

# Pastoralist Civil Societies

Cooperative empowerment across boundaries in  
borderlands of Kenya, Uganda and Ethiopia

Study of civil society in Eastern African border regions

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### List of Acronyms

ABI	Arnold-Bergstraesser-Institut for Social-Cultural Research
AGEH	Arbeitsgemeinschaft für Entwicklungshilfe (Germany)
CBO	Community based organization
CGQ	Catalogue of Guiding Questions
CIDP	County Integrated Development Plan
CS	Civil Society
CUEA	Catholic University of Eastern Africa
DRYREQCOI	Drylands Research & Qualification Consortium Initiative
EPRDF	Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GIZ	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH
GoE	Government of Ethiopia
GoK	Government of Kenya
GoU	Government of Uganda
GoSS	Government of South Sudan
GTP-I	First Growth & Transformation Plan
ICRC	International Committee of the Red Cross
IRID	Institute for Regional Integration and Development
KDF	Karamoja Development Forum
KDP	Kakuma Pastoral Development Project
KSDP	Kuraz Sugar Development Project
LC	Local Council
MADEFO	Matheniko Development Forum
LOF	Lands of the Future Research Network
MCA	Member of County Assembly
MCSP	Missionary Community of Saint Paul the Apostle
MP	Member of Parliament
NGO	Non-governmental organization
NRM	National Resistance Movement
OPM	Office of the Prime Minister
OTuRN	Omo-Turkana Research Network
RBSG	Robert Bosch Stiftung GmbH (Germany)
SNNPR	Southern Nations Nationalities and People's Regional State
SORC	South Omo Research Centre
SPDM	Southern Ethiopia People's Democratic Movement
TBI	Turkana Basin Institute
ToR	Terms of Reference
TUC	Turkana University College (Lodwar, Kenya)
TUPADO	Turkana Pastoralist Development Organization
TPLF	Tigrayan People's Liberation Front
UPDF	Ugandan People's Defense Forces
VSF	Vétérinaires Sans Frontières (Veterinaries Without Borders)

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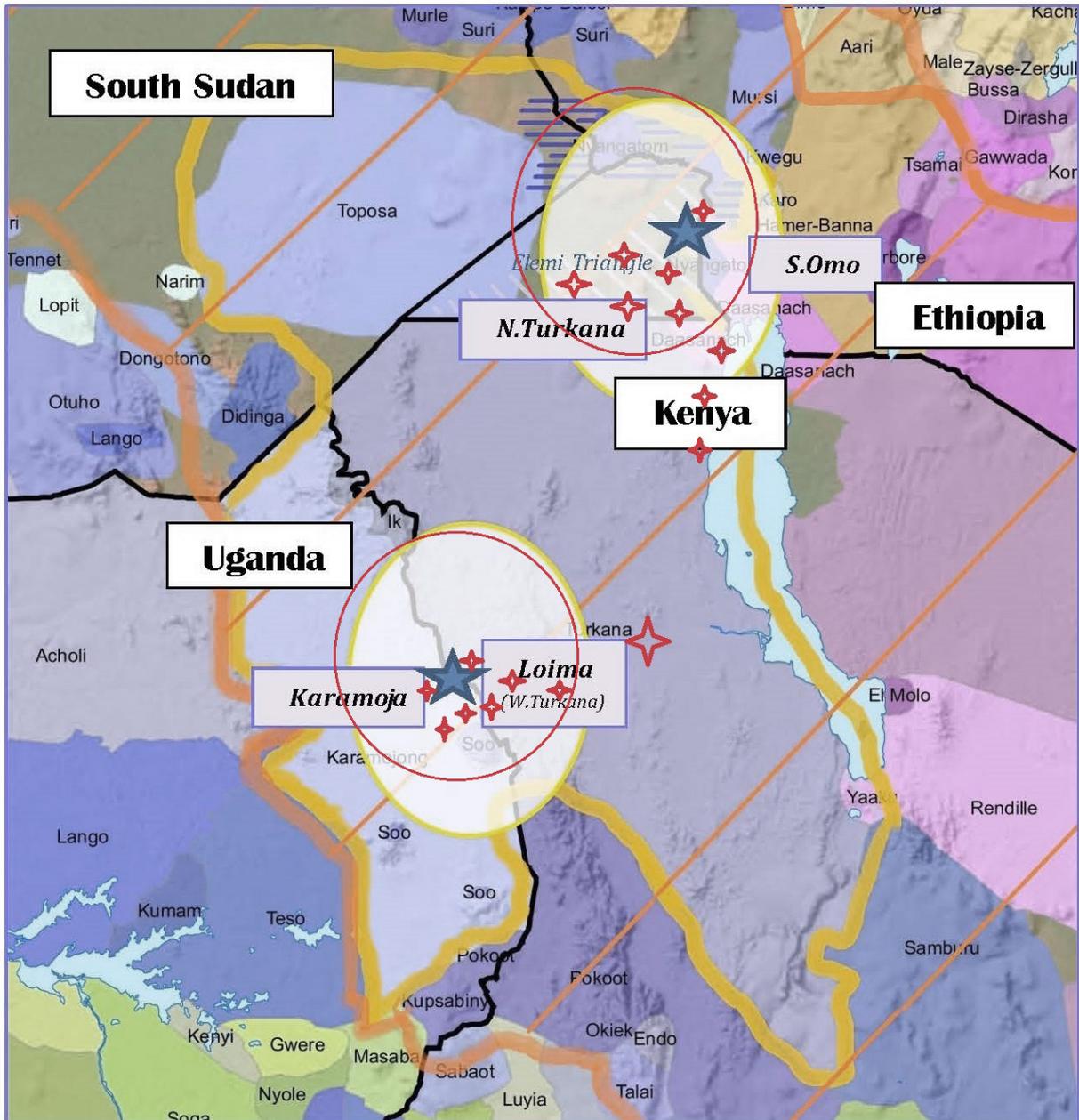
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# 1 Scope, Objectives & Background to the Study

## 1.1 Map of the study region & research locations



**Map above:** The study area (based on Languages GHA). The thick yellow line approximates the area with Ate-ker-speaking (majority) population, the thick orange line and orange hatching the area inhabited by pastoralist communities, the yellow ovals with blue stars the 2 study regions with the research locations as red stars. The locations indicated by the red stars are for (1) Ethiopia-Kenya frontier, from north to south: *Kibish*, *Koyàsa*, *Lokamarinyàng*, *Napàk*, *Kàikor*, *Kòkuro*, *Tòdonyang*, *Lóarengak*, *Nariokòtome*, *Lòdwar*; and (2) Lòima-Karamója frontier, from east to west: *Lòdwar*, *Lorugùm*, *Lokwatúbwa-Kachakachòm*, *Lokiriáma*, *Urùm*, *Rúpa*, *Moróto*, *Loregàit – Kobébe*.

**Note:** Here and elsewhere in the text, **accents** with the upper end towards the left indicate a short vowel (as in Lòndon), with the upper end to the right a long vowel (as in Chicágo). Accents are used for names and terms unfamiliar to average readers but partly dropped after initial introduction.

## 1.2 Why here?

When Eastern Africa appears in the media, and thus in the conscience of the global public, it is most frequently in the context of some form of crisis, misery or failure. The same is true for certain regions *within* East African nations. These are commonly ecologically disadvantaged, politically marginal and economically challenging parts of a country. In both cases, the perceptions of the majority or mainstream audiences are strongly shaped by clichés and a very slim and reductionist base of information. They miss the remarkable achievements and capacities of the inhabitants of these areas and the most important potentials and treasures they hold. Focussing on two notorious East African border regions, this study intends to contribute to a re-balancing of the picture and to increasing the chances for tapping some of these potentials in a circumspect, equitable and sustainable manner.

Based on our experience, it makes sense to look to local civil societies when we ask how the conditions of people in challenging circumstances can be stabilised or even improved sustainably. If civil society is a way in which a local population organises itself efficiently to further the legitimate interests of its members, ensure inclusivity in decision-making, and maintain a balance between freedom and control that satisfies its members, it is indeed worth supporting. But where and when does it really do so?

And what is *civil society* exactly?

One of the most topical and intriguing questions is how “civil society” should be conceptualised to make sense in local contexts where, for example, only a tiny fraction of the population is organised in forms we normally associate with the term, i.e. NGOs, CBOs and the like. As it happens, our study region, the borderlands of Kenya’s Turkana county with Uganda and Ethiopia, is such a place. Although formal organisation is minimal among its inhabitants and very few people are literate, it provides rich material on highly efficient and self-reliant forms of civil organisation promoting social cohesion and sustainable resource use. They rely on relations and structures that are usually referred to as ‘informal’ because they are rarely registered by any government institution. Yet the cooperative practices that comprise them continue to prove highly empowering.

While the sense of citizenship of most ‘civilians’ here is different from urban or elite understandings, they have in their own way become conscious of their civil status. Yet, more than looking to legally enshrined rights, they regulate conflicts and work towards prosperity through systems of personal relations based on norms of mutual support, fairness and proportionality. They form civil societies of proximity in which cooperation is at the same time flexible and general.

But there is little awareness of the remarkable social and economic capacities of these societies in the wider public. Even development actors working in the region have often a very limited understanding of what these informal civil societies do, how they work, and how much they achieve every day. Consequently, it becomes difficult for them to design strategies that harness their potential.

In this project, we look at a region where there is much understanding across the borders of neighbouring friendly nations and between rival but closely related communities –the Karamojong of Uganda, the Turkana of Kenya, and the Nyangatom of Ethiopia and South Sudan– living in their common borderlands. But at the same time, there are not only strong antagonisms due to histories of resource competition, there is also a momentous lack of understanding between decision makers and the area’s population; between local, national, and international actors; rural and urban economies, elite and local knowledge communities.

As urban elites across national boundaries use to look at people like the local communities of the study region from a normative perspective based on their own economic and cultural standards, and thus see deficiency and failure everywhere they look, they fail to grasp the remarkable efficiency and success of these communities. While others around them collapse in internal conflicts, often all the way down to civil war, destroy their own ecological base through unsustainable value extraction and lose cohesion in fragmentation, atomisation and hierarchisation processes, the people we studied use their mastery in resilience and adaptation<sup>1</sup> they have developed over centuries to cope with a harsh and unpredictable environment and manage severe challenges like exponential population growth, recurrent droughts, diminishing resources, and so on.

Given that environmental and socio-economic conditions are similar in large parts of Africa, particularly the dry belt between Somalia and Sudan in the east and across the Sahel up to Mali, Mauretania and Senegal in the west, the relevance is obvious. The dependence of vast populations on continued access to the healthy natural environment they are adapted to connects the participation of these populations in decision-making processes, i.e. what we expect civil society to achieve, with the notion of the common good.<sup>i</sup> In this case, crucial public goods are (the access to) pasture and water, requiring freedom of movement, and peace.

Therefore, this study asks how these local societies work; what we can learn from that, including for other contexts; how they could be efficiently supported without creating new dependences; what that means for conceptualisations of civil society, i.e. how not to exclude local majorities due to socio-cultural biases; and how boundaries between states and knowledge communities, social, professional and ethnic groups can be more bridges than barriers for cooperation and beneficial practices.

### 1.3 Civil society: a concept in need of revision?

Negatively defined, civil society is what is not part of the state or business. It is commonly associated with NGOs and people fighting for certain rights. But what about regions where over 90% of the population is illiterate and have only vague ideas about what civil or human rights are? Can the 5% matching the common notions reasonably be called *civil society*? Or would we then need a definition of *civil society* that could also apply to such a – often discursively silenced – local majority?

We concur with Van Dyck (2017) that concepts of civil society should incorporate that countries and “groups that share similar cultural values and attributes within a country have some distinct forms of social organization, cultural and political traditions, as well as contemporary economic structures”.

“The most commonly used definition was created by CIVICUS, which conceives of civil society as the arena outside the family, the state, and the market, which is created by individual and collective actions, organizations, and institutions to advance shared interests (CIVICUS, 2011; PRIA et al., 2012). ... However, it is critical that the definition of civil society represents its current evolution, nuances, and growing diversity. A proposed definition that captures its current form is “an ecosystem of organized and organic social and cultural relations existing in the space between the state, business, and family, which builds on indigenous and external

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<sup>i</sup> An important impulse in this regard is the public trust doctrine (see e.g. Blumm & Wood 2013). “The public trust doctrine is that ancient doctrine that most legal systems have. It dates back to roman law and therefore it's all around the world, it's in every state in this country and its premise is so simple. The public trust principle requires government to act as a trustee in protecting our crucial resources like the oceans, wildlife, rivers and also the atmosphere. So, rather than being a matter of complex statutory law, that very few people understand, everybody can understand the public trust. It simply requires government to manage the resources so they will be functional and abundant for future generations as well as present ones. The public trust principle envisions all of these crucial natural resources as being bundled in a trust, an endowment that government manages. The government can't just do what it wants with that trust. It has to actually manage that for the people, not for the corporations or private interests, but for the people.” (Mary Wood in Brandt 2017). The Ateker pastoralist model of civil society largely accomplishes that through its vital mechanisms of self-governance.

knowledge, values, traditions, and principles to foster collaboration and the achievement of specific goals by and among citizens and other stakeholders.”

While we agree with this definition, we would put some more emphasis on the normative dimension to allow us to differentiate between socio-spatial contexts where the existence of a civil society is *tangible* because the concerned relations lead to actions with a certain *impact* and other contexts where they don't. So what would make the difference? *Ideally* a civil society is a dense and influential network of actors that ensures high levels of inclusivity in decision-making, equitable negotiation, and a balance of interests serving the common good. It helps generating social consensus on the rules of interaction without choking healthy forms of competition.

This is actually the case in the local societies we studied. They do all this largely without external guidance or assistance. However, they do of course *not* exist in some kind of social isolation. They are part of relationship networks and practice systems that are not nearly as inclusive and balanced. And this is no peculiarity of this region. Where political and economic elites gain disproportionate power over key resources, the mass of the people is usually unable to exercise sufficient influence in spheres where the distribution and use of these resources are determined. As a result, both interests *and* capacities of local people are widely disregarded – and so the ways in which the resources are used produce outcomes that are neither as equitable nor as efficient as they could be. It is high time to tap into the potential of their time-tested empowering practices of cooperative regulation.

## 1.4 Objectives

How can civil society be strengthened in such regions? And how can beneficial practices be promoted, without creating lasting dependencies on external resources, including across borders? We explore specific answers to these questions that take account of the particular opportunities and challenges in selected borderlands as basis projects in Eastern African border regions. The objective of our study was to sketch out the most pertinent features of the civil societies of the study region and to discuss the design of possible projects aimed at supporting these actors. During the study period (June-September 2017) we formed a team of European and African experts, travelled the region and analysed the conditions, needs, and opportunities for realising these aims and initiating cooperation with local and regional partners to do so in synergy. We thus used the study to

- **map social landscapes** of the two study regions with a focus on (a) key actors, both collective and individual; (b) cultures, networks, and institutions of cooperation, both within and across sectors and borders, and the role of proximity; (c) key mechanisms (both resilient and ephemeral) of inclusion, participation and integration; (d) obstacles and challenges to cooperation and inclusion; (e) lines of conflict and antagonism; (f) individual and collective initiative, innovation and promotion of positive change;
- **identify objectives, strategies and potential key partners** for pioneering innovative ways of empowering exemplary individuals whom to emulate and learn from would benefit others, promoting promising activities, leading by example and gaining influence for borderland communities, including in decision-making processes they are so far largely excluded from, for sensible approaches as well as sustainably and equitably beneficial practices;
- **document the results** of the study, **analyse** them against the backdrop of existing knowledge and develop circumspect **detailed concepts** for efficient and risk-conscious intervention.

## 2 The Study Region: Characteristics & Issues

This study focuses on **two border regions** epitomising many of the problems underlying the crises that periodically propel Eastern Africa into the international headlines: First, the region where the Kenyan Turkána people border the Nyàngatom of **Ethiopia** and **South Sudan**; and second, the historical cradle land of their Ateker-speaking communities along the **Kenya-Uganda-Border**.

These two regions **contrast** in important respects and thus provide unique opportunities for understanding key reasons of why so many expensive external interventions fail to achieve better results while simultaneously local people are often intriguingly successful in managing difficult situations with little or no external assistance. We use this study also to explore which lessons intervention designers and policy makers can learn from their comparison.

### A pastoralist dryland region

Arid and semi-arid lands (ASALs) make up more than 60 percent of Ethiopia, c.80 percent of Kenya, and a little more than 40 percent of Uganda.<sup>2</sup> Their cultures and societies, most of which rely on mobile livestock economies referred to as **pastoralism**, as do over 90% of the inhabitants of the borderlands forming the study region. As they organise their social and economic affairs almost entirely through their own cultural institutions, practices and regulations, we explain them below.

### 2.1 Political conditions

Formally, all three states –Kenya, Uganda and Ethiopia– are multi-party democracies. Yet there are significant differences in how they are structured and in which way they allow for competition of organised interests. The two sub-regions analysed in this study are part of their border regions. One of their common features is their spatial distance from the political and economic centres of each state, and they are illustrative examples for ‘second’ or ‘super-peripheries’. While it addresses important imbalances, the common core-periphery notion does not do much justice to the far more complex set of differences between the sharply contrasting socio-economic and cultural models that characterise them. But before we address them, we will first give a brief overview on key features of the national contexts, especially governance structures, political, economic and social dynamics.

