rather than “simply illustrat[ing] the problem as it occurs and as a reality [Kenyans] live with”. This is problematic as it perpetuates the wildlife-centred narrative of “African wildlife being in constant peril and the source of that danger being black people” (ibid).

The tension caused by growing efforts to decolonise the sector whilst remaining dependent on donors from the Global North was made explicit in interviews with a journalist and Communications Officer, both of whom drew attention to the fact that AWF has two representative Twitter accounts. Alongside the @AWF\_Official account analysed in this dissertation, there is also an account representing the NGO's CEO, Kadda Sebunya (@AWFCEO) from which thoughts on issues of leadership, economics and sustainable development within the conservation sector are shared alongside regular references to the NGO's plans to ensure that future conservation initiatives develop and promote capacity for African leadership and autonomy. Both argued that the CEO's account was deliberately designed with a Kenyan audience in mind and was geared to motivating and inspiring Kenyan-led conservation initiatives, with the Communications Officer citing the account's frequent use of inclusive pronouns as clear evidence of this, and the journalist describing the contrasting content of the two accounts as proof of the sector's need to "speak from both sides of the mouth".

Clearly, the assumed expectations of a text's intended audience are important in shaping its depiction of human-wildlife interactions. Whilst the Daily and Sunday Nation articles appear to act as community watchdogs by holding governmental and institutional bodies to account, they are constrained to producing content that sells, and as such may be prioritising the more dramatic and overly negative types of human-wildlife interactions experienced by communities. Likewise, the transformative capacity of AWF communications on Twitter appear to be stifled by its continued dependence on individual donors in the Global North, causing them to reproduce wildlife-centred narratives that limit the visibility and agency of communities living in close proximity to wildlife alongside their efforts to promote African leadership and autonomy in the conservation sector. Additionally, whilst Ewaso Lions and Lion Guardians appear to post far more content about the inclusion and incorporation of rural communities in their coexistence initiatives, their apparent need to protect the reputation and public perception of both wildlife and people seem to result in the omission of specific reference to conflict, rather than a clear and objective depiction of its root causes.

## **Conclusion**

In this small cross section of the Kenyan media landscape, there was significant diversity in the depiction of human-wildlife interactions that implies both a continued reliance on dominant Western conservation ideology and the influence of assumed audience expectations, values, and beliefs. Within the newspaper articles surveyed, use of conflict frames positioning humans and wildlife as irreconcilable adversaries was apparent, with frequent use of referential and predication strategies that depicted wildlife as antagonists and humans as the victims of conflict. Whilst interview participants acknowledged the assumed role of journalists as advocates holding governmental and institutional bodies to account with regards to protecting and compensating communities, frustration was expressed at the limitations caused by time pressures and the need to attract readers, which may account for the tendency to both focus on more negative news items and to uncritically refer to popular conflict-resolution strategies that may not address the political causes of conflict.

Within the Twitter data set, a clear difference was evident in the content produced by the American NGO AWF and the two smaller Kenyan NGOs Ewaso Lions and Lion Guardians. AWF's apparent dependence on their international followers appears to be the reason for content that reinforces the wildlife-centred values of Western conservation, reflected by generalising and abstract references to conflict caused by the international wildlife trade and sparse reference to the damage caused by problem animals. Content from both the Daily Nation and AWF were indiscriminate in their references to conflict and did not differentiate between human-wildlife impacts and human-human conflicts, as has been suggested in the literature (Young *et al*, 2010). As such, this appeared to impact both the understanding of conflicts reported and the efficacy of resolutions suggested, as was the case with the articles documenting an apparent rise in poaching in the Taita-Taveta area.

The content analysed from the Twitter feeds of Ewaso Lions and Lion Guardians was consistently more positively framed than that of the Daily Nation and AWF, with both providing increased visibility and acknowledgement of the skills of communities involved in conservation initiatives, and by aligning their content with discourses of coexistence rather than conflict. Whilst this may seem progressive, neither account included detailed references to conflicts, and as such risk replacing one selective frame of reference with another. Interview participants

discussed the impact of having to cater to the values of individual donors and to avoid the use of blame-laden statements in their communications that vilify either humans or wildlife. From the content analysed, it would seem that whilst this clearly seeks to address problematic discourses and the marginalisation of indigenous agency and expertise in the conservation sector, pressures to conform to audience expectations risk the portrayal of an imagined environment almost entirely devoid of conflict.

Clearly, the research presented highlights the importance of assumed audience expectations in the creation of content concerning human-wildlife interactions. Journalists must balance their role as watchdog with their need to sell papers daily. Likewise, conservation NGOs have to produce content that both reflects plans to decolonise the sector and promote the capacity of African leadership, whilst also attracting the attention, emotions and donations of donors, who are still predominantly garnered from the Global North.

Therefore, whilst the Kenyan media landscape is perceived as an agent for transformative social change, its reliance on and reproduction of Western conservation ideology hinders the full realisation of this potential. To affect real change within the sector, media outlets would need discursive freedom to depict human-wildlife interactions realistically and neutrally rather than reproducing dominant discourses and ideologies. This would mean journalists moving away from sensational depictions of villainous wildlife and dependent communities, whilst also broadening the scope of suggested resolutions. Likewise, NGO communications need to be free to both promote the agency, expertise and skills of indigenous communities and depict the realities of conflict and coexistence, rather than curating emotive content that encourages followers to donate.

The findings based here are deduced from remote analysis conducted on a small segment of Kenya's vast media landscape and thus cannot be considered definitive. Further research incorporating both a broader selection of Kenya's media outlets, including those not produced in English, and an examination of actual audience engagement with this type of content is needed. This would further expose how discursive practice shapes content creation whilst also continuing the important dialogue about how to decolonise the conservation sector so that it no longer looks to Western practice, donors and ideologies, but instead fosters African values, beliefs and leadership.

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## **Appendices**

### **1.1: Newspaper Coding Manual**

#### **Content:**

Wildlife attacks: Articles that focus on wildlife attacking communities. Content that discusses human fatalities as a result of wildlife attacks should be included in this category.

Wildlife killed: Articles that reference to wildlife being killed as a result of HWC. Wildlife that has been killed either by local communities in retaliation or by the KWS should be included in this category.

Animals encroaching: Articles that reference the presence of wildlife in residential areas but that does not reference actual attacks should be included in this category.

Government weaknesses: Articles that focus on severity of HWC as a result of government inefficiencies. These include neglect of local communities, reference to changes in law and policy and failure to act.

KWS weaknesses: Articles that focus on severity of HWC as a result of KWS inefficiencies. These include failure to compensate, slow response to wildlife attacks and other problems arising as a result of a lack of funding.

Bushmeat law change: Articles that focus on the proposal to change the laws in regard to the consumption of bushmeat.

Poaching inevitable: Articles that include references to poaching but framed in a way that makes poaching seem an inevitable response to unmanaged and unmitigated HWC.

Poaching negative: Articles that include references to poaching but do so in a way that clearly demonises and criminalises the act.

Climate change: Articles that comment on the impact of climate change in reference to HWC.

Innovation/education: Articles that focus on the efforts to prevent conflict and promote coexistence. These include education initiatives, methods of mitigating conflict and other tactics used in conflict-prone areas.

Conservancy success: Articles that explore the positive impact of community conservancies. References may focus on financial or conservation benefits.

Land dispute/other: Articles that focus on the reference to land disputes. This may include status of protected areas, usage of land or displacement of communities.

#### **Tone**

Positive: Articles that focus on successes and solutions to problems posed. This includes items about successful examples of coexistence, innovative interventions mitigating conflict and conservation success stories.

Negative: Articles that highlight or emphasise the severity of conflict, inefficiencies or failures of conflict mitigation and references to failed conservation attempts.

## **1.2: Social media Coding Manual**

### **Content:**

Facts: Animal facts, sightings, views, narratives and anecdotes. Will not necessarily be about HWC but may be describing accompanying picture of animal/landscape.

Pledge: Any reference to sign a petition to pledge support, show you care, retweet to raise awareness.

Caption this photo: Image with no informative content and whose sole purpose is to get them to engage with content.

Question: Any open question or poll.

Buy: Posts including links to merchandise or any affiliated partners selling products

Donate: Posts seeking followers to donate money to specific causes

Event: Posts in reference to specific events, such as award ceremonies, as well as recognised days (Earth Day, Lion Day etc).

Vision: Posts in reference to annual reports, mission statements, visions for the NGO and future plans.

Work done: References to the work the NGO does/team members involved/ day to day activities. This may specifically reference work in relation to HWC, or work done in general.

Land: Posts that refer to land rights, habitat loss, land degradation and the need to protect land/protected areas.

Tourism: Posts that refer to safari or tourist opportunities, either with the NGO or affiliated partners.

Covid-19: Posts that refer to how the NGO is impacted by Covid and how the NGO responds – this can include community outreach work (production of masks, for example).

Poaching: Posts that refer to the threat of poaching – this may be explicit references to instances of poaching, or more vague references to the ongoing threat.

Crops/Livestock: Posts that refer to crop damage and livestock losses.

Wildlife Trade: Posts that refer to wildlife trade. This includes selling of animal products, sale of exotic pets and cub petting.

Coexistence: Posts with explicit reference to human-wildlife coexistence. This includes inclusion of the word, and anecdotes depicting coexistence successes and efforts.

Retaliatory killing: Posts that refer to community retaliation as a result of unmanaged HWC.

Work with community: Posts that reference the work NGOs do with the community explicitly. This includes education, healthcare and mitigation of conflict.

### **Use of Image**

Animal: Images depicting single animals or herds.

Land: Images depicting landscapes without animals or people.

People: Images depicting people. These can be team members or members of the local community.

Other: Images that do not include the above categories. This includes screenshots, banners for event days, illustrations etc.

None: Posts with no images whatsoever.

### **Tone**

Positive: Posts that focus on successes and solutions to problems posed. This includes items about successful examples of coexistence, innovative interventions mitigating conflict and conservation success stories. Positive profiles of team members should also be included in this category.

Negative: Posts that highlight or emphasise the severity of conflict, inefficiencies or failures of conflict mitigation and references to failed conservation attempts. References to negative conservation statuses of specific species and habitats should also be included in this category.

Declarative: Posts that appear to be neutral in tone as their content focuses on statements without opinion. Animal facts that do not focus on conservation status or vulnerability should be included in this category.

Participatory: Posts that are not clearly positive or negative in tone but instead call for follower participation. This includes requests to sign petitions, donate, spend or answer questions/polls.

**1.3 Critical Discourse Analysis Analytical Framework – (adapted from <http://www.politicseastasia.com/studying/how-to-do-a-discourse-analysis/> and Fairclough, 2003)**

1. **Context:** how does the text fit into the bigger picture? Consider purpose, audience, register, form and tone. Think about when and where text was produced.

2. **Production process:** consider political slant/target audience/online context as well as genre.

3. **Code material** – evolutionary/ethnographic coding (Mayring, Altheide). What themes/topics come up? Categorise them.

4. **Structure:** Are there sections that deal predominantly with one discourse?

Do discourse strands overlap?

How are issues discussed? One by one? Equal allocation?

What comes first? Counter-factual case, refuted, then the main argument?

Significant headers/layout features?

What role does intro/conclusion play? First and last words?

If structure is not chronological, why is this?

**Generic news structure:** Headline + Lead paragraph = summary

Satellite paragraphs

Wrap up – outcome/resolution. Rectification of normality?

5. **Discursive statements:** what ‘truths’ are established on each major code/topic? How does this reflect power dynamics?

Consider legitimation – authorization/rationalization/moral evaluation/mythopoeisis

6. **Cultural references:** How does context inform the argument (especially intended audience?)

Does material contain references to other sources?

Is there an implied knowledge of another subject matter?

What meaning is attributed to other sources?

What function does intertextuality serve in an overall argument?

**7. Identify linguistic and rhetorical mechanisms**

Word groups – lexical sets, semantic fields – look for common features and imagery created.

Adjectives and adverbs – useful for identifying judgements

Use of modal verbs – can be used to open notions of dialogicality as acknowledges that there may be other options

Evidentialities – adverbs etc used to suggest factuality or certainty. Are certain ideas naturalised as common sense?

Nominalisation – can be used for generalising and abstracting from particular events

Hyponyms/synonyms/antonyms

Collocation

Grammatical structures -	subject and object positioning in sentences
	Pronoun use
	Tenses
	Active and passive voice – obscures relationships behind text and can be used to shirk responsibility. Look also for instances of metonymy etc
	Deixis
	Sentence structures and grammatical moods
	Allegories
	Metaphors/similes
	Idioms/proverbs
	Parallelisms
Rhetoric/literary devices	Hyperbole
	Triadic structures
	Synecdoche
	Rhetorical Questions
	Ana/cataphora
	Creation of antagonists and protagonists?
	Conjunctions – used to order/categorise voices?

Speech: direct or indirect? Who is quoted directly and who is paraphrased? Who speaks and who is silenced?

Assumptions or intertextual references? Does this open or close dialogicality?

Free indirect reporting – reporting speech act without reporting content

**8. Inclusion/exclusion:** how are social events represented and recontextualised?

Consider inclusion/exclusion – are details/actors suppressed or in the text at all? Are they backgrounded – mentioned somewhere but inferred in other places?

Who/what is given prominence?

Abstract/concrete representation – pronoun usage – is it possessive? Who is activated and who is passivated? Who makes things happen? Are bodies mentioned specifically, or impersonalising language used instead? How are actors named/classified?

**9. Interpret the data**

What is the discourse about and how does it work?