#### 2.1.1 Kenya

##### Kenya’s larger space for civil society

In regard to the freedom of expression and political activity, Kenya is the most liberal of the three countries. Recently there has been more repression towards critical journalism and various forms of bullying of opponents are common. The security forces have a longstanding bad reputation for using illicit violence and engaging in corrupt practices to a deplorable degree that seriously tarnishes their standing with the population. However, people, including the media– are generally free to express their opinions even if they are in clear opposition to one or the other layer or representative of government. They enjoy and use this freedom constantly and civil society organisations have more manoeuvring space and are more effective than in any of the neighbouring countries in putting pressure on powerful actors to constrain transgressions. There are more frequently forms of intimidation and repression when open criticism and civil activity is directed against individual politicians and / or businessmen who feel their interests are seriously threatened and simultaneously strong or ruthless enough to use illicit methods of inflicting harm, which in some cases has reached even the level of lethal violence. It is, however, clear that this has massively decreased with the shift from Moi-era

dark state authoritarianism to the vibrant democratic culture that is thriving in Kenya today. It would therefore be the best location to function as a main base for the proposed projects.

### **Civic freedoms in Turkana**

Even areas as remote from national politics as the Turkana borderlands benefit, in their own way, from this active and open civil culture. It allows pastoralists to keep the frankness of their public talk that has been a hallmark of their own culture since before the first writing travellers visited the area. When elected representatives visit the area, they are often called out by the attendants in no uncertain terms and held accountable for broken promises or failure to provide assistance where it is urgently needed. However, the power of locals over the performance of representatives is hampered by their inability to know what means these representatives actually have at hand and how they use them, as these are things that are not only beyond their cultural horizon but often matters of closed-door arrangements between members of exclusive elite circles. There are also only few ways locals have to pressurise these elites apart from pleas, appeals and their vote in the next election.

The latter instrument is further weakened by the clientelistic attitudes politicians and their agents share with the larger population. On the one hand, they are related to older cultural features, especially the materialisation of personal relations in the form of gift-giving. In pastoralist societies, wealthy men are expected to support their less lucky peers, elders and juniors through adequate gifts of food and stock when requested. As the entire society is based on the asking and giving of gifts and counter-gifts, there is a necessity for every individual to balance between acts accommodating these requests, with which they build symbolic and social capital that works both as insurance and central tool of empowerment, and acts of refusal with which they have to protect their resource base against depletion through excessive giving. This same principle that is central to the everyday life of pastoralists has taken on new forms in office politics, and it is a core part of the informal system of corruption that pervades all kinds of institutions in (of course not only) Kenya.

Form and extent of such practices relate to the degree to which people accept them and to what extent they perceive them to be beneficial to themselves. Many are highly critical of corrupt practices when they are excluded from their benefits but in denial when they are not. In some cases the cry "Corruption!" sounds like a „You have to cut me in or I'll blow up your business!" And there is a number of examples where politicians who first give the ardent activist against abuses and advocate for the neglected and excluded engage in the same illicit practices even more ruthlessly for their own networks once they have been voted into office. But that does not devalue the possibility of calling out abuses in public without having to fear direct and brutal repression by state organs and the strength that the population in Turkana (and other parts of Kenya) can mobilise to fight abuses, hold the more powerful accountable and make sure larger parts of the population benefit and resources are allocated at least a bit more equally. They are, however, limited by the low degree of trans-local organisation and low access to decision making debates taking place on the county or national level and in policy formulations limited to international networks of professionals that normally communicate only with top players in the different levels of government and among non-state actors. As this excludes 95+ per cent of the affected people, levels of inclusiveness are obviously not ideal.

### **Kenya's political reforms & consequences for Turkana**

Kenya's 2010 constitution radically altered the governance structure of the country and set the course for **devolution**. In the 2013 elections, governors and county assemblies were elected in 47 new counties, which went along with the creation of new institutions at the federal and county level.

Besides new functions and responsibilities, devolution led to the transfer of considerable funds from the federal to the county governments. As a consequence, the competition between individuals, their personal networks and (frequently changing) coalitions for public office and related benefits on the county and lower levels, which had already been fierce in Turkana politics, escalated further.

The clientelistic features of Kenyan politics, together with the widespread attitudes of locals considering **voting** a business with the highest bidders, makes access to money a core issue. This was even more obvious during the data collection for this study, as we travelled the region when the countywide and local campaigns for the 2017 elections were in full swing. Campaign vehicles and advertisement devices promoting candidates were omnipresent in Lodwar, the administrative centre of Turkana County, and election rallies were held in all six sub-counties (Loima, South, East, North, West, and Central). While official numbers are not yet available for the 2017 election, it is well possible that the voter turnout of only 30.2 percent in 2012/13<sup>3</sup> increased at least to some extent in 2017, not least due to the higher amount of resources at stake and available for campaigning. However, the continued low participation of pastoralists in elections is a conspicuous sign for the continued distance of their proximity-based societies from formal institutions.

Following the 2013 elections, county governments had to formulate *Integrated Development Plans* (CIDP) in line with Kenya's *Vision 2030* long-term **development policy**.<sup>4</sup> Turkana's County Government was supported by the United Nations in the conception and implementation of its CIDP.<sup>5</sup> With its formulation and unprecedented power over public spending, modern Turkana elites enjoyed considerable self-determination in planning and financing development for the first time. Population growth and threats to pastoralism, the region's main economic activity, were recognised as crucial issues. However, these realisations have so far remained without sufficient impact on planning, practice and the revision of problematic elements of longstanding development doctrines, e.g. the expansion of farming in zones of key importance for pastoralists, the role of education and 'alternative livelihoods'.<sup>i</sup> Thorough cross-sector discussions and cooperation are urgently needed here.<sup>ii</sup>

### 2.1.2 Uganda

In Uganda, president Yoweri Museveni and his National Resistance Movement (NRM) have been ruling the country since 1986. Significantly, a 2005 constitutional amendment reintroduced multi-party politics that had been banned. Since the early 1990s the NRM has gradually transferred functions and powers from the central government to **local councils** under its decentralisation programme to foster more effective regional socio-economic development.<sup>6</sup> However, its success has been limited.<sup>7</sup> Support by **state authorities** is far more crucial for people to access resources related with the formal system than in Kenya, and money is tangibly less, although it is by no means unimportant. Also, the tradition of governing through military force, which began with independent Uganda's first president and has differed gradually between its ruling regimes, gives more power, including in economic pursuits, to military and security forces.<sup>8</sup> The impact of these factors on the prevalent style of governance is also key in regard to the conditions under which both **formal** (NGOs, CBOs, etc.)<sup>9</sup> and **informal civil society** (citizens and their home-grown institutions) operate. While there are numerous reports on transgressions and the enforcement of culturally hostile policies in **Karamoja**, the part of Uganda considered in this study, there was a strong perception of gradual improvement in these concerns since 2011, among our interlocutors.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>i</sup> See chapters 6.2.1 "[Irrigated cultivation](#)", 6.2. "[Alternative livelihoods](#)", 3.3.3 "[Pastoralist education & formal education](#)".

<sup>ii</sup> See chapter 6 "[Views of development & ways of empowerment](#)".

## Conditions for civil society in Uganda

Many of these positive changes in the study region are thought to be owed to the persistent failure of most of the anti-pastoralist transformation policies the government of Uganda (GoU) started imposing<sup>i</sup> during the forced disarmament campaign, the resulting collapse of Karamoja's pastoralist economies and the aid emergencies it generated, while a few well-positioned profiteers were able to benefit (ibid). Their interest in continued profits might have contributed to the change in policy, as after 5 years of constant failure it had become undeniable that pastoralism remains the most productive, efficient and reliable form of value creation in Karamoja (see e.g. Stites et al 2016).

As pastoralism thrives when supported by well-designed NGO assistance and NGO contributions to poverty management and mitigation are massive and crucial, NGO projects in Karamoja normally enjoy the endorsement of and backing by the government; at least as long as they stay clear of national politics and are sufficiently cautious with criticism of abuses perpetrated by state actors and with promoting forms of empowerment that could be interpreted as threats to state authority, e.g. advocacy for civil and economic rights. Generally, the activities considered by the study appear to be met with rather positive attitudes.

Another positive feature of the conditions in Uganda are the civil freedoms that allow a vibrant and multi-faceted media sector to thrive. A large number of print outlets and private radio and television stations exists in Uganda. While civil society organizations have enjoyed this freedom and successfully exerted influence, the Public Order Management Act of 2013 and further amendments to the country's NGO Act of 2016 have been criticised for negatively affecting the legal space for civil society organisations operating in Uganda. These include, similar to Ethiopia, extensive requirements that have to be met in order formally register with Uganda's National Bureau of NGOs.<sup>11</sup>

### 2.1.3 Ethiopia

Under the doctrine of *Ethnic Federalism* that was introduced in Ethiopia with its 1995 constitution that defines federal states according to ethnicity, the country is a federation of nine regional states. The EPRDF (Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front) coalition government is in power since 1991 and consists of three single-ethnic parties with a clearly demarcated regional and ethnic constituency and the SPDM, which is itself a coalition that represents ethnic groups of SNNPR (Southern Nations Nationalities and People's Regional State), to which our study region belongs.<sup>12</sup>

Since the mid-2000s, Ethiopia pursues a strategy of state-directed macro-economic planning. 'Development before democracy' boils down the authoritarian approach towards development adopted by the government, which has severely limited the space for dissent, criticism and civil society in recent years<sup>13</sup>, to an essence. The 2009 'Proclamation to Provide for the Registration & Regulation of Charities and Societies' has forced many NGOs to cease their activities, as organisations working on

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<sup>i</sup> Addressing one aspect of this, Gelsdorf et al 2012:33 observe, "controversial government policies towards Karamoja demonstrate a belief that the state can change centuries-old livelihood systems simply by edict. There is little doubt that livelihoods in Karamoja are vulnerable, and that change is needed, but current policy seems to suggest that the mobility requirement of both livestock and people in such a harsh environment is not well understood. This raises questions about **research uptake**. While there is research and knowledge about the environmental constraints and requirements involved in pastoralist mobility in Karamoja, policies are still being designed which do not take this research into consideration. The issue is that this knowledge has not found a champion within government policymaking. Experience from elsewhere regarding pastoral policy suggests that changing both official policy and unofficial attitudes requires painstaking work to engage policymakers in the process of research and analysis. While improved policies or interventions may or may not enhance the legitimacy of the state (or the party in power), they are clearly important to the well-being of the affected population, and hence are an end in themselves."

issues related to advocacy and human rights and relying on more than 10 per cent on foreign financing were banned.<sup>14</sup> Given the general scarcity of resources and the power of the state over their allocation, it is difficult for locals to run organisations that voice criticism of policies and practices of the government. But neither do or did such organisations exist among the Nyangatom, nor is that what the models we discussed aim for. They are about improving the understanding between neighbouring communities and between them and elites, and thus about generating opportunities for tapping the potential of local knowledge from which all development actors, including GoE, can only benefit. We discussed such strategies with organisations that have established and maintained –not least by avoiding political pitfalls– a good working relationship with GoE and are thus able to work closely with local populations and found consensus regarding conditions and limits of such projects.<sup>1</sup> It is, however, clear that under the present conditions the work on the Ethiopian side has to be more limited, more cautious and to a larger degree under the control of the government, most plausibly the *woreda* administration which is the only government institution familiar with the local language.

#### 2.1.4 Judicial power & practice in the three countries & sub-regions

To understand the living conditions of the borderland communities, abstract knowledge on the respective country is important, but doesn't lead very far. This concerns decision making and representation as much as adjudication, which is of course in itself a central form of decision making and reflects both important ethical notions and critical power relations.

**Kenya's** Supreme Court made African history this year by annulling elections favouring a sitting head of state for irregularities.<sup>15</sup> While this does demonstrate strength of democratic structures in Kenyan society, as do the very open public discussions on such matters,<sup>ii</sup> Kenyans are very expressly aware of the political pressures at play, as they came to the fore in the subsequent turns of events, as well as of the power of bribes and relations in daily-life adjudication in the formal judiciary.<sup>16</sup>

People in **areas like Turkana**, however, and especially **pastoralists**, prefer their **own institutions** for the mediation of conflicts and adjudication of transgressions to the formal system. Not only is access to formal justice demanding, as the representatives of the involved parties normally have to walk and travel long distances too many times, thus posing serious problems to people with extensive daily duties in tending to numerous stock. The trust in the established indigenous institutions, like neighbourhood assemblies and direct inter-party negotiations, is also considerably higher. They dispense justice according to principles the people extensively refer to and take as a matter of course in daily life, forming thus a key part of their culture. They are intelligible and plausible to everyone and guarantee a high degree of inclusivity, as the affected parties have optimal opportunities of participation in the decision making process.<sup>17</sup> Over the decades there has, however, been a slow increase in local disputes brought to state courts. This concerns mostly especially severe cases like homicide or serious injury, or cases where one party refused to accept a majority opinion on a case, or where community members with superior knowledge of the formal system seek refuge from local adjudication against them with formal institutions.<sup>18</sup> This does, nevertheless, not offset the pushes and pulls in favour of their **judiciary of proximity**.

<sup>i</sup> This concerns e.g. the consortium of VSF-Germany (lead) with Mercy Corps and TUPADO.

<sup>ii</sup> An intriguing example is the recent dialogue between the Attorney-General and critical readers on many of the most burning issues regarding Kenya's judiciary in the Daily Nation ('AG Muigai: There is no legal basis for a transition govt', October 1 2017 <http://www.nation.co.ke/news/constitutional-basis-for-a-transition-govt/1056-4119418-rihmw3z/index.html>). On the other hand, the judiciary has come under massive pressure as a result of the ruling; see e.g. Oluoch 2017.09.30., Lang'at 2017.09.02.)

While the cultural justice system of the **Nyangatom** and **Karamojong** is near identical with that of the Turkana, formal adjudication in their respective countries differs considerably. For **Ethiopia**, observers commonly comment on the salient power of the executive over the judiciary and the unlikelihood to find redress for transgressions by state institutions, officials or powerful people, and pertinent studies contradict each other, suggesting that corruption remains a problem<sup>19</sup>. This has not been an issue for borderlander communities as long as their interaction with the state and cultural outsiders was scant. The recent imposition of radical large-scale transformation schemes converting much of their land into agro-industry complexes owned by outsiders has changed that. There is reason to be skeptical about the reliability of formal justice for the protection of local interests as things are today. For them as for NGOs who want to operate in Ethiopia, not to incur the wrath of the government remains paramount, even in situations where these interests are disregarded.<sup>20</sup>

In **Uganda**, the Local Councils (LC) system has led to a deeper penetration of the state into the daily life of pastoralists than in the other two countries. The double function of the LC chairmen at the local level as representative of a neighbourhood and organ of the government is an under-researched contact point of two contrasting social systems. In our interviews, the high degree of merger of powers was especially salient in the role the LC5 chairman played in the adjudication and mediation of disputes. His intervention was frequently solicited by Turkana who had been cheated of livestock in the 'stolen cow' scheme described in the annex by coalitions of locals with local security forces. The LC5 of Moroto district, Hon. Napàja, was especially esteemed among Turkana because he had restored justice in many cases against deviant compatriots, yet was also said to be overburdened with the amount of cases and unable to attend to all of them. As to other parts of the formal redress system, many partners reported that, in order to be attended by officials, they would have to incentivise them first to make the case worth their time. Understandably, people preferred their own institutions for adjudication and conflict management. Nevertheless, to use the state, even if partly in form of the *informal state* (Khisa 2013), in conflicts across ethnic boundaries has become an important avenue for preventing such conflicts from escalating, in spite of the imperfections of the system.

### 2.1.5 Pastoralists & party politics

Most Ateker communities have kept a healthy distance from the struggles at the centres of national politics. Historically, their representatives in the formal sphere chose opportunistic approaches to interaction with ruling regimes, not least out of realistic assessments of the marginality and limited influence of their constituencies.<sup>21</sup> Neither in Uganda, nor in Ethiopia have there been efforts by Nyangatom or any of their neighbours of forming or joining forces opposing the government in state politics. In Turkana where the number of formally educated people, who are far more interested in party politics than pastoralists, is much higher, the competition between candidates running for office, usually on tickets of parties with national reach and ambitions, is incomparably more intensive and extensive. It actually reaches into most parts of the county through the struggle for posts like MCA or MP and has partly divided local populations along lines of support for competing candidates.<sup>i</sup>

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<sup>i</sup> In Lorugum, for example, the split overlaps partly with division into quarters, which in turn overlap to a large extent with religious divisions. Most people in Lorugum *Centre*, where most shops are located, are Protestant; Lorugum *Mission / Nákwa mekwí*, where the Catholic mission, dispensary and schools are situated, is mainly Catholic; and Nangordèngor has the largest number of followers of the syncretic sect *Legio Maria* that is mainly borne by illiterate sedentarised populations. (Pastoralists are sometimes baptised but have commonly little knowledge of or interest in the details of Christianity and practice the rituals of their culture without seeing any conflict in the coexistence of the different systems.) However, the

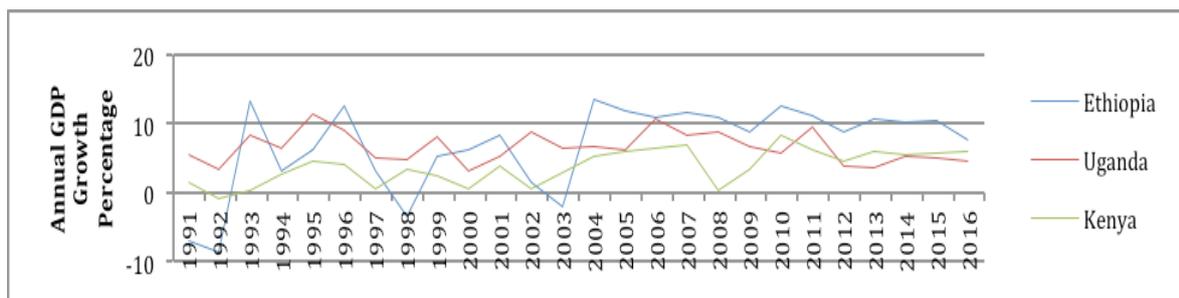
In the 2013 elections, an ODM (opposition) candidate, Josphat Nanòk, won the newly created position of county governor with the help of then (and for very long) dominant political strongman John Munyès who won the equally new senator position. When they fell out over the distribution of the resources now available thanks to the new constitution, etc., Munyes allied with basically all Turkana MPs against Nanok and his county government. The 2017 elections showed that the new financial and administrative power allocated to the county governments can give a decisive edge in the competition if used for efficient alliance building. Munyes and his allies lost most of the positions.