Who created the material?

What is their position?

How do their arguments draw from and in turn contribute to commonly accepted knowledge of topic at the time and place the argument was made?

Who might benefit from the discourse the sources construct?

**10. Present findings** – consider their relevance – what is interesting/significant in relation to research questions? Add evidence as needed and add annotations to appendix.

## **1.4 Daily Nation Bibliography**

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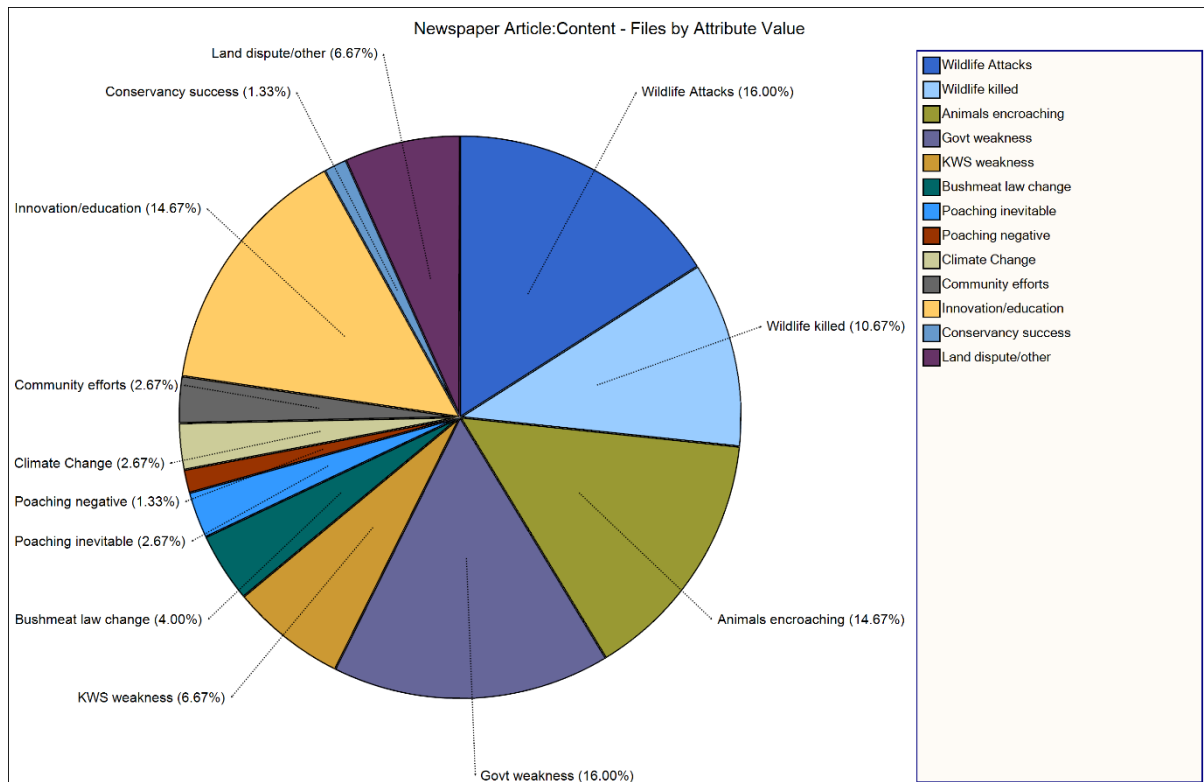


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22. Wild animals kill teacher in Kibwezi, LILLIAN MUTAVI, Daily Nation (Kenya), (June 26, 2019 Wednesday)
23. GUYO: SGR project brings to question our wildlife conservation ethos, KALTUM GUYO, Daily Nation (Kenya), (June 24, 2019 Monday)
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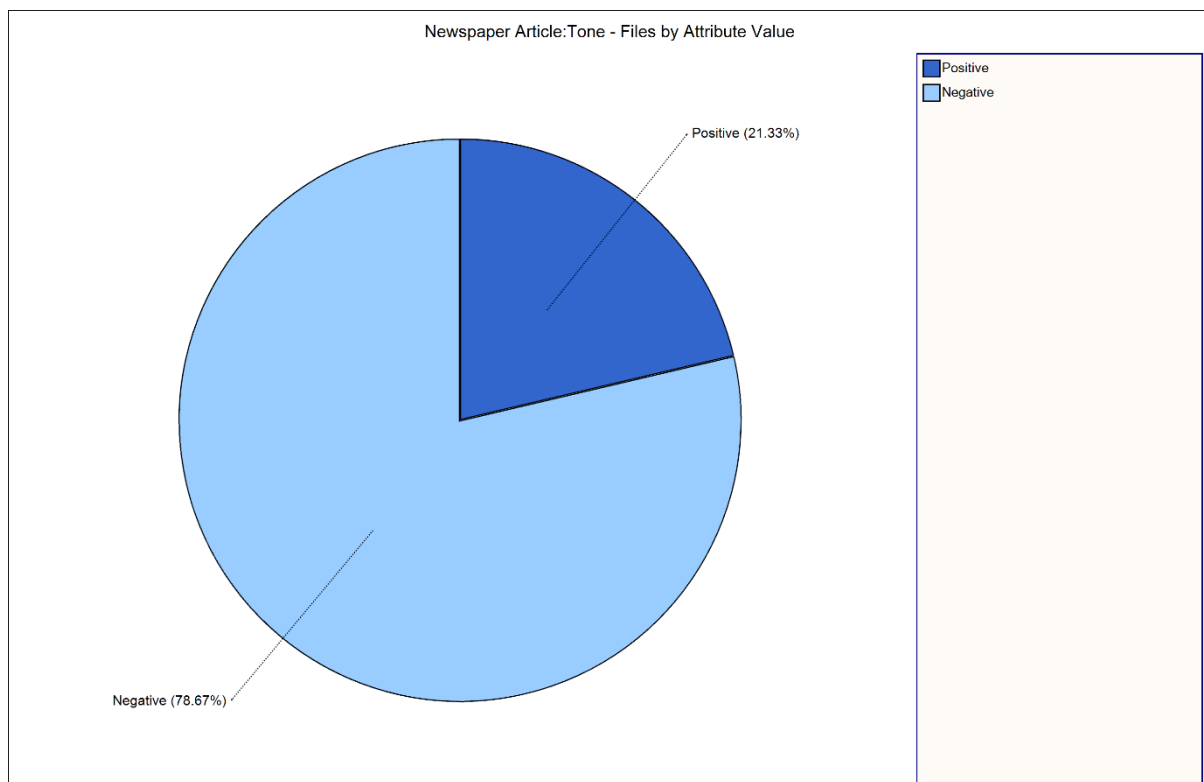
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51. OBETTO: Let's teach environmentalism in lower classes to build skills bank, NIMROD OBETTO, Sunday Nation (Kenya) (September 16, 2018)
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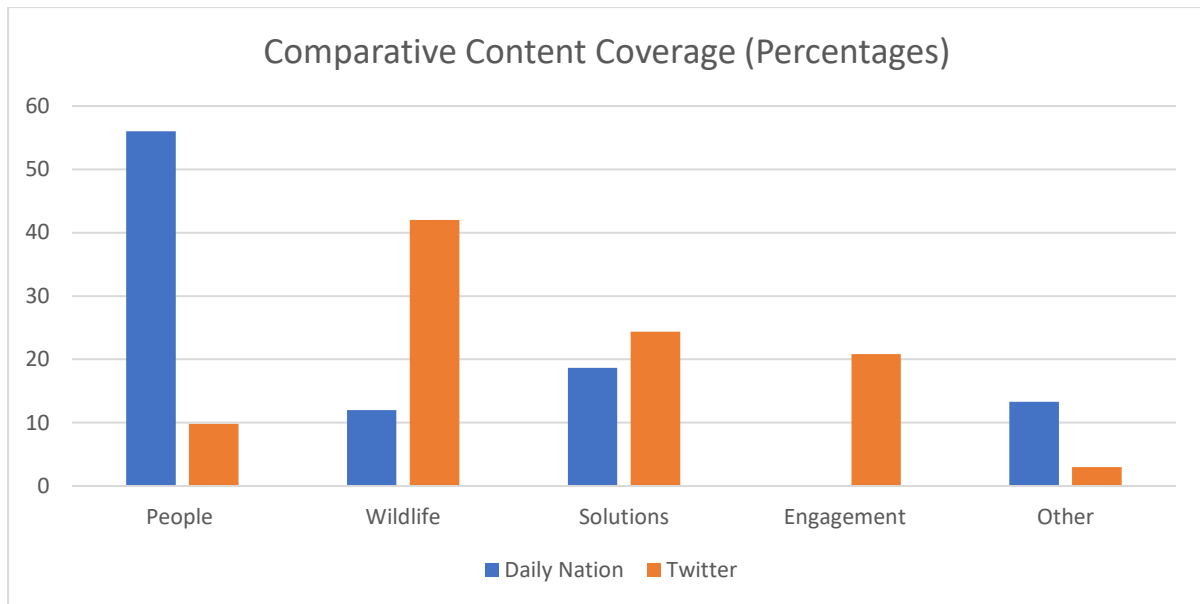
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61. Senators rally against Balala over rhino deaths, IBRAHIM ORUKO, Daily Nation (Kenya), (August 1, 2018 Wednesday)
62. Lake Olbolosatt to be gazetted to end human-wildlife conflict, WAIKWA MAINA, Daily Nation (Kenya), (July 31, 2018 Tuesday)
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## 2.1 Daily Nation content coverage



## 2.2 Daily Nation – Overview of tone





#### ***2.4 Breakdown of condensed categories used in 2.3***

The use of Ethnographic Content Analysis (Altheide, 1996) provided different coding manuals for my two data sets, so condensing the coding categories used was needed to gain a meaningful insight into my findings. As such, the categories were condensed using the categories below.

**People:** Daily Nation: Wildlife attacks, animal encroachment, poaching inevitable, KWS Weakness and Government Weakness.

Twitter: Work with Community, Crop Raiding

**Wildlife:** Daily Nation: Wildlife killed, Negative Poaching

Twitter: Animal facts/anecdotes, Land, Poaching, Wildlife Trade, Retaliatory Killing

**Solutions:** Daily Nation: Innovation/education, Community efforts, Conservancy successes

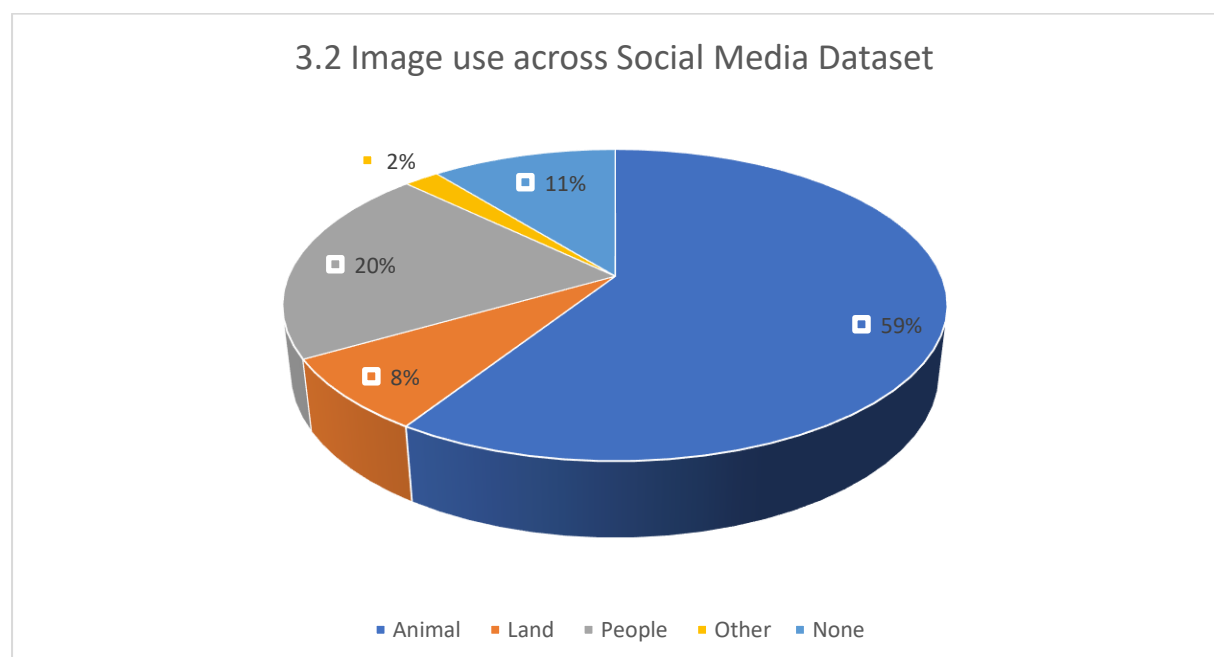
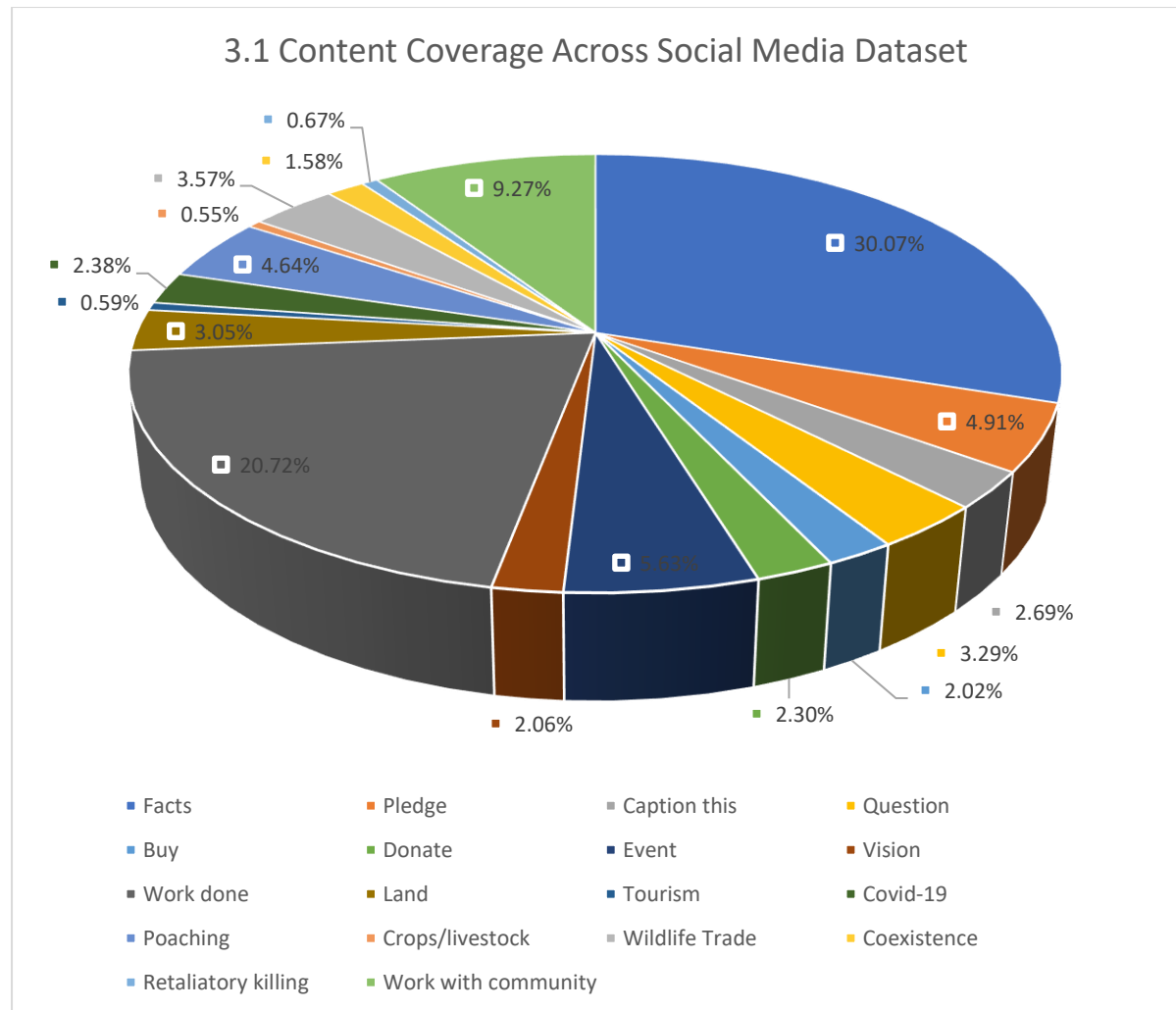
Twitter: Vision, Work done, Coexistence