Although pastoralists are still far less invested in the resource competitions of the informal economies of the formal sector to become seriously divided over them, this is slowly changing and the impact of the increasing decentralisation and the resulting proliferation of formal institutions into their proximity is a process in need of further research. But given the remaining distance of pastoralists to the formal system, their organisation into political parties of their own remains a nonissue.

## 2.2 Economic conditions

### 2.2.1 Economy & demography

One of the most momentous yet at the same time least addressed issues of development and social dynamics in Africa is the mismatch between population growth and economic growth. We generated the graphs below to illustrate the problem by looking at them in comparison.

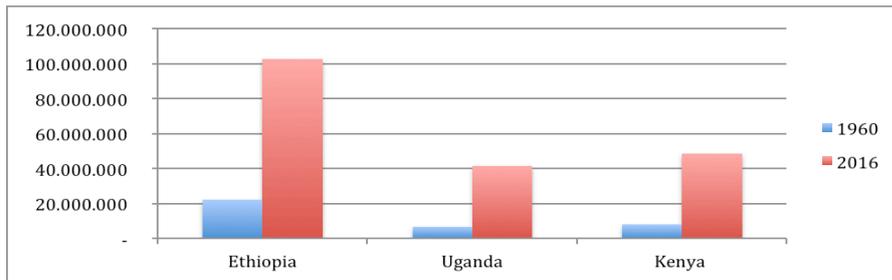


**Figure 1 Annual GDP Growth Percentage for Ethiopia, Uganda, Kenya between 1991 and 2016. Source: World Bank 2017a**

More than Uganda or Kenya, Ethiopia has been credited with rapid economic growth over the past decade with double-digit GDP growth figures since the mid-2000s (see Figure 1). This is, however, largely the result of large-scale investments into transportation infrastructure, hydropower and the construction sector and does not represent a similar growth in productive capacity. The government of Ethiopia (GoE) has thus turned to regions that have so far been marginal to the national economy. But this has severe consequences for their inhabitants, ecosystem productivity and resilience. At the same time, population growth (see Figure 2) remains unchecked and is especially high in disadvantaged areas like the study region.

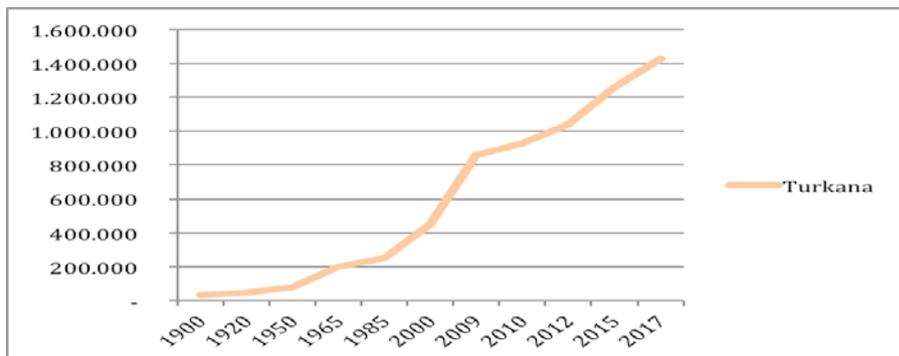
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coincidence between religious affiliation and support for specific candidates is neither consistent nor stable. Charismatic and / or well-financed aspirants often manage to break into the followership of their competitors and religion is not normally a serious obstacle.



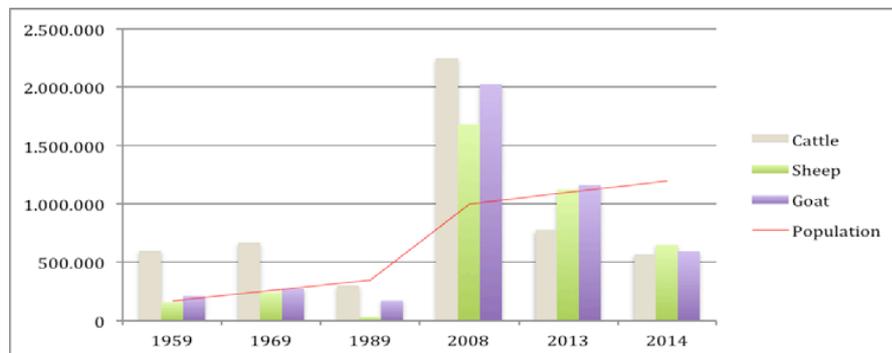
**Figure 2 Population growth Ethiopia, Uganda and Kenya between 1960 and 2016; Source: World Bank 2017b**

As figure 3 indicates, the **population of Turkana** increased nearly by factor 50 between 1900 and 2016/17 alone. Since the mid-1980s Turkana's population grew from c. 250,000 to more than 1.2 million in 2015, which illustrates how pressure on natural resources is mounting.



**Figure 3 Turkana population growth between 1900 and 2017; Source: Compilation of the author based on census data, UN OCHA, ethnographic studies, and personal field inquiry.**

Very similar developments are visible in **Karamoja**. Figure 4 illustrates the mismatch. The drop in livestock figures after 2008 is attributed to the disruption through the military occupation.



**Figure 4 Livestock numbers and population growth, Karamoja, between 1959 and 2014**

Although oil exploration in different parts of Turkana, mining (mainly limestone) in Karamoja, and the development of commercial farming schemes in Ethiopia's Omo River Basin are growing economic sectors besides mobile livestock economies and organic agriculture, pastoralism remains the major source of livelihood for the inhabitants of the study region.

## 2.2.2 Ecology & economy

"...one cannot begin to really understand the social system of the Turkana, let alone make any kind of sociological analysis, until one understands the environment in which that system operates" (Gulliver 1951:37)

Culturally, the study region is part of the Ateker region. Most of its communities share the Eastern Nilotic Ng'Ateker language and much of their traditionally agro-pastoralist culture, communal economy and social organisation. Ecologically, it is part of a belt of drylands whose inhabitants have adapted, over millennia, to a harsh and unpredictable environment. Here, resource abundance in time of rain contrasts sharply with the acute resource scarcity that strains all life in the dry season and threatens it with slow mass starvation death during periods of prolonged drought that hit the region in unforeseeable intervals. The flexibility and mobility of (agro-) pastoralism developed as the central human answer to this condition. Today it coexists with (largely transfer-dependent) other forms of economy in the region, but it has remained the only significant sustainable livelihood based on a productive use of the areas' resources even in the absence of external input<sup>i</sup>.

The study region's communities practice a mixture of (semi-)nomadic pastoralism and rain-fed cultivation<sup>ii</sup>. The most important factor producing difference in the ecological conditions shaping their socio-economic patterns is water, followed by (and closely related to) soil and topography. Higher altitude is commonly related to higher humidity and different types of vegetation.<sup>22</sup> Cattle, the most prestigious and culturally important kind of stock, do well almost anywhere in a good wet season but depend otherwise on the grass of higher grounds – some of the most important of which are situated in the study region, especially the Karamoja-Turkana escarpment and Mt. Loima in the west and the Loriònetom and Thóya mountains of the Turkana-Nyangatom borderlands – or river banks and flood plains. Sheep, goats and donkeys have, thanks to their ability to browse shrubs and trees, the largest range of possible habitats and survive practically anywhere as long as water is available, while camels thrive on the scanty browse of the more arid plains. All groups practice as much crop cultivation as their technologies can extract from the respective mixture of eco-systems. Consequently its importance is highest among the Nyàngatom and other communities of Ethiopia's Lower Omo valley where the staple crop sorghum is accompanied by a larger variety of other crops like pumpkins / calabashes, beans, tobacco, and maize<sup>23</sup>. Fields are most of the time a form of fenced garden 'owned' by specific women organising its cultivation. Men commonly only assist in very specific activities like clearing<sup>iii</sup>, as they do most of the herding, whereas children can be closely involved, like in weeding or fending off birds.<sup>iv</sup>

Nomadic<sup>v</sup> pastoralists have, as other mobile people, often had difficult relations with the governments claiming sovereign power over their lands, lives and movements. This is not least owed to the stark differences between the concepts national and international elites have of a desirable form of life and those of mobile cultures.

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<sup>i</sup> One notable example are the community fisheries of Lake Turkana whose production contributes to the livelihoods of c.200.000 people around the lake. It is presently severely threatened by Ethiopian cash-crop irrigation schemes in the lower valley of the Omo, source of over 80% of the lake's water (see e.g. Abbink 2012; Arnold 2013; Avery 2013; Carr 2017; Kamiski 2016; Gownaris et al 2016; Hobdod et al forthcoming; Oluoch 2015; Woldemariam & Fana 2014).

<sup>ii</sup> Those with access to the flood plains of the Omo River in the east use them for an additional flood-retreat cultivation.

<sup>iii</sup> Exceptions are the flood retreat fields along the Omo where Nyangatom and their neighbours were able to produce rich harvests before the recent intervention, often producing crops as a means to acquire livestock for herd (re-)building.

<sup>iv</sup> The best studies of indigenous economic systems and their interrelation with the ecosystems are those by Tomay for the Nyàngatom, Carr 1977 for the Dásanach, Little & Leslie 1999 and McCabe 2004 for the Turkána. They all show that a key element in the indigenous systems is flexibility, both in location (nomadic migration) and in strategy (which includes cultivation, foraging and the tapping of resources available through structures of the modern world, like relief food or money).

<sup>v</sup> Most of the region's peoples are *semi*-nomads, i.e. they have permanent settlements (in which e.g. old and feeble people, pregnant and nursing mothers remain throughout or most of the year) but most of the population moves according to the availability of pasture and water as well as the threats from diseases, enemies and other adverse factors. The largest group, the Turkana of Kenya, who inhabit the driest environment, have largely been full nomads until aid and development intervention led to sedentarisation as consequence of destitution and population growth-related scarcity.

### 2.2.3 Livelihoods: Numbers don't ensure objectivity

In the modern world, numbers have become an icon of reliability and quality. However, doing serious scientific work in the region under discussion quickly calls this notion into question. Not only are some of the most important figures, such as reliable statistics of economic activities, unemployment, livestock populations, and so on, not available, keen observers of the conditions will notice quickly that the figures that are given and reported are often clearly dubious, problematic and misleading, while available others are omitted. Here examples from Turkana:

With between 68,680 and 77,000 sqkm<sup>i</sup>, **Turkana** County is the largest in Kenya. Due to its aridity, it is also among her least densely populated (c.12 persons per sqkm), although population growth here is with 6-7% among the highest. While this is all well-known, a crucial fact that is hardly ever reported or discussed is that this rate is only the tip of an iceberg and that the most instructive information here is the increase from c.30.000 Turkana at the dawn of colonial rule about a century ago to far over 1 million today. It seems rather obvious that an environment with extreme periodic resource (water) scarcity cannot easily accommodate such immoderate growth.

Although pastoralism is the base of Turkana culture and certain statistics give figures like “60% relying on the livestock sector for their livelihood while the others rely on rain-fed agriculture, irrigation, fishing, mining and employment”<sup>ii</sup>, our observations suggest that, for one, many included in this figure have lost too much stock and have become too detached from the active (and indeed vibrant) pastoralist economy, and that of the remaining 40% only few are able to live off fishing, even less off irrigation<sup>iii</sup> and even less off mining, whereas though both active and destitute pastoralists plant sorghum when it rains enough, practically nobody can live of rain-fed farming alone.<sup>iv</sup> According to well-informed sources, the very tangible but not-all-too-public truth seems to be that most of the 40% non-pastoralists (and many impoverished pastoralists) rely on relief aid and remittances of relatives. Of the minority of formally employed people, the vast majority works in government institutions or aid organisations and NGOs. While “alternative livelihoods” are a central theme in development discourses, a lack of circumspection and a lack of attention to the priorities and aspirations, knowledge and capacities of the pastoralist majority leads to massive expenditure into interventions with little suitability to addressing root problems.

### 2.2.4 Interventions, demographic & economic changes

Governments, aid organisations and private actors have introduced economic activities like administration, fishing, retailing, etc. but pastoralism remains the main productive activity. Interventions

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<sup>i</sup> The difference between both figures is caused by the disputed status of the Elémi Triangle, an area to large parts under Kenyan domination but, based on ambiguous colonial arrangements, claimed by South Sudan (see Collins 2005, Mburu 2007, Eulenberger forthcoming). Fascinatingly, both figures appear in the English Wikipedia entry on the Triangle, without explanation.

<sup>ii</sup> EU & FAO 2013:ix; crude and misleading inaccuracies like these are common in such ‘grey literature’—and not surprising considering that in this (far from isolated) case not only was none of the (all-Kenyan) research consultant team Turkana (cf.p.iii), but even a maximum of one of the (only 12) interlocutors (p.45), and neither was there even *one* social scientist involved or interviewed.

<sup>iii</sup> The same document reports a total of c.16,600 irrigation farmers, i.e. c.1,6% of the population, with an average of 0.16 ha irrigated, admitting that the “current size of holding does not provide farmers with enough food supplies” (p.41), but omitting that most of them also rely on permanent subsidies, and later perpetuating the plausibly challenged doctrine that irrigation should be expanded.

<sup>iv</sup> The report even says “One of the biggest challenges to agricultural development in Turkana County is inadequate water to meet the moisture requirements for crop and livestock production. The annual rainfall ranges between 120 to 600mm which is erratic in time and space, and is therefore unreliable for crop production.” (EU & FAO 2013:ix)

such as the introduction of veterinary services, boreholes, drought-time food aid, etc., have enabled it to feed over 10 times more people than before, without changing its main modes of operation. But the ongoing changes also stretch its capacities to both the limits of human frugality and those of ecological resilience. This is exacerbated by recurrent severe droughts which many locals and professionals perceive to gradually worsen as a result of both global and regional climate change<sup>24</sup>. As we visited the region at what people were hoping to be the end of a prolonged drought that had killed off a vast part of the livestock population, this perception came up time and again during our visit.<sup>25</sup>

Together with the rampant unemployment among those ejected from the pastoralist economy by loss of livestock to drought, diseases, raids and resource scarcity and among graduates and dropouts of the formal education system, this leads to rankings of Turkana and neighbouring regions (including Karamoja) at the bottom end in national poverty level surveys and similar indicator polls. This is a well-known and widely cited fact that centrally shapes the image of the region for both national and international audiences and informs development and aid policies that have brought substantial resources into the region for decades. However, the results of these costly endeavours were often disappointing, all the while pastoralism remains the backbone of most productive rural economies.<sup>26</sup>

The socio-economic system in which the communities indigenous to the study region combine mobile pastoralism, the main strategy for coping with the extreme uncertainty of water availability in this drought-prone region, with flood-retreat farming, fishing, foraging, crafts and exchange activities, has formed a distinctive social and ecological landscape, recognized as a World Heritage site,<sup>i</sup> that could be supported to further increase productivity and resilience.<sup>27</sup> Today, the lower Omo-Turkana basin sustains more than 4.5 million people. Systems disregarded by outsiders as 'outdated' are proving much higher resilience, efficiency and sustainability than many as they presumably 'more advanced' forms of production often promoted as their replacement.

During a night we spent in Kachakachòm, a small Turkana hamlet that had just lost almost all of its livestock, i.e. its main productive capacity, to a terrible drought, its girls and boys danced for long hours on a moon-lid dancing ground to the traditional Ateker music that generates dizzying wattleworks of rhythms and melodies with alternating solos and choirs by clapping, singing and moving alone. This was a powerful demonstration of the resilience and vitality of a culture that provides people with the mental and emotional power to go through recurring hardship with determination, self-reliance and ingenuity. Who has come to know them knows how much we and everyone can learn from them, including their relatives who have gone to school and university. Recognising that and revealing their strengths, skills and wit to the world would help them, too.

### 2.3 Social conditions – key institutions & actors

The study region is home to the **Ateker** (or Karamoja<sup>28</sup>) cluster of closely related ethnic groups speaking the same (Eastern or Plains Nilotic) language<sup>29</sup>, *Ng'Ateker*, divided by the borders of four nation states. The **Ateker peoples** share much of the basic features of traditional social structure, cultural institutions, and agro-pastoralist livelihoods. They interrelate and intermarry easily, yet con-

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<sup>i</sup> The Lower Omo valley and Lake Turkana are considered to be both ecological and cultural world heritage, starting with the designation of several national parks on the Kenyan side as natural world heritage site by UNESCO in 1997. The importance of the region for the ancient history of mankind as its very cradle has led to a designation as archeological heritage site by UNESCO in 1980, which has since then even increased with a number of spectacular finds on both sides of the border. And since the 1970s scientists across disciplines have documented its importance for the understanding of sustainably adaptive socio-ecological systems and efficient decentral mechanisms of resource management and equitable social regulation.

flicts with neighbouring communities over livestock, pasture, and water remain frequent in many areas, including the Turkana-Ethiopia frontier, as in large parts of the pastoralist belt between Somalia and the central Sahel. To different degrees, inherited endogenous forms and constellations of conflict are exacerbated by exogenous factors and interventions, as will be discussed below. What is less widely known is that the institutions of these communities form civil societies of proximity that regulate internal and external conflicts, resource use and resource distribution quite efficiently and sustainably without external assistance. This text discusses some of their basic features.