**Engagement:** Daily Nation: N/A

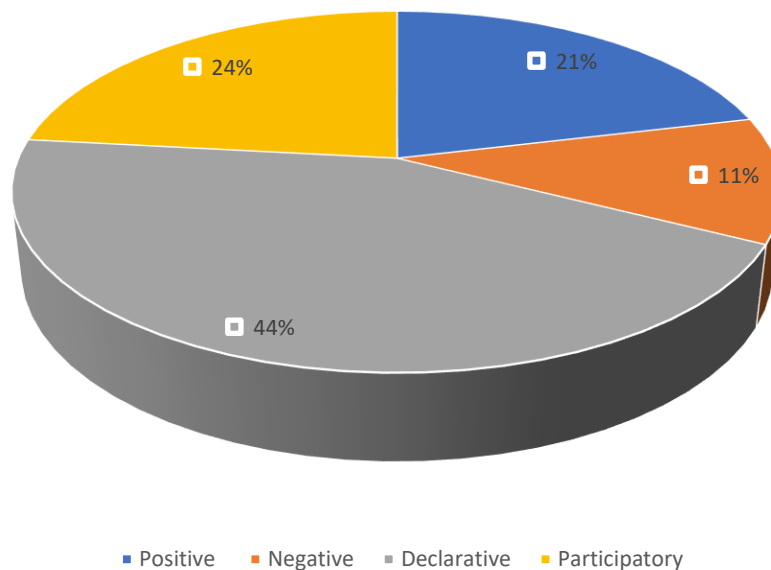
Twitter: Pledge, Caption this, Question, Buy, Donate, Event