### 2.3.1 Communities

The ethnic groups indigenous to the region make up more than 95% of the local population.<sup>i</sup> Through customary institutions explained further below, they form strong political units<sup>ii</sup> that hold and defend claims over resources constituting the material basis of their economic and social existence. This does not mean that they are generally hostile towards others who would like to use these resources.<sup>iii</sup> Access is often negotiated with rival communities in direct communication in traditional grass-roots decision-making meetings. But if no reliable agreement can be reached and the pressure is too high or relations are generally hostile, inter-ethnic fighting can occur. Since their most immediate targets are nearly always herds of neighbouring communities, the offensive part is commonly referred to as cattle rustling or, more correctly, livestock raiding. Between three men and several thousand assemble and venture to capture livestock, and in ensuing fights, there are often casualties.<sup>30</sup> However, while these (normally low-intensity) conflicts keep flaring up along the Turkana-Ethiopia-South Sudan borders, they have been brought under control along the Loima-Karamoja frontier and in central Karamoja over the last decade. The continuing success of this large-scale inter-community peace-building is remarkable—and a number of the individuals we talked to (and suggest to work with) had and have an important part in it. While the concept of boundary is used by pastoralists and their representatives in the modern sphere alike, among pastoralists the formulation of boundary claims involves high flexibility. Conflicting interests can be reconciled. For pastoralists, fairness does not need to imply *exclusive* rights on territorial resources. As accessing pasture and water according to their elusive momentary availability is of outstanding importance for their livelihoods, resource sharing and *inclusive* rights to localised resources are a central part of well-established structures of peace. This concerns especially areas along the borders with long histories of resource

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<sup>i</sup> The rest consists mainly of government and NGO officials, labour migrants and traders, in Karamoja f.i. from other parts of Uganda or, to a lesser degree, Kenya (e.g. the small Somali trading community of Moroto town. According to census data, between 10 and 20% of Karamoja's population is urban (mainly in Moroto, the old headquarters of the region, and Kotido, as well as small proto-urban settlements like Kangole, Matany, Rupa, and Nakiloro, smaller in size than many European villages but of administrative and commercial importance). Although we focus on an area part of or of concern for mainly communities from the districts of Moroto, Kotido and Napak, the same applies to the other four districts of Karamoja where the centres and the share of urban population are even smaller.

<sup>ii</sup> This concerns (1) ethnic communities like Turkana, Nyangatom, Matheniko, etc. themselves that maintain strict taboos on internal conflicts and practice solidarity in conflicts with others; (2) territorial sections (*ngitela*, sing. *ekitela*, literally 'ridges') of these communities that dominate certain parts of the community territory and need to give permission if larger numbers of outsiders want to use resources on which they hold dominant claims; (3) local age groups (*ngajoréi*, sing. *ajóre*) who act as security providers and can be used to counteract transgressions against the communal claims to local resources; and (4) neighbourhood councils / assemblies (*ekiriam*) that take all decisions that concern local people beyond the family level. A wealth of information on this can be found e.g. in Dyson-Hudson 1966 (Karamojong); Gulliver 1951, Little & Leslie 1999 (Turkana); Tornay 1981 (Nyangatom); Carr 1977 (Dasanach).

<sup>iii</sup> Resources that are not part of their traditional economy, like oil deposits, are commonly of little concern to pastoralists and they often do not care about outsiders coming and using them as long as herding is not affected (see e.g. Wood 2009).

use, like the Karamoja-Turkana escarpment (Lotäre) and parts of the Elemi Triangle.<sup>31</sup> Cross-boundary communication is key for these structures integrating the local societies.

### 2.3.2 Pastoralist institutions

Existing well-functioning sustainable practices are found amply across the research region. Most of them are related to traditional pastoralist institutions like mobile family economies, decision making neighbourhood councils, age sets, ritual bonds, cultural norms and customary legal procedures. They not only manage affairs such as complex shared ownership rights to the key resources of the pastoralist economic system, land, water, animals and labour, and the opportunistic migrations most of the pastoralists and their herds undertake according to situational and foreseeable resource availability across their multiple socio-geographical boundaries; they also solve almost all the conflicts that arise within this society without external assistance and even manage to generate far higher levels of opportunity equality than the local segments of 'modern' society they neighbour and interact with. In addition, they have remarkable proven abilities to manage inter-community conflict and organise cross-boundary resource sharing. (We explain these mechanisms in the chapter on civil society and several sections on individual contexts and partners.) However, a series of serious stressors are stretching the capacities of these institutions, among them also certain influences of modern formal institutions.

Here an overview of the most salient of these institutions of proximity:

*Ekòl*: the matri-centric family unit

*Áwi*: the patri-centric family unit

*Ngiyenèt*: the extended family network

*Ngirukitòs & ngikidunyèt*: neighbours and neighbourhood

*Epàe & epálonò*: friend & friendship

*Àdakar, abòr, alomàr, arumrùm*: the migration communities

*Eré & ngireréa*: permanent settlement sites

*Àjoré, asepic & anakèt*: age- & peer groups

Descent groups of clans (*ngimacharìn*, sing. *emachár*) are also of a certain, but rather limited importance, as they do not determine cooperation patterns significantly, with exceptions like strangers looking for clan-mates first when they don't know anyone in person, and the prohibition to marry within one's own clan. Kinship is central but its influence on cooperative choices depends to a large extent on individual character and the quality of personal relations, especially outside the innermost circle of close relatives. Cooperation is often even closer between friends and neighbours than between siblings and their respective families. This is another result and expression of the high flexibility and mobility of relations among Ateker pastoralists, the importance of personal ties and the high degree of amity within ethnic groups that goes along with weak medium range divisions (like clans, sections, etc.). An issue that has received little attention in research of development practice so far is how the interaction patterns on which the entire socio-economic order is based are generated during the childhood and youth of pastoralist societies through the system with which they confer the knowledge, skills and norms to new generations that enable them to become responsible, active, productive and thus 'empowered' and respected members of their societies, a system we can call pastoralist education.<sup>32</sup>

### 2.3.3 Pastoralist education & formal education

Pastoralist societies developed vast ecological, physiological, social and other knowledge, passed on between generations by a cultural system of 'pastoralist education', and a wide range of coping strategies. While it is commonly assumed that bringing pastoralist children to school would improve their chances to gain prosperity and security, the facts at hand are not suited to confirm that as a general rule. First of all, formal education does not include a guarantee that the child will find a job. Even if it does find a job, that does neither imply prosperity nor security. In the drylands of the region it is the populations with the highest percentage of non-pastoralists that also show the highest levels of dependency, poverty and misery.

Our research confirms that formal education acts widely as an agent of social, cultural and economic division, as it fails to accommodate the needs and interests of pastoralist economies and the indigenous systems of social self-regulation, or to integrate any elements of the pastoralist education children receive in the family economy system. Consequentially, formal education is of next to no benefit in regard to preparing children for the tasks mobile pastoralism requires them to master in order to be successful. As the capacity to become a successful mobile herder and full member of local pastoralist society can only be gained if a child stays out of the formal education system, there is little chance of merger or cross-fertilisation of the two socio-cultural and economic spheres. At the same time, skills like reading and writing act as barriers for pastoralists to access key resources and decision making processes of key importance.

Pastoralists we talked to are rightly concerned about these problems and interested in alternative forms of education that do not force their children to choose one form of education over the other but venture to find ways of integrating both pastoralist and scientific knowledge, including across age groups.

### 2.3.4 NGOs

NGOs, in many contexts across the world indeed, even if not always, spearhead civil society activism in the sense of promoting rights, participation and social harmonisation. They have become an important economic sector in the study region and contribute in important capacities to the administration and negotiation of social needs and interests. However, their efforts to promote rights are rather limited here. The reasons for that differ from country to country.

The capacity of both local and international NGOs to act as trusted connectors between communities and (both national and global) development actors is considerable, and possibly essential. They are capable of accessing resources that both benefit themselves and create value for others. Their role in the economic system enables them to avoid many conflicts of interest that governments and profit-oriented enterprises commonly are entangled in when it comes to the distribution of benefits between them and local populations. As a result, it is often easier for them to take relatively neutral positions in socio-economic questions. However, with their members socialised into the same mainstream approaches to development and dependent on external funding, they remain vulnerable to discursive and material pressures that incentivise actors in the development industry to go with the established orthodoxies and the fashions of the day instead of with the consequences of a sincere scrutiny of these orthodoxies and fashions and their results in practice.

Another issue that came up repeatedly was the 'brain drain' of capable people from local NGOs into urban economies and, most of all, politics. In later sections we will reflect on the reasons and possi-

ble ways of addressing them. While NGOs should not compete with the problematic accumulation practices rampant in politics in the region, social prestige can and should be a key reward currency for those to stay out of shady games. We will suggest project designs taking into account that to be attractive, a position has to provide significant social benefits. One possible way is to give renowned NGO workers with sound knowledge, experience and understanding of issues of importance to target populations a stage to advocate for the interests of their communities and bring their most genuine insights and considerations into the public discourse. This can increase their symbolic and social capital and promote their attitudes and practices that can serve as role models, as we can exemplify e.g. through video-recorded interviews with Sammy Ekal, program manager of Turkana Pastoralist Development Organisation (TUPADO), and Lucy Akello, the head of MADEFO (Matheniko Development Forum). However, even their work comes with certain biases which only open debates with locals, development critics, researchers and professionals can balance.

Widespread ideas of development requirements in Africa imply that by the provision of a certain standard set of services' – health care, education, infrastructure, etc. – “development” in the more economic sense will follow automatically. This common, yet mostly not very detail-interested assumption is, though continuously falsified by the salient reality of billions of people, at the core of a belief that many in ‘the educated class’ or segment of the region’s population proclaim with ardour, with a sense of mission with which it justifies before itself and ‘the illiterate’ its difference and deviation from the traditional, its supposed superiority in relation to them, who tend to disqualify them as *ariàng*, ‘strangified’, estranged, spoilt for the hard but independent, tried and trusted pastoralist life, the only one that does not rely on alien allotment. Or as Mzee Imana puts it:

“Those ones who went to school are somehow delinked from those who are remaining with the community looking after livestock. Because even if they close the school, they don’t go and help their parents. They find that is a very difficult thing, they have become soft; a soft society that cannot overcome difficulties, not like those who have remained there [in pastoralist life], who were built up, who have been brought up in a tough way.” (Interview IE, Lodwar 07.07.2017)

## 2.4 Cross-border relations

### 2.4.1 Karamoja-Turkana Frontier

Uganda’s **Karamoja** region is an island of pastoralism with strong local institutions in an agriculture-based society where such institutions have been largely eradicated during and after colonisation. Of its largest ethnic groups, three- the Matheniko, Jie and Tepeth –live in the immediate study region and converge, if inter-community relations allow it– for seasonal grazing in the plains around Kobébe and Nakadánya where we did our interviews.

The military occupation going along with the 2006-2011 disarmament campaign reduced Karamoja’s livestock to under 20% of its previous size. The pastoralist societies were able to gradually recover from these devastating blows from 2011 on when GoU abandoned its radical transformation policies. The thousands of Turkana pastoralists fleeing a devastating drought that were accommodated in Karamoja provide important restocking opportunities for their hosts.

**Loima**, specifically the area along the Karamoja escarpment, is the oldest of all Turkana lands. It was here that a small group from west of the mountains came to form a new community and started expanding east, north and south. At the same time, an area just west of here in Karamoja is considered the cradleland of all Ateker groups where their common ancestors resided, and eventually sepa-

rated and migrated from: the land of Nakadanya along the Apulé river. Even today, the area is a meeting point for the region's pastoralist communities: the Jie from the north-west, Bokora from the south-west, Matheniko from the south, Tepeth from the south-east, Turkana from the east and Dodoth from the north. Recently, the combined effects of disarmament and the creation of a catchment reservoir at Kobébe are drawing them to come together here to water their livestock. Especially Turkana from neighbouring Kenya, hard hit by a multi-year drought and under pressure from massive population growth, have come in large numbers, and many of them have been staying in the area for years.

As in other parts of the region, many Turkana of Loima have become dependent on relief food. One alternative income generating activity that temporarily mitigated against the loss of livestock was the gathering of wild-growing *aloe vera*. Traders set up processing equipment and purchased the raw products from the locals until adequate supply could not be provided anymore. From our interviews it became apparent that the people of this region suffer recurrent and partly severe food shortages. During our stay, the situation was much better on the Karamoja side of the border where the new dam at Kobebe provides water throughout the year and rains had produced good pasture.

### Existing cross-border connections & activities

While an official border checkpoint with passport control exist on the Ugandan side, people who travel by road are rarely checked when entering or leaving Kenya. No visas are required for Ugandan or Kenyan citizens. Today, the free movement of people and goods also applies to livestock. However, when brought across the border for sale (not merely for grazing) or processing in slaughterhouses in Uganda, herders require 'animal passports' since 2015. According to local chiefs who issue these documents as *sensu lato* proof of ownership, they are meant to combat livestock theft.

After long, ferocious and devastating inter-community fighting, the Matheniko of Uganda and the Turkana of Kenya sealed in 1973 the peace treaty of Lokirama (Lokirama Peace Accord). The untiring work of the traditional community leaders from both sides to contain emerging laid the foundation for peaceful cross-border relations and resource sharing. Modern elites have increasingly co-opted this grass-roots peace through annual commemorations bringing together political leaders from the Ateker communities of not only Kenya and Uganda but even Ethiopia and South Sudan.<sup>33</sup>

Intensive cross-border relations are evident among **pastoralists**, **NGOs** (Non-governmental Organisations), and **government** bodies (local, regional, and federal) alike. Matheniko and Turkana stated that NGOs active in the border region form important links across the border and between communities, although it was obvious that the most numerous, intensive and consequential relations exist between the pastoralists of both sides themselves. The remarkably close and amicable relations between Kenyan and Ugandan government bodies are also of great importance, as they provide a critical (even if not problem-free) framework for cross-border mobility, personal safety and legal security. Meetings of mixed (elders and youth) peace committees, water users associations, choirs and sports teams were mentioned as formal and reciprocal cross-border inter-community activities taking place regularly. However, the by far most important remains the continuous border crossing by pastoralists in search for pasture and water or en route to visit friends from other communities.

### Trade: Borders, business & development

Cross-border trade has intensified in recent years due to the improvement of the main transit road, of road security on the Ugandan side through disarmament and heavy-handed policing, and to the favourable light-handed boundary regime maintained by the two countries. Particularly Ugandan

traders, sometimes with lorries, often on heavily loaded motorcycles travelling one of the Moroto-Kenya roads or on foot, use the economic opportunities provided by price and commodity differences. Although market stalls have recently been constructed at Lokiriama, structural shortcomings but most of all the deterring effect of taxation has prevented this project from taking off.

One of the main trade goods is Ugandan cement, a commodity increasingly produced from local limestone deposits around Moroto and a small Chinese factory recently established there. The other most visible kind of product is alcoholic beverages, namely beer and liquor. Whereas bottled Ugandan means not more than a somewhat less expensive variety on a market of the more affluent, Uganda liquor has reportedly serious consequences for local societies. Because of its low price, Ugandan *wàragi*, commonly sold in small polyethylene sachets, successfully competes with the *businga* (beer) *kaada* ('yeast wine') and *chang'aa* (liquor) of local brewers and distillers, commonly women without income from a functional herd economy who make a living for agglomerations of dependents.<sup>1</sup> It is sold mainly by young men crossing the border either on foot or (on main roads incurring various taxes to border security personnel) by motorbike (*piki*) and reported to 'spoil the youth', take away income from struggling mothers and erode the social fabric.<sup>34</sup> Another case of negative consequences of what some promote as positive change towards 'more development', the recent boom of commercialising local donkey populations by 'marketing' their hides and meat is described below.

### Example of development issues: Donkey boom & donkey doom

Donkeys are special among the animals of Ateker pastoralists as they are normally left to roam freely for optimal grazing and are only brought in when needed (see also Twerda et al 1997). That makes them particularly vulnerable to theft. As they have, until recently, not been in the focus of commercial livestock trade, this could be managed with time-seasoned strategies. However, the introduction of trade in donkey hides with prices sometimes exceeding 200,- € per piece in a situation where a prolonged drought has thrown thousands of households into destitution hunger spreading across the region<sup>35</sup> and hundred thousands of young men penniless and idle, the new business, advertised by its beneficiaries as 'tapping a development potential', has fast grown into a serious problem for entire communities and millions of people across Africa<sup>36</sup>, as also our partners report:

[10:51] "Another challenge is the issue of donkeys. Donkeys are used for carrying the luggage, assisting the people to move from one place to another. Now there is a market coming from China and they now skin the donkeys and open factories: one in Baringo, even one in Turkana here, one in Karamoja. Now the young men are going to other areas to steal. They come and skin the donkey very fast and sell the hide to these factories. When people wake up in the morning, they find the donkeys have been skinned and just the meat is lying there. This is because money has become a problem that is affecting our society, our young men. While the elders are crying, the young men are going to steal from another place. They go, skin the donkeys and sell them. So sooner or later we are going to lose a lot of donkeys, and they might even be wiped out if this situation is not changed by the government. We need the government to assist the elders to overcome this situation." (Interview IE with I.Imana, Lodwar 5<sup>th</sup> July 2017)

Group interview IE with pastoralists in Kachakachòm, Turkana county, Loima sub-county, 9<sup>th</sup> July 2017, Akál Achùka (old man):

<sup>1</sup> See Dancause et al 2010. There is serious lack of research on the sociology of alcohol consumption in the region. As it regularly unites large amounts of people for considerable amounts of time, it is an important venue for social interaction and negotiation. The social costs of this pervasive drug consumption are especially obvious in smaller settlements with their large majorities of jobless people in precarious conditions. However, this should not preclude studies into the social benefits of collective drinking, including strategies for keeping it at healthy levels. For interesting research in other parts of the continents see e.g. Willis 2002; Wolputte & Fumanti 2010.

The donkey is the vehicle of the Turkana. It is for transport. It is what the households use to move during their migrations. But now we are afraid that no donkey will remain in Turkana because today you can see your donkeys grazing in the morning and in the evening you don't get them back. You think 'Maybe they have gone to another kraal', and you go looking for them and finally you find they have been raided, they were taken without your consent. You have not been consulted. You don't even know where these animals are. Somebody has just taken them. So you will go and look for them. It is a problem. It has become a new form of livestock rustling."

IE: "What do you think could be done to stop that?"

AA: "We are somehow helpless. Because when somebody raids your animals you don't know where they have taken them. If the government was good, it would stop the business with donkeys to ensure there is a proper screening of these animals. If they discover that they have been stolen, then those people should be arrested and put in jail and the donkeys given back to the owner. It is only the government that will have a solution, because those people are like raiders. They will come and will take your donkeys from there; you will wait at home for your donkeys to return but they have gone to Lodwar. They have been sold, money has been taken. So it is only the government that can solve that problem by intervening to ensure that the animals that have been sold are genuine, that they have originated from the owner and that it is the owner who is selling them and not somebody else who is not known to own these donkeys."

IE: "But could they not set up, for example, some kind of system to monitor or control, maybe some boys who control where the donkeys are going and monitor who might be coming for poaching the donkeys? And then identify them so that they can be arrested?"

AA: "It is easy to set up that kind of security system. But these rustlers are also very clever. When they know that the people here have set up a monitoring system and when they steal from there, they will not even pass through this route here. They will take a different route, maybe as they will go to Kákuma. Or they will go to the Pokôt route. Now people will think that these animals are for the Pokot. These traders, these thieves are very clever, they also know the monitoring systems."

IE: "So it won't be possible to monitor the movement of the donkeys so that people can see where they are taken and when someone is capturing a donkey? Not just seeing them passing with stolen donkeys but actually catch them in the act?"

AA: "The challenge here is this business. It is the money. The money that has been introduced to the pastoralist people. Because with money, when somebody starts money business, he can sell your donkey or he can sell your cow and convert it into money. It becomes very difficult to trace. It is because of the people who brought money to the pastoral lifestyle. Now these people know what money is. Now since the donkeys can be changed into money and you cannot trace it, you cannot know that this money was the product of your donkey. What should happen is that the security forces should take care of this donkey rustling. If they would be found, people would treat them like raiders. If they find them, they might even kill them. But we also don't want to engage in that because those people are also actually our own children. If you kill them, it will trigger conflicts among the community members. So the best way is to organise security at the government level to verify their origin before they are being sold. ...

The people who steal donkeys have become like rabid dogs. They have gone wild and roam the bush. They don't even know their mother, they don't even care about their fathers (uncles). They have become like wild dogs. They just get these animals, don't care, just go and sell them. And the chiefs also issue licenses for these people. And with the proceeds of these donkeys, the robbers bribe their way into getting these licenses from the authorities. So when bribes are given, it is very difficult to refuse to issue these permits. ...

This behaviour has not been there before this drought came. People were busy herding and working. Now that the herds have perished in this drought, these people are resorting to crude ways of surviving. Stealing has become their survival mechanism. They don't want to know whether this donkey belongs to their mother, father uncle – they just raid it. They have nothing to do. They become idle. What is contributing much to this is the idleness of these young men. Before, they were herding, they were fed by their animals. But as there are no animals, as there is nothing to eat, they resort to this violent style of life. ...

On the side of the chiefs, that is just being driven by greed. Greed for money. Because when people want this, they are given money. You cannot resist. They just get money and they know that it is illegal. But it is going to

benefit them, so they just take, they do not care about what is happening with the community. So long as they are benefitting themselves they are issuing these permits. ...

When we complain to the chiefs about these young men, the chiefs also tell us 'You know, I am also not the parent of this young man. You are his father, you are his mother. They are not my children, they are your children. If you want to arrest these children then it is you, the parents, to arrest them and bring them here. Me, I cannot arrest these children.' And they know very well that the parents cannot arrest these children because they have gone into the bush. They have become wild. They are not even at home. They have no way of arresting them. So, it is only the government that can set up a system of arresting them and treat them as criminals. But when we complain to the chiefs, they say that they cannot arrest them but only you. ...

We have no power to elect the chiefs. We were asking the government before to allow us to select the chiefs but it has become very difficult. And, the government is using the law to select the chiefs. For us, there is no law that is saying that allows us to select the chiefs. It becomes difficult for us even to deal with the chief. Sometimes when the chief is given a bribe, we will not even see that bribe because it is given in secret. It becomes difficult to pin that chief down and say 'You took a bribe, you are not able to arrest this young man'."

Akimàt (old woman): "Sometimes the chief has no way of arresting these thieves because they don't even pass through him. They know that if they pass through the chief, the chief might ask many questions. So they avoid even getting to the chiefs. When they steal these animals, they avoid them as they avoid the home. They pass through the bush. The key issue is the buyer. If the market can be stopped, then this problem will end. But if the chiefs are to be blamed, they say 'Even me I have not seen these people'."

Interview IE with I. Imána, Lodwar 5<sup>th</sup> July 2017, 14:15 min.: IE: "As it is known that, for example, the cutting of trees for charcoal burning and also this poaching of donkeys brings a lot of problems, what do you think is the reason why it has not been stopped by now?"

II: You know, I think it is laxity of the county government. Because they are the ones allowing the factory of the donkeys to be built here. They have seen a silly lot of stealing yet they have not helped. They have all the machineries, they have the administrators, the KPR is there. This thing can be controlled! The police is there, but they are just trying to sleep on it. The other one about the charcoal is the same thing. Instead of making sure we protect our resources, they give permits for people to cut the trees. They give a pretext saying they are cutting dry trees – but people are now becoming more sophisticated and put some fire under and then it dries slowly, without anybody knowing. So if the new government comes, we are going to pressure them to make sure this issue of donkeys stops, this issue of burning trees commercially stops, other than for domestic purposes.

### Potentials for improvement through intervention

Along the Loima frontier, inter-community links are tight and internal affairs of the pastoralist communities are, with exceptions in cases where disaster-bred hardship and predatory schemes by outsiders to the local civil societies of proximity combine to scenarios like the 'donkey boom', successfully managed. Personal friendship, communal resource sharing, and cross-border linkages through regular official meetings of committees and emissaries helped keeping resilient peace. However, inter-community relations and no less the interaction of communities from one side of the border with government bodies on the other side of the border is highly dependent on effective and regular communication. **Communication** has massive economic importance, particularly when livestock is a major commodity. Prices, demand, and supply can vary tremendously over time and space. Since the first Somali traders opened shops under colonial rule, economic ties have grown between pastoralists and the outposts of the formal economy in the emerging settlements. **Trade** in livestock and charcoal from the pastoralists and industrial products to them has grown slowly and steadily, and though most inhabitants of the mushrooming **settlements** of the rapidly growing sedentary population depend on transfers, they are, of course, buyers nonetheless. In the growth of the network of modern institutions like administration, health care, schooling and welfare, the major **centres** like Lodwar (c.70.000 inhabitants), a town that sees 5 national flights every day, and Moroto (c.20.000),

the old administrative centre of Karamoja, have become relays for international resource flows that run through them into the local societies of the infrastructural hinterland.

**Mobile network** coverage has improved considerable within the last decade and most people are now able to at least reach areas with sufficient coverage without walking for too long, although the continuum reaches from a few minutes to a day in some very mountainous and remote places. Mobile communication both in forms of videos and audio recordings to foster and maintain cross-border linkages are not ‘a pie in the sky’ but do already exist in simplified forms. Although only applicable for smartphones, the cross-platform instant messaging service *WhatsApp* serves as a successful communication tool not only for (partly cross-border mobile) local youth but also among Ugandan and Kenyan chiefs. Their *WhatsApp* group enables roaming-free, instant cross-border communication.

## 2.4.2 Turkana-Ethiopia Frontier

Turkana County borders to the north-east Ethiopia’s *South Omo Zone*. Part of the Southern Nations, Nationalities and People’s Regional State (SNNPR), it is divided into 8 *weredas* designed to include the lands of one or several specific ethnic groups. Two of them border Turkana County: Nyàngatom in the northernmost part and Dásanach from the Kùras Mountains to the shore of Lake Turkana (see map). Except for a few kilometres north of the present shore, the Turkana side of the borderland lies inside the Eleme Triangle, a territory disputed between Kenya, the only country with effective control of and activities in parts of it; South Sudan, whose government makes claims on it based on ambiguous formulations and practices of the British colonial government and historical grazing rights of South Sudanese communities, Topòsa and Nyàngatom; Ethiopia, who was generally thought of as having renounced all claims under Haile Selassie but re-emerged as a voice in the contestation parallel to the South Sudanese claim in 2015 emphasising historical rights of ‘Ethiopian’ communities, i.e. Dásanach, Nyàngatom and Súri (see map) to the resources of the Triangle. As the British, GoK and the Turkana have gradually expelled and banned all other communities from most of the area, the feeling of historical injustice combines with the need for pasture and water for their herds, exacerbated by droughts and the expropriation of economically central lands for sale to investors into industrial cash crop schemes run by migrant bottom-wage labourers.

### Nyàngatom

The Nyàngatom today live mainly within the Nyàngatom *wòreda* (district) of Ethiopia’s South Omo Zone and in former Suri territory, south of Longólemòr, in Ethiopia’s Upper Kibish valley. Since the expulsion of the Suri they also occupy areas of the Kàuto plateaux north and west of Mount Nàita in South Sudan. Colonial records record their permanent presence in and domination of the Triangle’s most productive plains around Kibish (Nákuá) and indicate, together with oral history,<sup>37</sup> repeated shifts of dominance of the Tepèth Hills (also referred to as Dongíro Mountains, Sóya or Thóya) between them and the Súri. With both Turkána and Topòsa they share the language, lifestyle and much of their indigenous culture. Their friendship with the Topòsa is permanent and reliable. But even if long periods of peace have helped them to reap rich harvests of friendship, intermarriage and cooperation, relations with the Turkana have often soured into conflict.<sup>38</sup>

### The situation in South Omo

The main water source of the region is the Ómo River. It gathers the profuse seasonal rains in the Ethiopian Highlands and leads them into the Turkana depression where they form the world’s largest desert lake and –through an enormous amount of constant evaporation in one of the hottest parts of

Africa— provide humidity for a vast dryland region suffering from nothing more than from lack of water. The southernmost part of the Omo valley is called Lower Omo, famous for its productive ecosystems and ethnic groups with rich and diverse indigenous cultures perpetuating highly specialised knowledge that forms the base of their high socio-ecological resilience. Most of them practice a combination of mobile pastoralism with rain-fed and flood recession agriculture, fishing, foraging, crafts, exchange and sales of their products, especially livestock products, sorghum and honey.<sup>39</sup>

Since the mid-2000s, the Ethiopian government dedicated considerable financial resources to the exploitation of the Omo River basin and its hydro-agricultural resources base (i.e. hydropower generation and irrigation agriculture). The upstream damming of the Omo and the transformation of huge parts of prime production zones of the indigenous socio-ecological systems into large-scale commercial cash-crop farming schemes has a massive impact on the ecology of the region and the capacity of local communities to provide for their material and social needs. The Kuraz Sugar Development Project (KSDP) is the largest agricultural development project launched by the Ethiopian government under its last 5-year development plan (First Growth and Transformation Plan - GTP I, 2010/11-2014/15). It is projected to cover 100,000 hectares of irrigated cultivation and build 4 processing factories. Moreover, the Ethiopian government has initiated a “villagization” program aiming at ‘sedentarising’ the agro-pastoralist communities of the lower Omo Valley and integrating them into the formal economy. However, all independent checks on its implementation indicate that it fails to keep the promises made to the affected people and affects their economic and social life negatively.<sup>40</sup>

Simultaneously, concerns of informed people are rising on the Kenyan side. As Mzee Imana puts it:

“When we hear about the irrigation of sugarcane and cotton in Ethiopia along River Omo, we get scared that maybe this is going to affect Lake Turkana. And if it affects. That means it affects the livelihoods of the people along there. But we have no statistics, we have no studies that have been carried on how much it can affect the livelihoods and the lifestyle of people here. It has not been studied. This is the thing we want to request even from the county government. Someone should come to do the study. We need to involve researchers, together with the Ethiopian side and see what effect it can bring to the society around.” (Interview by IE, Lodwar 2017.07.07)<sup>41</sup>

### **Security policies & cross-border activities**

In October 2016, the Ethiopian government declared a State of Emergency (SoE) following violent anti-government protests across many parts of the country. The SoE has led to increased presence of military and police forces across South Omo, particularly along the major transportation routes and in the vicinity of the state-owned sugarcane estates. Rights activists and critics of the government-sponsored development projects have been arrested and reportedly continue to face restrictions under the SoE, which was eventually lifted in August 2017.<sup>42</sup> Border crossing remains impaired due to tightened immigration policies. Travellers, including government officials and key development actors who used to cross the border informally, are now required to report in Omorate (the only official border post on the Ethiopian side) and present exit as well as entry documents in order to legally cross the border. As obtaining an exit entry is only possible by making a day(s) long and expensive journey on roads without public transport, the once vibrant and easy cross-border mobility in the area has almost ceased. Border crossing is partly also hampered by flare-ups of conflicts between the armed communities.

Past years had seen similarly levels of insecurity, and periods of peace also saw quick returns of cross-border exchange and cooperation. In our and the opinion of many of our interlocutors, peace is not just a condition for positive relations, positive relations and multiple interactions across the border are actually one of the most crucial pillars of and incentives for peace. If they are blocked, even

(and sometimes especially) when in the name of providing security, this makes reliable peace much harder to achieve and to maintain.

### **Increasing pressure on resources**

Today, the alteration of the Omo River's hydrological cycle through up-stream damming and the allocation of key land to large-scale irrigation schemes supposed to hire hundred thousands of migrant workers from overpopulated and impoverished parts of Ethiopia to produce cash crops for non-local investors is increasingly affecting the livelihoods of the communities of the lower Omo.<sup>43</sup> In addition, conflicts in South Sudan have prompted a large number of Topòsa pastoralists to migrate into the area, further exacerbating the pressure on the limited resources the local societies depend on.<sup>44</sup>

### **Cordial inter-governmental relations alongside inter-community conflict**

These difficulties stand in contrast to the rather cordial and impassionate relations between government officials and other professionals across the border. As the interests of the two national governments are not strongly antagonistic at this point, as well as historically, escalation is not in the interest of most local and regional officials<sup>i</sup>, especially those who are appointed and do thus not depend on popularity among local voters. Also, officials access considerable benefits through cross-border conflict management and peace building activities, which thrive in an environment of amicable and well-funded working relationships. However, even if lack of motivation contributes to the failure of the two friendly governments to bring sustainable peace to the frontier, the capacity of local communities to throw in significant power of their own is a crucial factor. Consequently, any solution meant to last more than a short period of time has to integrate these communities so closely that they support it because it tangibly works to their benefit.

## **3 Research Methodology**

Methodologically, we chose an anthropological, qualitative research design. The study report is informed by a balanced set of primary and secondary sources including a desk-review on relevant literature on the region, in-depth interviews, focus-group discussions, and stakeholder workshops.

Hannah Longole as main local partner supplemented the ABI consulting team that cooperated closely with two local experts – Prof. Michael Lokuruka (Commissioner of Kenya's Public Service Commission, Lecturer at Karatina University) and Samuel Ekal (Founder of TUPADO, Turkana Pastoralist Development Organization). Research assistants and resource persons that joined our study team proved to be knowledgeable and effective facilitators. Seven local research assistants from Turkana County and Karamoja supported the team during the planning stage and implementation of fieldwork in the study region. Preparatory tasks included the assessment of potential travel routes, a pre-selection of interview site, as well as briefing of community representatives and government officials.

The assignment started with a desk-based analysis of the different local, legal, political, economic, and cultural contexts that shape civil society on all sides of the borders (See Annex 1 for an overview of relevant literature). Based on this assessment the sequence of the elements of the field mission was determined as well as a preliminary list of potential interview partners.

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<sup>i</sup> County and Sub-County level in Kenya, Wereda and Zonal Level in Ethiopia

### 3.1 Data collection (types) & fieldwork (implementation of study)

The data gathered through community meetings, focus group discussions, as well as open and semi-structured interviews in Turkana and Uganda was used to complement desk-based research carried out in Germany.<sup>i</sup> We utilised case and situation specific questionnaires to identify roles of individuals and their influence in opinion forming, decision-making and collective action processes. Interviews with individuals of the Ateker-speaking pastoralist communities were mainly carried out with the help of interpreters; transcription and comprehensive translation of audio-recordings was done on a rolling basis. Moreover, we met with representatives of government institutions, academia, NGOs, development actors, and the media in Nairobi, Eldoret, and Lodwar. A crossing from Turkana County into Ethiopia in Kibish was not possible due to temporarily heightened insecurity at the border. We therefore relied on information collected during visits in 2010, 2012, 2014, 2016, and 2017 of members of the study team and information provided via telephone by Ethiopian partners.

### 3.2 Data evaluation & bias avoidance

Data triangulation and methodological triangulation was used by drawing on different types of interviews, observation, and textual analysis in different contexts over the course of the data gathering process. Data analysis consisted of a three-step process of qualitative coding.<sup>45</sup> First, we organised and categorised notes taken during interviews, a limited number of audio-transcripts of interviews, and other documents (i.e. study reports, secondary literature). This process of descriptive coding was followed by topic coding, the linking of particular information to our specific research questions. Analytical coding refers to the interpretation of data beyond categories and was aimed at generating novel insights. In addition to previous experience, discussions during an early stage of interaction provided the opportunity to conduct assessments of intra-community dynamics and enabled a pre-selection of people who we anticipated could meet the requirements for becoming focal figures.