**Other:** Daily Nation: Land dispute, Bushmeat Law Change, Climate Change

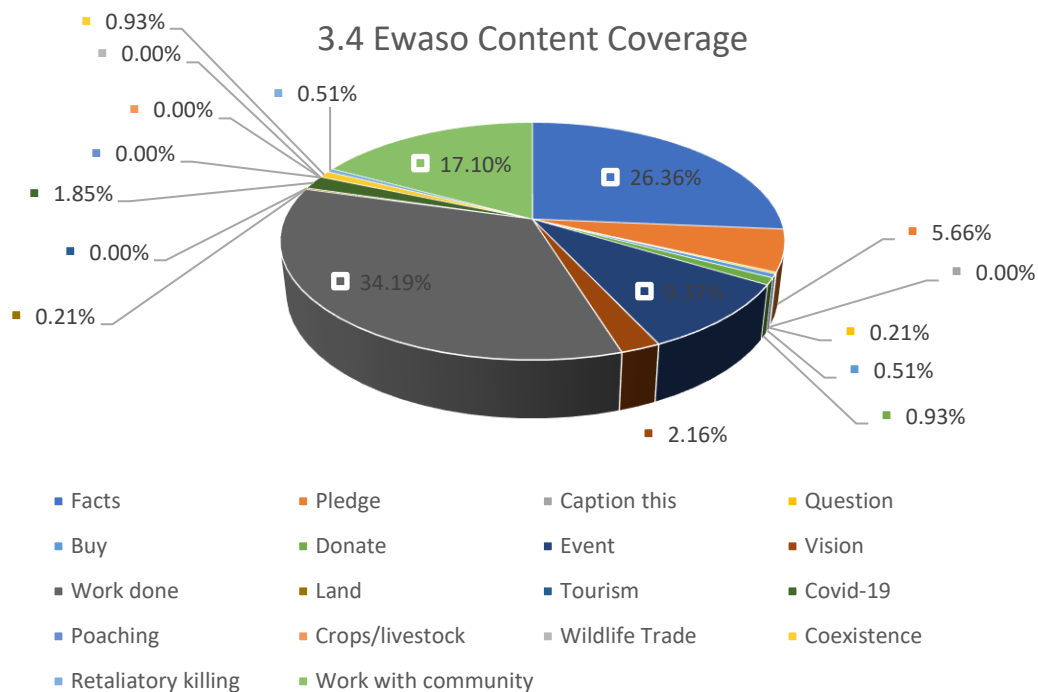
Twitter: Tourism, Covid-19



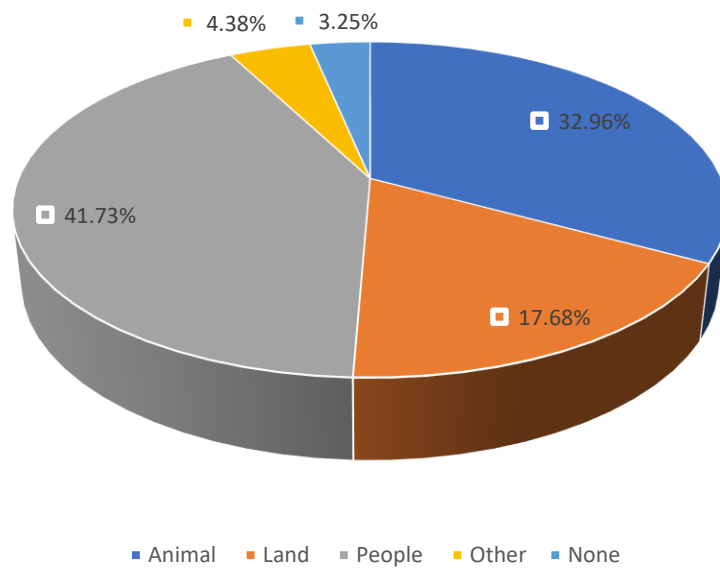
### 3.3 Overall Tone across Social Media Dataset



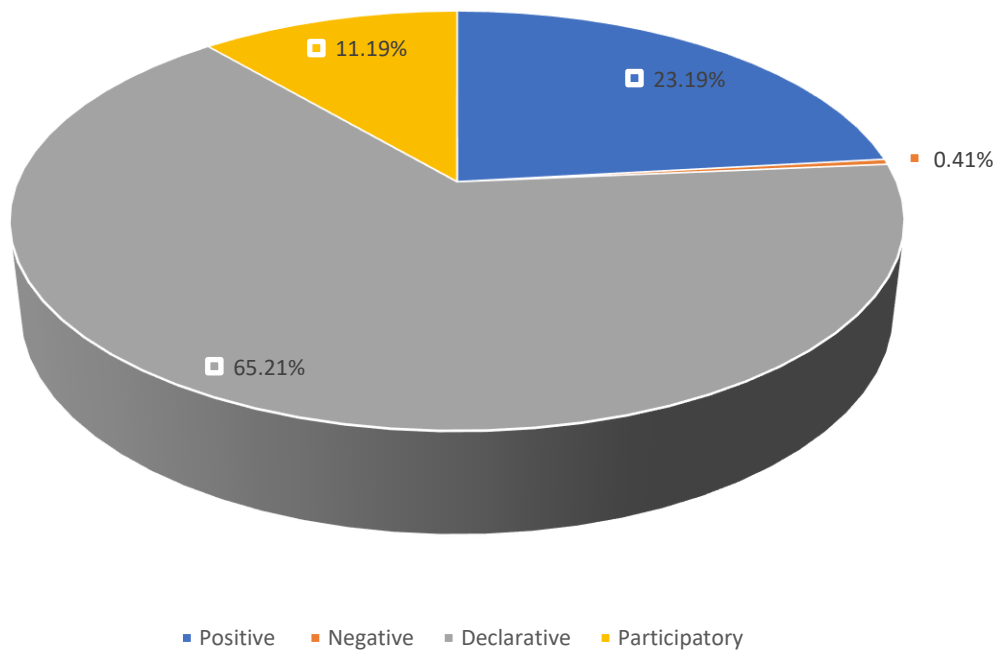
### 3.4 Ewaso Content Coverage



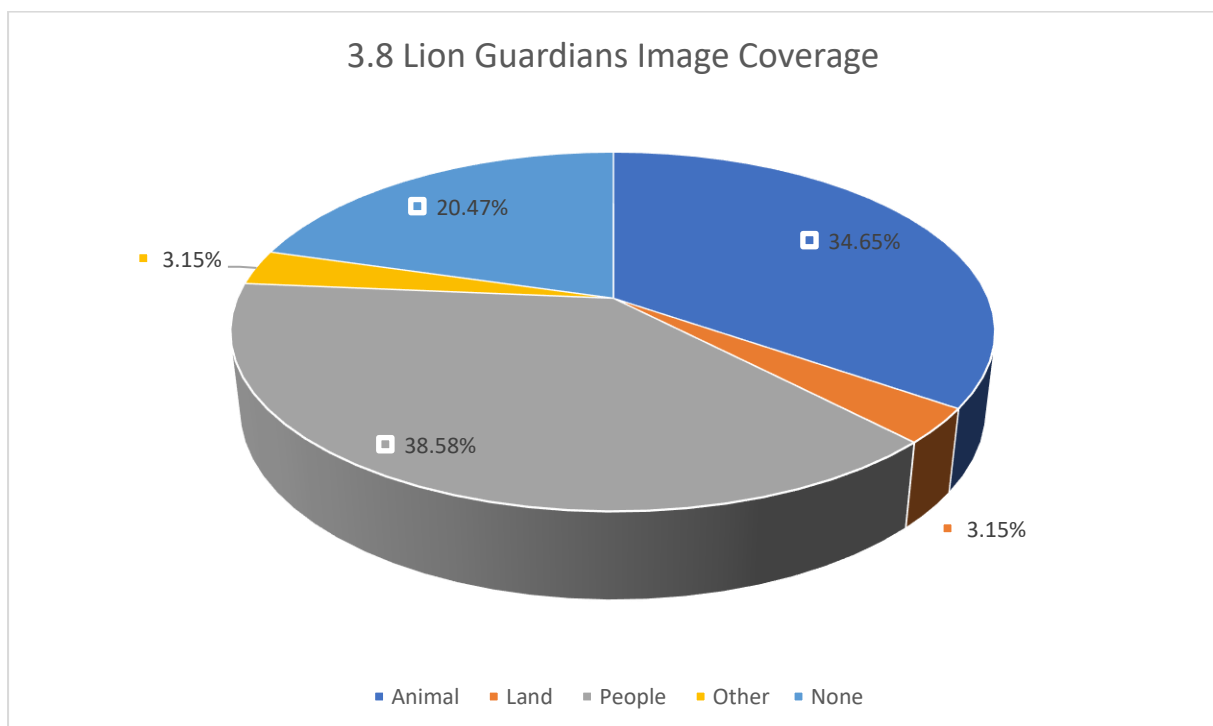
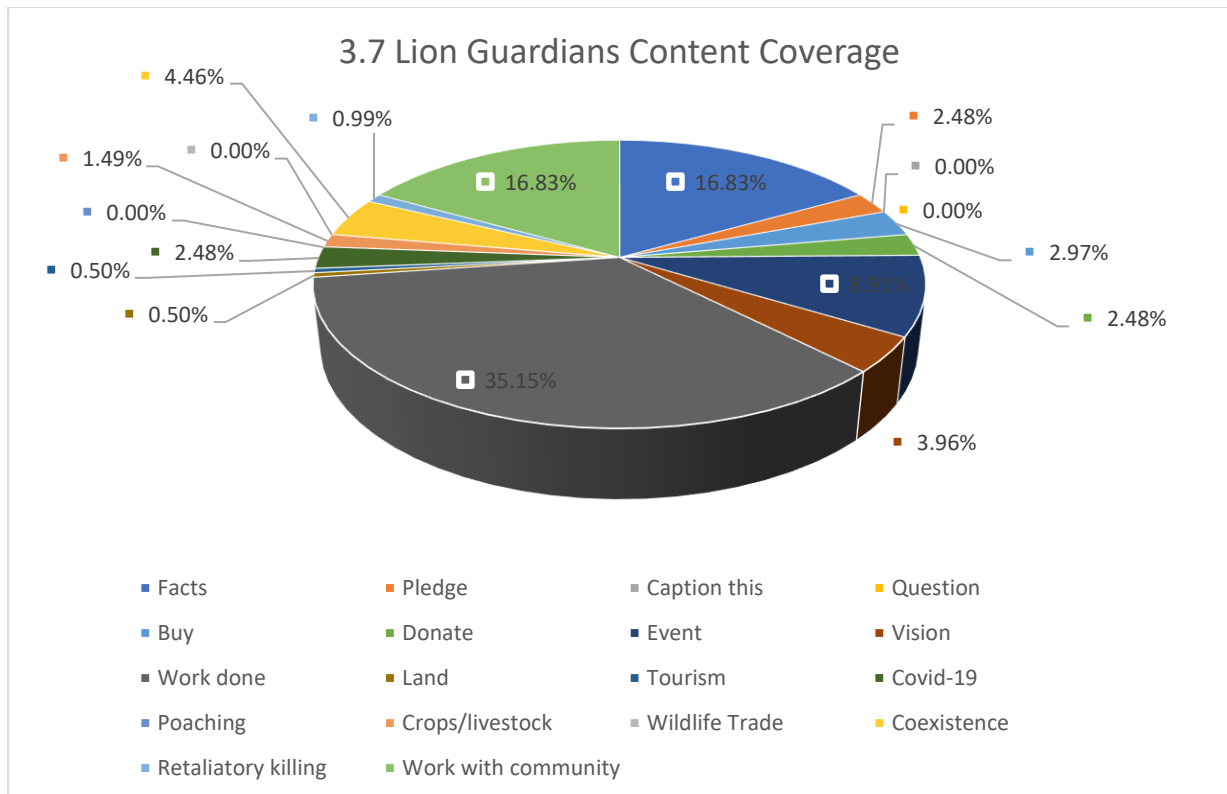
3.5 Ewaso Image Coverage