During the data collection and evaluation process direct and third party feedback techniques were applied in order to scrutinise actions, approaches and assumptions continuously and at all stages and levels of project work. In doing so, the consultant team intended to counteract possible biases, perceptive distortion and framing effects. We reflected in sessions with our research assistants and partners on the context, process, and content of our discussions and interactions. The outcome of this conversations was three-fold: first, it allowed us to enquire in more detail about certain issues that were touched upon; second, it helped revising and adapting interview guidelines; third, it enabled us to adjust further actions. A workshop held on 25 July at St. Theresa Pastoral Centre in Lodwar brought together all research assistants involved in the data gathering process and a wide range of partners from government, academia, media, and development organisations. Following a brief description of the study's objectives and preliminary findings, participants jointly reflected on the core questions and issues investigated by the team. This exercise combined different perspectives on the outcomes of the study and helped reassessing the intervention models we had discussed.

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<sup>i</sup> Focus group discussions, interviews, and community meetings were carried out in Lodwar, Lorugùm, Kachakachòm, Urùm, Lokiriáma, Moróto, Rupa, Kobébe and Loregait; as well as in Kaikor, Kibish, Lobur and Nariokòtome.

## 4 Mapping Civil Society: A pool of autonomous agency

### 4.1 What is “civil society” in the research region?

Every definition draws on a heuristical goal that it aims to support. To justify our own definition of “civil society” (CS), we therefore need to identify such a goal. We chose to focus on the double purpose of civil society of promoting (1) increased participation in decision making processes and (2) social harmonisation as mitigation of conflicts based on generally agreed principles of fairness, which can be expected to empirically be to a large extent a consequence of (1). The logical consequence of applying these principles to regions like the ones under study is the revision of common notions of CS as consisting of an agglomeration non-governmental but legally *formal* organisations in favour of one that allows it to conceptualise the illiterate 90+% of the people as *active parts* of civil society – i.e. as *factual actors* and *relevant partners*. This is compatible with current understandings like the one formulated by Van Dyck (2017) of a ‘civil society ecosystem’ “as a complex and interconnected network of individuals and groups drawn from rich histories of associational relationships and interactions”, recognising and embracing the agency of local people and their cultural roots.

In a discussion with VSF-Germany and other partners, the question of formalisations of indigenous and other forms of organisation, potential benefits but also risks came up. This topic is discussed below in conjunction with the role and dimensions of social proximity and reciprocity as key mechanisms of inclusion, participation and integration in both the pastoralist and the modern sphere. Given the ambiguity of its effects, it seems advisable to use formalisation strategies only cautiously and in conjunction with strong action research components.

#### Cultural universes of ideals, dreams & aspirations

Ateker pastoralists do not commonly aspire for most of the culturally and ideologically charged material icons of social success that haunt the dreams of people in stationary societies. They don’t aspire for cars or private land or lots of money. As people elsewhere, they wish for and pursue social recognition, respect and prestige (Bourdieu: “symbolic capital”). They treasure sizeable families, large networks of friendship and kin (“social capital”). And they seek material wealth (“economic capital”), not least because it is convertible into the other two kinds of value. This material wealth consists almost entirely in animals. Livestock is ‘social blood’ in these societies as its circulation sustains their individual members, materialises their relations and position and integrates the members of a society within and between groups. A complex system of multiple rights on the stock serves both as a disaster insurance of central importance in a highly disaster-prone region and as main currency of capital accumulation and transaction in a competitive game.<sup>46</sup>

For non-pastoralists, livestock is only one among many commodities. Here, the material icons of global modernity take a place similar to the one they have for the affluent, the ambitious and the poor elsewhere. Globally prevalent ideas of material wealth and of formal education as decisive cultural capital that provides keys to social and economic capital widely accompany the transculturation of individuals and communities, especially in the growing permanent settlements where non-pastoralists make up the majority. The third main type of aspiration is for influence and power in the realm of politics. Due to the crucial role money and the display of affluence play in politics, it is commonly closely related to material pursuits. One of the main problems is that the experience of the region’s people does not indicate that hard and productive work is a sure road to status and wealth. It rather points to the ability to talk the talk matching the context and walk benefits home on

informal, often illicit, but well-trodden paths as key recipe for success. That does, of course, not mean that all ambitions and aspirations at play here are purely selfish. Certainly, pursuits of wealth, knowledge and influence are also usually at least partly driven by concern and regard for others, the wish to help or benefit others – but usually only *certain* others. The key differences concern both the degree and the specific boundaries of inclusivity.<sup>47</sup> Which others exactly are regarded and which are not? For us, exemplary people and role models are more inclusive than others, and practices increasing inclusivity are worth supporting.

## 4.2 Spatial, cultural & social proximity

We found ample evidence that “existing well-functioning sustainable practices” are often based on social proximity, which in turn appears to be strongly correlated with spatial proximity. There is partial overlap with cultural proximity, but it remains important to note this partiality, as well as to define these notions more precisely.

### 4.2.1 Proximity in pastoralist society

A field where the relation between spatial and social proximity is conspicuous are the economic structures of Ateker pastoralist societies. Here, the matrifocal and patrifocal elements of the family economy translate into the spatial closeness structured by the architectonic design of household compounds where siblings, wives, children, friends, children’s, siblings’ and friends’ wives and children, etc. form important units of both materially marked convivence and close daily life cooperation. Yet while cultural standards in family organisation and compound construction<sup>48</sup> limit the translation of emotional into spatial proximity, they are most strongly expressed in the free choice of proximity and companionship in the transitory arrangements of migratory livestock camps.<sup>49</sup> The voluntary nature of cooperation, spatial and social association that comes with the mobility and flexibility of residence resulting from the needs of the stock disincentivises anti-social behaviour.<sup>50</sup>

Due to the aridity of their environment, the Turkana are traditionally fully nomadic, i.e. they did not use to have – with a few exceptions in ecologically special zones like the Pokot frontier south of the Turkwell river and a few spots in the Turkwell delta – permanent settlements, whereas Karamojong and Nyangatom, enjoying higher average humidity are semi-nomads as they combine permanent villages (*ngieréa*, sing. *eré*) where commonly old people and mothers of very small children remain even at the height of the dry season, as resource availability allows their subsistence there, whereas the bulk of the herds moves with the physically fittest part of the population according to the considerations of strategic resource use guiding the decision making of the herd managers and forms temporary “cattle [or rather: livestock] camps” (*ngaborin*, sing. *abòr*, or *ngadakarìn*, sing. *àdakar*).

Social and emotional proximity is fairly directly translated into the spatial composition of these settlements. While there are certain basic prescriptions as to the spatial order in to which structures like day and night huts, goat and cattle pens, men’s parlors, personal granaries, main gates, etc., are to be assembled,<sup>51</sup> the ample space for generating spatial closeness and distance between relatives and non-relatives –most pronouncedly when dividing up to lead the different fractions of the family herds to different grazing areas– displays a tendency towards drawing together people who like and cooperate with each other and see spatial separation following from continuing tensions between individuals, families or even larger segments of a community.

Such settings foster high levels of participation in decision making. Although there are forms of meritocracy and in certain ritual gatherings (*ekiriam*, *akirikèt*) generally respected and life-seasoned

men commonly dominate with sophisticated speech performances, women and youth are included in the general freedom of expression that goes along with radically democratic consensus-based decision making negotiated in open assemblies. Everybody has the right to voice his or her opinion, and a debate needs to end in a general agreement. This leaves little space for hereditary or office-based leadership, the centralisation of power, permanent group hierarchies, class formation and the like. However, states and other formal organisations have often tried to reduce this equality in their relations with the communities for practical reasons, and the consequences of this have not yet been seriously studied and analysed in this region. Our models address this through their openness to indiscriminate participation of general population and a deliberate focus on this issue.

### Pastoralist migration patterns as cross-boundary relation multipliers

The following maps from the classic ethnography of the Karimojong and socio-ecological analysis of their economy (Dyson-Hudson 1966) show, combined with the above map by Novelli, graphically how much the life of the pastoralist communities is one of constant change in proximity to both parts of their own society and mobile sections of neighbouring communities.

While the wet season allows these communities to gather in their distinct homelands where their permanent settlements (*ngieréa*, sing. *eré*) are, the resource scarcity of the

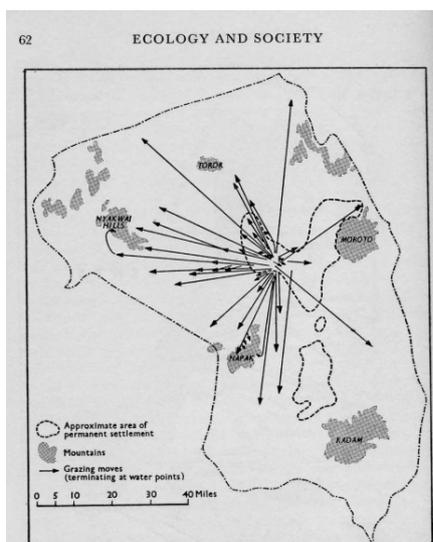


FIG. 10. Dry Season Scattering of One Subsection (Ngingoleriet, 1956)

Ngingoleriet are a subsection of Ngibokora and the map is based on the position of their herds in the early dry season (February–March) of 1956. Notes: (1) Movements start from the settled area of the subsection, and are simplified to straight lines, terminating at water points where the herds were enumerated during this period. Any Ngingoleriet herds exploiting the extreme S.W. of Kadam (the Teso swamp region) or the area immediately north of Kadam (the southern Aril ridge) would have been missed by enumerators.

dry season forces them to move with fractions of the family herds in different directions.

Where exactly they go depends a speculative balancing of pull factors like the availability of water, browse and / or pasture with push factors like risk of disease infections, hostility or unpredictability of neighbours. In any case, their chances of growing the herd instead of seeing it decreasing depends on the range of areas they can theoretically go to, and that range does not only depend on general relations between the involved communities but also on personal relations of their members.

A Turkana who has a Jie friend will have someone to go to when the rains fail in Aturkàn (Turkana land), and thus where to go in Najie (Jie land). Such relations develop when com-

munities meet at grazing grounds they share. They get to know each other and many will find friends among the others whose company they enjoy. Often this relationship continues through mutual visits and consecutive meetings in shared grazing grounds of the course of the seasons. Often they will ask and give each other specific animals who will, as part of the receiver's herd, live with him and produce offspring that embodies the growing relationship between the bond friends.<sup>52</sup>

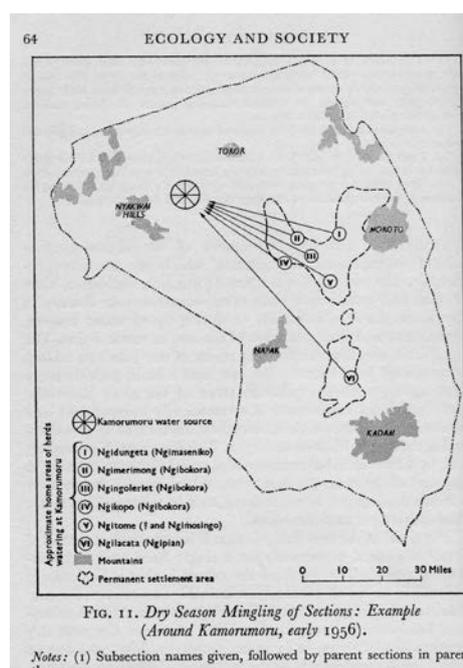


FIG. 11. Dry Season Mingling of Sections: Example (Around Kamarumuru, early 1956).

Notes: (1) Subsection names given, followed by parent sections in parentheses.

When conflicts arise where the communities meet, friends can talk to friends on the other side, inquire more neutrally, calm tempers and mediate between the opponents. They can meet the other side more safely because they are –up to a certain point on the curve of an escalating conflict– under the protection of their bond friend. Therefore, people who practice inter-community resource sharing, are sociable and ambitious have many friends and acquaintances in many places. Through them, they can negotiate access to important resources for others. This produces symbolic and social capital they can use to further build both their herds in an increased migration radius and their position in society through the support of their cooperators.

This situation makes the value of inter-personal cross-boundary communication obvious. While spatial flexibility is a central ingredient of success in mobile pastoralism, communication is a major limiting factor. But where communication partners can just call each on mobile phones other instead of walking for days under a scorching sun while leaving their livestock and family affairs without their personal care and attention, inquiring about changes for finding adequate pasture and obtaining permission to use it can rise dramatically, provided a suitable relationship network exists.

#### 4.2.2 Proximity in local governance & political representation

##### Chiefs

In the early colonial period, British and Ethiopian colonisers alike identified among those locals they considered to wield sufficient influence among their peers those who seemed to be most ‘friendly’, genuinely and extensively inclined to cooperate with them and promote their interest, of course in return of one or the other form of reward, and named them chiefs (NgaTurkana *ngikatukòk*, sing. *ekatukòn*; Nyangatom *ngimuròk*, sing. *emuròn*, otherwise the word for diviners and healers). There is little space here to go into the details of this, but it can be said that chiefs have since remained in an ambiguous position between the spheres. Under the British, Jomo Kenyatta and the Moi regime, many chiefs used this position to expand personal power and wealth. Some became highly controversial among their local ‘subjects’ due to the extensive use of abusive practices and / or ‘stinginess’, i.e. a level of resistance to request of sharing out benefits of office exceeding local thresholds of tolerance; others were respected as efficient mediators of communal interests, sociable personalities and / or important providers. Generally, the relations between local government are severely understudied in this region.<sup>53</sup>

##### Political representation & the ambiguous power of education

Since then, the power of chiefs in Turkana has declined considerably and much of the influence they once had among local communities has shifted, gradually increasing with the process of decentralisation and devolution of administrative and allocating power, to MPs, MCAs (formally *councillors*), *ward administrators* and, as the most recent step, *village administrators*. Simultaneously, the social distance between all these office holders and the local population has grown with the increases in educational requirements demanded of applicants. While the chiefs of the colonial era and most of the first decades after independence were (illiterate) pastoralists like their ‘subjects’, a completed secondary education has become a precondition for eligibility and university degrees are used as shiny icons of key cultural capital in the competition for offices of all sorts.

Notably, people are generally quick to admit that proficiency in formal education and social proximity to local people, including a genuine understanding of and will to promote their views and interests, do not necessarily correlate positively. In simply terms, ‘an educated guy’ might be ‘close with’

the people, but that depends most of all on his individual personality. The same is true for those who instead received a full pastoralist education, but their close integration into the local society, in contrast to the spatial and cultural distance imposed on those going through the formal (boarding) school system, makes this closeness easier and significantly more likely.

### 4.2.3 Changes in proximity patterns

The conditions under which nomads like the Turkana sedentarise generate new dynamics in their social relations. While their migratory lifestyle and the communal ownership structure of their traditional land use system allows for far-reaching flexibility in adapting spatial proximity to emotional and social proximity, this changes in contexts where residence becomes permanent and generates new patterns of ownership.

One result is that conflict management through spatial separation becomes much more difficult. We have recorded the suppression of visible negative feelings and disapproval, as well as increased fear of social exclusion and intra-community tensions as important socio-psychological consequences.

Another significant change in most permanent settlements is the massive decrease in the use of the traditional institutions through which pastoralists regulate local and community affairs, along with their higher exposure to the power of modern institutions (although locals do by no means frequently or prominently turn to them, except for those providing the food aid on which most sedentarised Turkana rely, and to a lesser degree the health care system). People continue to prefer managing their own affairs autonomously, although the strong institutional framework pastoralists have for that is melting away in the settlements parallel to their increasing detachment from pastoralist life.

Yet another is the introduction of displays of social superiority through expensive buildings and the like. It largely visualises the increasing division of 'elites' from 'common people' that slowly transforms pastoralist societies in the region towards conditions resembling more closely those typical for the strongly 'westernised' and socially increasingly atomising post-colonial societies of the region.

Here we encounter a central difficulty for the definition of *civil society*: if the term is to prioritise the genuine and extensive participation of citizens, conceptual and notional reifications of civil society as *NGOs* and *activists* lead us away from appropriate models, because in contexts like the ones studied here, the latter are part structurally part of a socio-cultural minority claiming, generating and entrenching elite status, while reaping – like businessmen, politicians and other modern professionals – asymmetric economic and social benefits from it.

This contradiction is difficult to solve – but the pursuit of alternative models of cooperation with local populations with a focus on mitigating existing contradictions by involving a larger spectre of local actors into processes of key importance for locals in which their influence is low is a plausible strategy. After distilling a broadened definition of civil society from our analysis, we will therefore turn to the different categories of potential partners endeavours in this direction could work with in the pursuit of this goal.

## 4.3 Respected people, trusted connectors, role models & change makers

In recent years, working towards a better integration of local populations in development activities – which have been widely criticised for being impaired by top-down approaches – has increasingly focussed on working with and through individuals that enjoy special respect and influence among

their communities. This is based on the hope that such people can act as integer and efficient connectors that represent and promote the interests of their communities without pursuing selfish goals that would compromise the interaction. As the situation of the target population of an intervention is generally conceptualised as deficient and the intervention usually as a measure to address the concerned deficiencies, i.e. change that situation for the better, there is special interests in such individuals as “change makers”. However, among people like the pastoralists of the research region, “change” does not necessarily have the widely positive connotation it enjoys in the development community and industrialised societies.<sup>54</sup>

One of the most important results of our study is that, for the research region, categories often presumed to be synonymous – like ‘respected people’, ‘trusted connectors’, ‘role models’ and ‘change makers’ – have to be disentangled and differentiated, as we found them to apply to conspicuously different kinds of people in the expressed perceptions of our interlocutors.