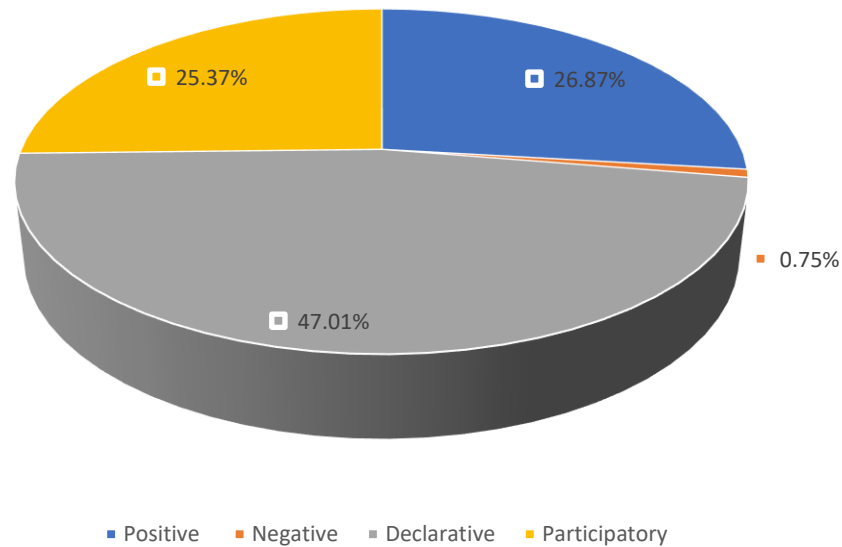
3.6 Ewaso Tone Coverage



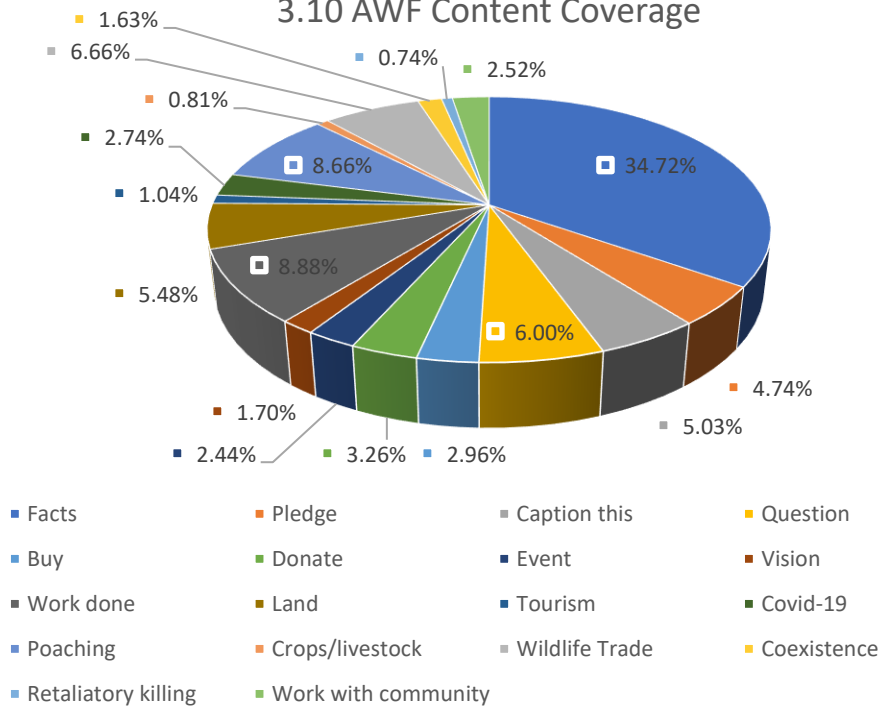




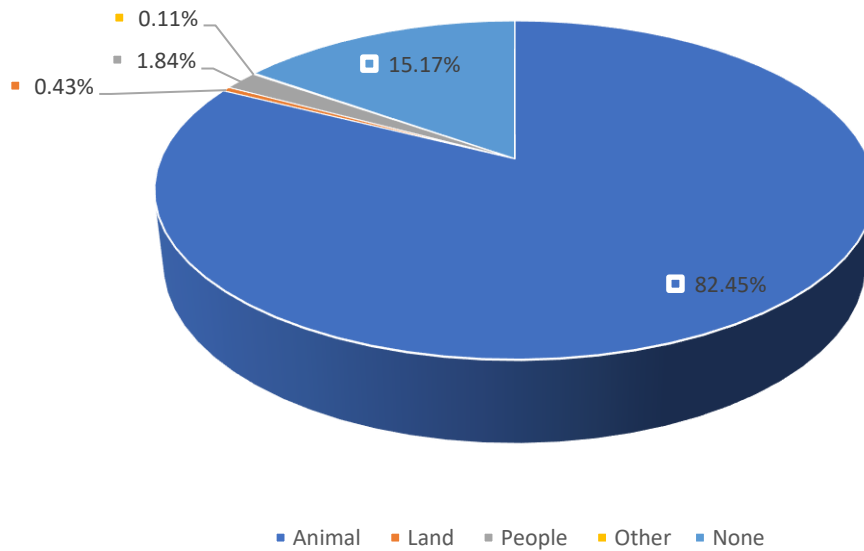
### 3.9 Lion Guardians Tone Coverage



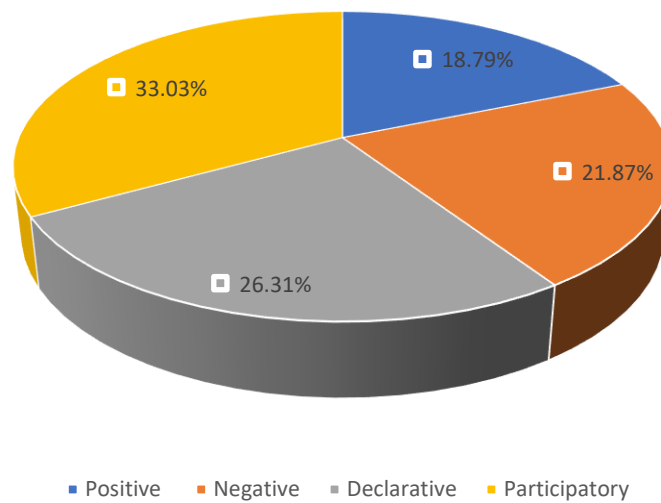
### 3.10 AWF Content Coverage



3.11 AWF Image Coverage



3.12 AWF Tone Coverage



#### 4.1 Tweets included in CDA: AWF









#### 4.2: Tweets included in CDA: Ewaso Lions



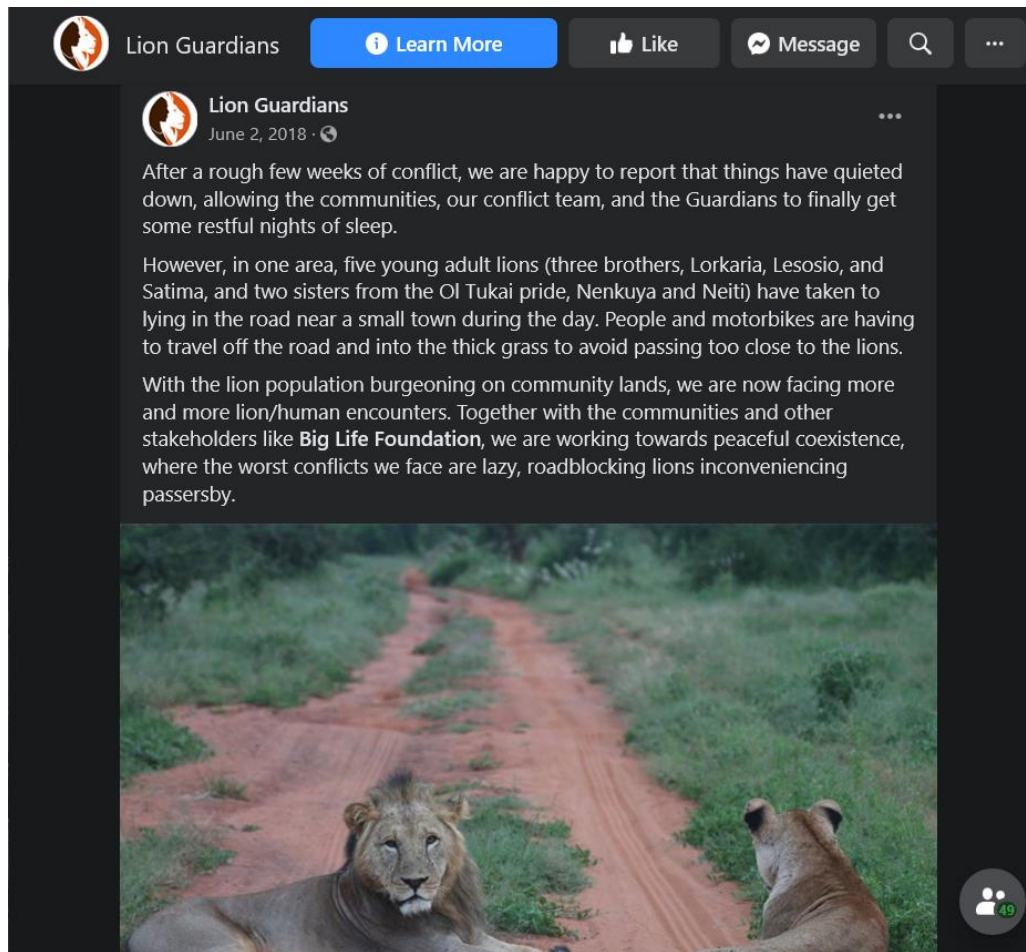




#### 4.3: Tweets included in CDA: Lion Guardians







(Note: the final tweet above is a hyperlink to a Facebook post, hence the length of text included).

### **5.1 List of Interview Participants**

Interview with journalism and conservation academic – 05/06/2020

Interview with NGO Communications Officer with a background in journalism – 14/06/2020

Interview with a prominent Kenyan conservationist – 14/06/2020

Interview with NGO Communications Officer – 15/06/2020

Interview with prominent Kenyan conservationist – 01/07/2020

Interview with Kenyan journalist with a background in conservation – 02/07/2020