The at first glance most salient difference is between those respected and trusted people who are pastoralists and thus integral part of the local civil societies of close proximity, whom we will call ‘**internal connectors**’ and discuss first, and professionals with formal education who, even if they are from the area, form a socio-culturally and economically clearly distinct group, and in the border regions under discussion a small minority that largely specialises in brokering cooperation and resource flows between local environments and the wider world, i.e. ‘**external connectors**’.

Related to this division, there is another important pattern of difference. It concerns the relations between respect, trust and mediation functions on one side and change making on the other. Although life is quite challenging for a majority of the region’s people, what they normally look for in an ‘internal’ leader is not so much the ability or determination to change things in any fundamental way, but the ability and determination to help finding ways of avoiding or reversing negative changes, especially changes that affect their ability to live the life they desire and are well qualified to master.<sup>55</sup>

How this is similar and at the same time different for ‘external connectors’ will be discussed in a later section. First we will use the explanations of our interlocutors to shed some light on what kind of people are commonly especially revered, trusted and respected and why.

#### 4.3.1 A list of trusted connectors

Our first round of interviews on the Loima-Karamoja could be summarised with the following enumeration of the people mentioned most frequently, mostly considered to be *trustworthy* and *connectors*, together with a very condensed list of factors contributing to their position, to give a first impression of the kind of personalities people come up with when interviewed without steering interruptions.

- (1) **Ekéno Lolup’kòngu**; territorial section: NgíKàmatak; age group: NgíThemàè; area of main (migratory) residence and influence: Lotäre (i.e. the Karamoja escarpment region) & Central Karamója, western Loima; well-known kraal leader & marksman; was an *ajoré* [local age group] team leader, i.e. age set & war leader; most prominent Turkana representative in public meetings with other ethnic communities, government and NGOs; many strong relations with representatives of other communities; large family & herding community; rich.

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<sup>i</sup> Like his friend and age-mate Kodèt, Ekéno has indeed spend far more time on the Ugandan than on the Kenyan side of the border in recent years, although this is a relative notion in areas where there is no government presence over long distances.

- (2) **Kodèt Imána**; territorial section: NgĩKàmatak; age group: NgĩThemàe; area: Lotäre & Central Karamója, western Loima; well-known kraal leader & marksman; close associate & in-law of Ekéno, sometimes referred to as 'his deputy'; mostly involved in peace talks in Kotído (Jíe land), Kobébe, Moróto, Namálu, Nakapiripirit; large family & herding community; rich.
- (3) **Akoèl Munyès**; territorial section: NgĩVoyakwàra; age group: NgĩThemàe; area: Letéa, Lokipòto, Lopedurú, Naturturio, Nakito (all along the boundaries of Turkana West sub-county with western Loima sub-county) and Lotäre; participated as key representative in peace talks in Najíe (i.e. the Land of the Jíe ethnic group of Karamója), Namálu (centre of the Piàn Karimojòng) and Kangóle (centre of the Bokòra Karimojòng); involved in most peace talks; used to explore places of good pasture and advised people to migrate there; wealthy.
- (4) **A.K.\***; area: western Loima; female *emuròn*, rainmaker, ritual leader & healer; strong spiritual power; ritually counteracts disasters like drought, epizootics, epidemics and raids; consulted before raids.
- (5) **Apá Lóris (†)**; area: Central Karamoja (ethnic Matheniko); *emuròn*, healer, ritual leader; peace maker, convinced Karimojòng and Jíe not to attack the Turkána; killed in K\* for 'siding with the Turkana', buried in Nakilóro (i.e. at the border point on the road between Lokiriama and Moroto).
- (6) **E. M.\***; *emuròn* and sorcerer (bad); used to snatch peoples' wives through magic.
- (7) **Ekakutàn Nakoribéye**; originally a Kwatèla (i.e. from NW Turkana), he lives now in Lotäre; brilliant bull song composer who impressed & won young women with his songs and in dances.
- (8) **MP Protus Akúja**; member of the national parliament for Loima sub-county; has done many good things like supporting those defending the community, making peace with enemy communities, always intervening in times of adversity like enemy attacks and drought-time famine.<sup>i</sup>

Some of the attributes with which or interlocutors explained the respect these people enjoy might look strange to readers unfamiliar with the environment. In the following sections, we therefore provide categorisations, explanations and quotes from interviews that illustrate their background.

### 4.3.2 "A government of their own"

Darlington Akabwai, a veteran of development and peace work with the region's people, says

'I like this research because it identifies people who have been neglected. They have been keeping the livelihoods of the Karamojong, Turkana, Nyangatom, Topòsa and other Ateker people without the government. They have a government of their own; protecting the livelihood; keeping the management of livestock; maintaining the grazing migrations; extending this unity of purpose to the neighbours. And they are recognised even by those neighbours. ... People who are usually forgotten by the governments... They have institutional structures that rely on individuals who are recognized by the rest of the communities, who are respected by the communities themselves because of particular characteristics that they manifest, characteristics that support the communities. So your approach helps to reach and understand the people who are forgotten. (Interview by I.E., Lodwar 3<sup>rd</sup> July 2017)

He goes on to describe how this form of informal or internal leadership relates to mobility.

<sup>i</sup> This is probably the answer with lowest level of general consent, at least when looking at Loima sub-county as a whole, illustrating the more divided character of the *ariàng* political sphere as compared to the pastoralist sphere. The interviewees were dearly supporters of Protus, the sitting MP, and this was common in the areas we visited. Western Loima, including the borderlands, and the Catholic part of Lorugum, were his main support base and most of the MCAs of this area supported him and the Jubilee alliance of MPs under the former Senator, John Munyès. However, his rival, Jeremiah Lomorukài, ally of the county government, had built strong support in the populous eastern and central parts of Loima, including the large settlement of Turkwell, a main irrigation agriculture side. And he had not only strengthened his base in the Protestant parts of Lorugum, but also made inroads into populations originally supporting his opponents. Jeremiah, as he is commonly referred to, won the seat, in spite of widespread displeasure with some of his methods.

When you get a Turkána moving or Karamojòng moving, he belongs to an àdakar or alomár [Ng’Ateker terms for the migratory herding camps] which in Kwatèla they call arigàn. And that **institutional structure** is managed by the owners. (D.Akabwai, 03.07.17)

Here he refers to the decentral structures of the socio-economic system. Households, consisting of more or less extensive families, are very independent in their decisions and are free to move across the vast shared land of their community, provided they communicate appropriately with those holding the strongest collective rights on certain localised resources.

At the same time, they commonly rely on certain outstanding individuals for advice and mediatory functions. Those individuals ‘are recognized by the community. If you miss them, you will do nothing in this setup. They have **particular characteristics** that are recognized by the communities’ (ibd.). He then summarised the kinds of people that enjoy special appreciation.

### 4.3.3 Respect as symbolic capital, generosity & reciprocity

In probably any society, much of what we think of when we use the word *respect* is related to the recognition an individual enjoys as an entity endowed with rights that demand, through the strong support this recognition has among the members of a key social context, consideration when deciding about the most appropriate course of action towards this individual. Part of this recognition can be an assessment of the power an individual –or related actor network– has to mobilise resources and mechanisms in agonistic pursuits. It includes both the risks of incurring harm from a hostile use of this power and the potential for providing benefits. Another, sometimes contrasting part of social recognition / respect / prestige / symbolic capital is the high value conformity with certain norms has for decisive and even for otherwise oppressed majorities or for influential minorities.

### 4.3.4 “Respected People” - A typology



Photo: Elder at Urùm meeting, July 2017 (© I.Eulenberger)

According to D.Akabwai’s account on the matter, revered people are found across genders and ages.

[[15:40]] Leaders and gifted people ... are not only among men, it is **gender balanced**. You find them among women, you find them among the youth, you find them among the elders. (interview IE with D.Akabwai, 03.07.17)

#### Generous people

The first criterion Darlington mentioned is indeed among the most frequently cited.

Such a person could be a very generous individual. Not necessarily rich, but very generous in his community. When he sees problems in the community, he can mobilise assistance to be given to the affected. The method of mobilization is normally going to the community and saying: “This is the situation that has faced us – if there is anybody with a bull, loan it to me, I will pay it later, so that we slaughter that bull to solve this problem.” So he is a generous person who understands his community and is very much liked by the community because of that character. (D.Akabwai, 03.07.17)

The high cultural value of generosity is central to how these societies deal with the contradictions between the strong desire for individual advancement and family prosperity, the ‘natural injustices’ arising from the central role of hazards in the role of individuals and groups, and the common need to insure oneself against these hazards that, like diseases, drought and raids, can hit anyone inde-

pendent of their skill and dedication. As in similar social economies, surplus economic capital (here: livestock) is converted into social capital (mobilisable relationships) through symbolic capital (prestige) through generous giving to other individuals or community assemblies. As livestock is so attractive to possess, giving up this possession in return for immaterial values is also a sign for a prosocial disposition that allows others to develop trust towards this person.

This also applies also to people considered as rather poor by both pastoralist and *ariàng* ('modern') standards. One example we describe in more detail below is Nasuròn, the local female head of a typical sedentarised family segment. Although she owns only a few goats and does not belong to those with comparably high income in the local community, her consistent readiness to share what little she has with her neighbours is duly noted and rewarded with general respect, trust and the award of a leadership role at the neighbourhood level.

### The rationality of generosity

One example is the economically rational social expectation of generosity. Generosity can be economically rational if it helps maximising the good with the highest value. If that value is social esteem, a feature conspicuously strong in many traditional societies, it is rational to give away economic capital to gain symbolic capital. On one side, being celebrated as a friend, an elder, a benefactor, an important man, an exemplary individual, a good man, a great man, etc. provides significantly greater emotional and mental rewards than being spat at as a nastily stingy and selfish icon of bad character. On the other, people listen to and prefer to side and interact with those who try to meet their requests and behave friendly towards them, at least if the choice is between cost-benefit models perceived to be similarly rewarding in other respects.\* Therefore, in many societies generosity is also materially rewarding.

This is also the case in Ateker pastoralist societies. By giving away a lot of livestock, the key form of economic capital in these societies, the generous individual creates and social landscape of symbolic capital deposits around it. When struck by disaster or in need of an economic boost for an important effort, this capital can be harvested through demands for reciprocity. These are never secure. Neither can they be enforced (in contrast to fines levied by the community) nor are they safe from accident, as debtors run into disasters and hardships of their own. Nevertheless, the concept of obligation to reciprocate is integrated strongly enough into the world view and system of accepted practices of these societies to make generosity profitable. However, as even the first ethnographers already noted, there is simultaneously a permanent game of *discursively generating contrasting expectations* of what the best next move and outcome within this –in a sort honour-based– system of interwoven reciprocations should be. And even here, people who exceed in giving but are negligent in calling in debts might end up losing symbolic and social capital, too. So, the generosity of the rich is as an ambiguous phenomenon here as anywhere.

It needs to be pointed out that as much as generosity is valued in itself, we find that among the most revered personalities, it is but one of several components that builds an adequate reputation.

### Leadership qualities in Ateker cultures

In Ateker society, the most influential individuals are by no means necessarily the richest, nor are the richest most frequently also the most powerful. Admittedly, many if not most of the most prominent leader figures, be they *ngikaduaràk* (spiritual leaders), *ngikagumàk* (war leaders) or 'just' influential elders (*ngikasekou* / *ngikapòk*), are also relatively rich (which in pastoralist society always means rich in livestock, not anything else). However, while some are certainly among the richest herd

owners of their respective region, others are certainly not – and still command significant and conspicuous influence on public opinion and decision making processes in their communities. And there are many ‘rich people’ (*ngikabaràk*, sing. *ekabaràn*, literally ‘cattle people’ / ‘cattle man’) who are not exceedingly influential, be it because they are seen as stingy and selfish or because their advice or arguments are not particularly convincing or simply because they are not very gifted performers and orators in a society where wit and eloquence are crucial capabilities in a society constantly reorganising and managing itself through public discussion.

Now if we ask with the ToR “Who does the community allow to become such a personality?” the clues point to strong interrelations with the other questions raised there, “What are the group dynamics leading to the identification of such actors?” and for the “social capital [providing] the context for these civil society actors”. Our answers here can, unfortunately, not claim to be based on research of sufficient depth and extent to allow for any air of conclusiveness on these points. But there are some striking features that can and should be mentioned. They have to do with certain moral norms that are, for good reasons, very prominent in these and similar societies. Some of them have already been mentioned. This section provides a summary of the *spectre of behavioural and character ideals* our interlocutors cited most frequently; of structural and situational *dynamics* that bring people with these characteristics into positions of influence, conceptualising them as opportunities to gain or lose *social capital*, i.e. the capacity to mobilise social relations with other actors in accordance with their aspirations; and of the ways *positions provide* individuals with social capital.

### “Sharpshooters” & ‘War Leaders’

The communities of the region have been fighting each other over livestock, pasture and water since long before the arrival of writing observers in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The long and gruesome civil wars of the adjoining countries and the inability of their governments to provide adequate security have kept the necessity for armed self-defence at high levels for large parts of it. Therefore, courage and leadership qualities in combat situations remain qualities in high demand.

‘Some of them are **sharpshooters**. As young men they have been fighting for their community. They grew and became old with that respect that whenever he goes to follow the animals which were raided by the enemy, he is a leader and will recover them. They are brave, they are sharpshooters, and all the communities will recognize them and even give them names.’ (D.Akabwai, 03.07.17)

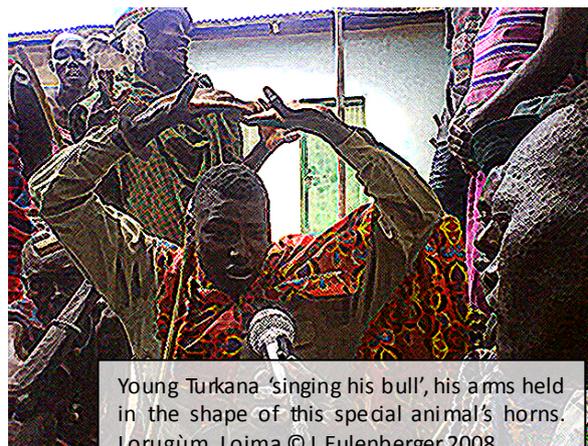
These names commonly refer to particular episodes of success in battle.

The late Lokwarasimòè [name of honour referring to fighting enemies, *ngímòè*, using a spear, *akwara*] was known to use a spear to go and fight the enemy and recover the animals. Lopéimòè, that was a person who went and killed a very dangerous enemy; one of the dangerous enemies which was always pestering them. So, the sharpshooters, the warriors are recognized because they protect their community by fighting for them. They protect their community by defending (it against) the enemies that will attack.’

“Sharpshooter” (*ekágumàn*) is a term that not only refers to excellent marksmanship but courage, determination, generally high efficiency in battle, and very often also to coordination skills that compel participants in a fight to follow his leadership. Such a trait helps a man to build up respect and trust, and many influential pastoralists share it. But simultaneously, there are many who are influential in spite of its absence, and there are many who are renowned marksmen and braves without any leadership function and battle leaders whose special influence does not extend beyond matters of armed conflict. And there are also highly valued qualities that have little in common with the martial virtues that might be irritating to outsiders.

## Great singers

And then there are singers. They are gifted to sing. When he sings his bull<sup>i</sup>, everybody wakes up to dance. He is remembered by his bulls. He is very, very eloquent in singing. ... When he observes a situation, (e.g.) a drought, he designs a song that will describe that drought very well. When an enemy came and attacked and they overpowered that enemy, he can design a song that will depict that situation. So those are gifted singers and they are recognized because of singing. (D.Akabwai, 03.07.17) [9:27]



Young Turkana 'singing his bull', his arms held in the shape of this special animal's horns. Lorugum, Loima © I.Eulenberger 2008

It might not be immediately obvious how this category of revered people could be important for actors looking for ways of supporting good practices and empowering local civil society, but it is also not too difficult to imagine and we will come back to that when we discuss the connector network.<sup>ii</sup>

### 'Spiritual leaders' or 'Seers' (*ngimuròk*)

Among Ateker pastoralists, the most influential kind of leader are probably the most powerful 'spiritual leaders' or 'seers' (*ngimuròk*, sing. *emuròn*). They are credited with extraordinary spiritual power (*eduàr*), such as the capacity to foresee events, outcomes and threats, identify their reasons and provide instructions that help managing them, channel spiritual power through rituals, prayers and blessings, heal, guide and mediate.

[13:43] And then among them there are traditional seers, God given dreamers; or if they **discern the intestines of an animal** [that was ritually slaughtered], they will say [for example]: "Rain will come! Soon rain will come. We now see this rain! It is already depicted in the intestine of the animals". And not all of us will be able to discern it when they open the intestine. They might say: "An enemy is coming to attack us, and let's do this-and-this to counter it." ... They can be **dreamers**; they can be people who foretell by looking at the **intestines** of the animal. They can be people who use the **tyre shoes**<sup>iii</sup>, and those shoes will tell everything that is going to happen, according to the gift that particular seer has been given. [[15:00]] He could dream and say: "The enemy is coming! Let's do this, kill a red goat and put half of that red goat on this side, another on this side; when they pass there they will get confused and they go back". Someone will use the **sandals** and say: "You see, the enemy coming. He is passing like this. Let's do quickly and move away from this place and we'll pass like this", and within a short time such a thing happens. (interview IE with D.Akabwai, Lodwar 03.07.17)

However, there are very many *ngimuròk* and most of them possess (or are perceived to possess) these capacities to very different degrees, and typically some of them not at all. Also, even the most powerful *ngimuròk* are in principle vulnerable to capacity loss as a result of a range of possible factors, including sickness, age and potent hostile spiritual action, i.e. spells of other *ngikaduaràk*, i.e. spiritually powerful people, though the more *eduàr* they possess, the less easily can they be 'beaten'.

<sup>i</sup> The most common songs of Ateker pastoralist men are songs praising special bulls (mostly oxen) or (less prestigiously) he-goats. These animals are usually presents from close friends and a praise to the animal includes normally praise for the giver and his relationship with the receiver. At the same time, the identification of the individual with that animal is extremely strong. A man will follow to find and bring back that animal if it got lost or captured by thieves or enemies, its death is mourned like that of a person and it is one of the most painful punishments to have it killed on the orders of the local council.

<sup>ii</sup> See chapter 6.6.4 "[Making the project sustainable by making it attractive](#)".

<sup>iii</sup> The most common shoes among the region's pastoralists are sandals made of discarded car tyres. In the past, they used to be of leather and many *ngimuròk* still prefer using leather sandals for divination.

Of central importance in regard to this project is the deliberate distance most great *ngimurok*, including those named as key trusted connectors by our interlocutors, put between themselves and the ariàng ('modern' / formal) public. One strong cultural expression of this is the widespread opinion that '*their name(s) should not be written*', and that doing so can be harmful for those involved in this act of uncalled-for disclosure. This makes it obviously difficult to *enlist* them in any kind of formal structure, including official meetings, where their authority could be helpful or even crucial, as insiders generally confirm that their influence is very strong among the large segments of pastoralist society that follow their leadership. But while there are good reasons to regret this, it is also easy to think of reasons why this convention is adaptive from a pastoralist perspective: it acts as a safeguard against their absorption into the modern system of institutional pressure and clientelistic loyalty. Tellingly, when we touched on the possibilities and advantages of involving them in cross-sector project, our interlocutors confirmed our concerns, most tellingly perhaps with the sentence: "She (a prominent and influential *emuròn* of the Loima Turkana) won't like to get involved as *she cannot serve two masters*" [interview with Nangèr, Nangólebei and Nathúr, Lorugùm, July 2017].

The 'great *ngimuròk*' (sometimes referred to as *ngikaduarak*, sing. *ekadu(a)ràn* in NgAteker, especially among the Topòsa) share with the 'non-spiritual' leaders mentioned alongside them the outstanding level of symbolic capital, i.e. prestige visible in their conspicuous prominence far beyond their immediate social environment, their function as consensus-generating mediators both within the large sections 'following' them (a notion that would be good to explain in more detail) and between them and others, i.e. their importance in inter-sectional and inter-community ('inter-tribal') affairs. The more successful they are in advising their community and providing them with ritual services, the more likely they are to be wealthy, i.e. rich in livestock, too. What differentiates them from 'secular' pastoralist leaders, apart from their different ritual, spiritual and thus social capacities, are their attitudes towards and relationships with the realm of modern institutions.<sup>56</sup>

### Famous chiefs (*ngikatukòk*)

Then there are some chiefs, who are very, very famous chiefs. After retiring they will go back to pastoral life and their *àdakar* will be known as *àdakar a ekatukòn be átí*, as if he is still a chief. To them, he works as if he is still a chief though the government has retired him but to a pastoral community they will recognize him still as a leader as their leader because of the characteristics of leadership that he has maintained. (interview IE with D.Akabwai, 03.07.17)

See also 5.2.2 "*Proximity in local governance & political representation*", [subchapter "Chiefs"](#).

### Prominent pastoralist 'leaders'

While probably a majority of individuals among them could claim to be 'generally respected' in the wider sense of the term, the most common response we received to the request of naming people matching the conjunct description of what (i.e. who) we were looking for was one pointing to a small number of prominent individuals who were widely known as 'leaders'. In our interlocutors' understanding, they fitted all the criteria we named. They were '*generally respected*' because both the pastoralist majority and key representatives of the modern world respected them in their role of *connectors* both within the pertinent socio-spatial segments of pastoralist society and between their 'followers' and modern actors. They are seen as *role models*, not necessarily for everyone's daily behaviour but *for people in this kind of position*, as opposed to others evoking discontent and concern with their actions. Typically our interlocutors found it also easy to associate them with the notion of *change maker*, but it became quickly apparent that their understanding of the term differed significantly from what people from donor countries have usually in mind when they talk about

*change* in such contexts. And probably one of the most important lessons we could learn from this study is how much language and semantics matter.

### **‘Traditional lawyers’ – analytical & oratory capacities**

[10:55] “And then there are traditional lawyers among the people of the Karamoja [Ateker] cluster. People will talk, talk... but when he wakes up to talk, he is so wise! When he talks, he summarises everything that was talked in that meeting – and everybody will say “*akosi kiro daang ngesi ngun*”, meaning “We all accept what so-and-so has said.” We will call them traditional lawyers. Because in modern life, a lawyer puts everything [clearly before the court, i.e. here before the neighbourhood assembly] so that the judge [here that assembly] will make the judgement quite correctly. We have very good traditional lawyers ... that can summarize everything that a Tree of Men [the assembly] has been talking about. Then he comes with a summary, a solution that everybody says: “That is what we’ll follow! That should be the decision for our communities that were struggling to find a solution! So-and-so has said it. (D.Akabwai, 03.07.17)

## **4.4 Individual examples & ways of connecting people**

### **4.4.1 Types of leaders & individual examples**

Inevitably, our descriptions of different categories of actors within the region’s society are abstractions and omit the complex differences of individual cases within these categories. We therefore thought this could be mitigated through the presentation of a few such cases that illustrate dimensions of this diversity but also the significance of the difference between the categories.

#### **A ‘village headman’**

One of our cases, we will call him Julian, is ‘the leader’ of a Turkana hamlet at the western foot of the Loima Mountains, an area of crucial importance for cattle pastoralism in the region. It consists to a large extent to (parts) of pastoralist families that have their youngest and oldest living in a permanent settlement while the most able try to find the best grazing and browsing conditions for the stock at whatever distance ‘from home’. However, we were told that most of their stock had perished in the current year-long drought, and there was indeed conspicuously few animals to be seen in the village. There were eye-catching residues of *aloe vera* harvesting, one of the alternative livelihoods destitute pastoralists and the rural (overwhelmingly jobless) pauper proletariat engage in. Although a school had just been opened in a nearby settlement and some of the children attend it, the inhabitants’ outfit in terms of dress, housing and behaviour is traditional pastoralist. We did not enquire into the settlement’s history but it seems likely that its creation occurred, as in many other cases, in response to the pull of water availability (both the settlement’s borehole and the riverbed shallow wells), relief food distribution, free school meals for children and medical services in a close-by rural centre, and to the push of drought, herd loss, hunger and failure of coping mechanisms due to disaster frequency and sharply increased population numbers.

When we came to the settlement, we were immediately referred to and greeted by Julian. He identified himself as the ‘kraal leader’ as the region’s English speakers commonly put it and took on the task of inquiring into our background, accommodating our interests and allocating to as a space to put up our little temporary camp at the fringe of the hamlet. He also promptly assumed the role of speaker for the c.40-80\* inhabitants when we called for a general meeting in the morning and weighed in strongly in smaller group interviews we held later, in one of them –funnily enough– popping up exactly when we had just started asking about ‘especially respected individuals’, ‘trusted connectors’ and ‘role models’. While we did not notice any expressed discontent with his leading role, his constant emphasis on it, which is not an infrequent but also not really a predominant form

of behaviour of people in such positions, raised the question how much he owes this position to that part of his character or to concerns or to incentives. Unfortunately, we had no time to inquire into these matters, but we can provide interviews with Julian and 'his people' that include, among other things, explanations for his position referring to his character and functions, as well as reflections on structures of authority in the local society, aspirations, ideals and visions from different perspectives (young / old, male / female, individual points of view).<sup>57</sup>

Here is an example:

Q: [0:00] "Who are the people that they know that actually protect their interests when ... the government does not protect them? Who are the people who actually work for protecting their interests?"

A: The elected leaders can listen to us, but now there are [the 2017 national] elections [including the posts of local MCA, MP, etc.], so we cannot say yet who our leader is going to be and whom we shall go to in order to complain when we have a problem to take to the government and higher authorities. For now everybody is busy campaigning.

Q: Apart from the politicians, are there people, e.g. pastoralists or civil society organisations, or some of your children who have gone to school who are active and advocate for your interests? Or do people just resign and say: 'We can't do anything; it's only the chiefs and the politicians who can change things and we are helpless anyway'?



Julian, July 2017 (© I.Eulenberger)

A: Nobody here has kids who have graduated. There is one boy from one of the elders who is still schooling, so we cannot rely on him.

Q: What about in a larger area? Are there not people who are respected because they really like push for the interests of the community, who are not just looking for money or self-empowerment, for jobs and positions, but who are active to improve the situation of the community or protect their protect and who they think would be the right person to empower so that their interests can be better protected? [At this point of the discussion, Julian enters.]

A: If you go to those other areas, to look for those prominent people, even those people are saying you must have your own leader in your area, this one is ours. This area here is called Kachakachòm. We have our kraal elder, Julian Emúria. He is the one whom we can take our problems to. We know he does not speak Kiswahili, he does not speak English, but if we have a problem, he is the one who can even bypass the chief or bypass even the MCA and go to the DCs office in Lorugùm. Then he can speak even in the local language and the DC will call for translators and they will listen to his problem. If there is anything if for this kraal of Kachakachòm, it is Julian who is the elder here to whom the problem will go. And then from there it can be taken upwards.” Group interview IE, Kachakachòm, Loima sub-county, Turkana county, Kenya, 10th July 2017

Julian could be called ‘the speaker’ of his hamlet and its handful of pastoralist families. In their losing most of their livestock to the ongoing year-long drought and deciding to have especially their old and mothers with small children staying permanently in a place with access to a water point and relief food distribution routine, shops, healthcare and other benefits, it resembles many permanent settlements that have kept emerging everywhere in Turkana since Lorugùm grew out of a famine food distribution centre with the first Catholic mission during the colonial period. And there are many men like Julian who became focal points around which such settlements form or who represent them in their interaction with state authorities and other formal organisations. Like Julian, they are commonly sociable personalities with a strong sense for common interests, a talent for mediation that helps their voice to be heard and considered both within their respective proximity environment and among officials and officers, and that extra bit of energy that keeps ‘rolling’ in doing their job and pursuing their vision of the common good that compels others to entrust them with a leadership role. Activities to empower their people and improve their chance to succeed can be done in cooperation with them, but the ambiguity of further empowering already dominant individuals should receive further attention through monitoring and research accompanying such interventions.

### Community ownership

Thinking of how to work with a local community like the one just described, working with and ‘through’ Julian, the apparently undisputed ‘local community leader’ would seem immediately plausible. It would certainly be the easiest road to take. Depending on the structure of the project, it would also be likely to work well in a number of respects. However, if broadening participation is a central goal, the question arises if there wouldn’t be a strong negative side effect. If Julian’ is already so dominant in representing the community to the outside, would it not be more fitting to promote participation by involving other members more intensively? Would the empowerment of a locally already outstandingly influential individual not actually reinforce dynamics increasing power inequality? Of course, this has to be put in relation with the consequences on the trans-local levels where it would still increase participation as members of ‘his village’ could access public attention and other resources through him. This positive side does not eliminate the problematic one, and it is possible that the people who came to us for small group interviews were from amongst those closest to him. But it is also highlighted in their statements, as in the following of an elderly woman:

[19:33] “The only way a kraal leader can be empowered is through power over a project that the community is desiring to happen; and also in the selection of people who are going to benefit in that project. He is empowered when he is the one who selects the beneficiaries. Sometimes when he has nothing, nobody listens to him. If he is empowered in form of projects –a school, a water point, etc.– that is under our control, not under the control of the MCA, not under control of the chief, if it is us who control it in our own system, we can empower our kraal leader so that now when he goes even to the chief, the chief will fear. When he goes even to the MCA, the MCA will fear because he knows this person has already organised his kraal and he can source for resources even without them.” (ibid.)

But a perhaps even more important problem is that empowering just one leader of one small community benefits only this one small community based on an arbitrary and coincidental selection. Over the course of our study we came therefore to favour instead, supported by the feedback from our many subsequent discussions, an approach that would empower *a multitude* of such communities in a larger (cross-border) area through a connection system that still works with trusted individual connectors but by working with more of them integrating a larger population.

### **Kibish – a landscape of somehow-leaders**

In Kibish<sup>58</sup>, we found strong figures on the scene of modern politics as well as in local pastoralist society. But not only are there the structural differences between spiritual and ‘secular’ leaders, during our research intriguing elements of competitive dynamics among the latter came to the fore, as did certain material motivations feeding in the pursuit of such positions and the relativity of the trust with which the community endows them when it accepts them in this role. Their authority is neither unquestioned nor very extensive, and it always remains subject to scrutiny, discussion and evaluation by its members. Our observations led us to caution against tying ourselves down to selecting the one-and-only local partner and considering a more pluralistic approach as more promising.

### **A leading Karamojòng elder at a centre of inter-ethnic contact**

In Karamoja, we found a similar plurality of local leadership. The following lines portrait one of the many eminent figures in the socio-political landscape of the central part of this region.

Longora Ngirogore "Lomòe" is a renowned leader of the Mathenìko Karimojong. He gained fame in the years of intense inter-community fighting when he led Mathenìko warriors in many raids and battles. On the other hand, he was one of leading elders building positive relations with other communities, securing access to water and pasture for his people in the Làngo and Achóli, and Tèso regions outside, as well as with Bokòra and Jé, Tepèth and Pokòt, and the Piàn of Nakapiripirit within Karamoja. Working closely with Ekéno, Kodèt and other prominent leaders of these communities, he is now a preeminent figure in the promotion and stabilisation of the inter-community peace, as well as of the resource sharing that provides its strongest incentive. He commonly migrates with his herds between Moroto and the Nakadànya-Kobébe region of Rúpà sub-county and has come to be especially influential in Kobébe where his people now share the water of the new dam and the surrounding pastures with the other communities. Jointly with the other community leaders, he monitors the environmental conditions, livestock movements, grazing, watering and settlement patterns of the area and meets them for joint responses to emerging local conflicts as they occur. He also represents the interests of people by coordinating with state officials and development actors. He has already appeared on YouTube making a case for the needs and aspirations of his community.<sup>59</sup>

### **The leading Turkana elder of the Loima-Karamoja frontier**

In conspicuous contrast to the Turkana of the Nyangatom frontier, their Nyangatom neighbours or the parts of Karamoja we consider here, there is one excelling figure among the Turkana of Loima. It was intriguing how universally the response to our question about a *respected and trusted connector* was nearly everywhere immediately referred to one particular man: Èkéno Lolup'kòngu. Other names came up around him, like the one of Kodèt Imána, a relative sometimes characterised as his ‘deputy’, one of a famous female *emuròn*, etc., but his was the one that was always mentioned, if in the county capital Lodwar or people from Loima in Nairobi, if in the sub-county HQ Lorugùm or in the

regions closest to the border – even in Karamoja virtually everyone we talked referred to Èkéno as the most outstanding leader of the Turkana pastoralists of the Loima frontier.

Èkéno is renowned for being influential and brave, a gifted orator and mediator, a man of wealth and wisdom who made lasting contributions to conflict resolution and peacekeeping. Born in Lokwa-túbwa (Loima region of Turkana), he joined his father at an early age to herd his family's livestock in the Loima-Ugandan borderlands. Acquiring fame as a courageous and efficient fighter in his youth, losing most of his siblings in armed hostilities with Karamojòng led to a gradual shift in his focus. He was in his early thirties when he became involved in peace negotiations between Turkana and Karamojòng, and since that time he has been building his reputation as an outstanding conflict manager and peace maker. Today, there are many occasions when parties to a dispute or communities facing serious risks of escalating inter-group conflict send for him to mediate – and refuse to start serious negotiations before he has arrived.

Being a diligent herd manager and benefiting from an extensive and continuously growing network of friends and associates, Èkéno became a wealthy herd owner, married nine women and built a large family able to take care of the extensive herds. His prominence as a leader of the Turkana communities of the Loima-Karamoja region owes much to his long story of success in the promotion of peace and resource sharing through negotiating consensus. But it also unites many of the typical features mentioned above, including his oratory skills, generosity, integrity and courage. Apart from that, his growing competence in mediating –as a trusted connector for both sides– not only between communities but also between them, government authorities and development organizations has expanded his roles and strengthened his position. As he is now growing old, he is –following a time-seasoned Ateker tradition– grooming and honing certain younger men, one of whom we met with him in Kobébe, as successors for his position. As such individuals are likely to become efficient and vital in promoting the communities' interests, knowledge transferred to them will proliferate.

#### 4.4.2 Issues of working with selected individuals as *trusted connectors*

Key problems regarding the work with selected individuals as *trusted connectors* and *change makers* were discussed quite extensively, for example, in our discussion with KDF where I brought up a few doubts I had felt while interviewing people in the region:

IE: The advantage of working with someone like Èkéno, for example, would be that he has a lot of established networks. He is respected by all, including by government people, including by NGO people and so on. But, of course, he is someone who is already empowered through all these contacts, through all these networks. He is not even that 'hard-to-reach'.<sup>60</sup> Because these contacts are already there. And (if) you strengthen his position further, there is obviously a certain conflict -or potential conflict- with democratic principles, as you were already mentioning. So what does it do to a community (when you are) empowering individuals so much? Could an alternative be to work with someone who is less prominent and who is not representing or not claiming to represent a large community like the Turkana of Loima? (Someone) who is maybe not even by now a representative of a community but is generally respected by that community, is known as to be integer [4:13] and unselfish? But now, with that kind of concept, this would probably also have to be a good communicator, someone who knows how..."

#### **“Losing identity”– misunderstandings between formal & ‘informal civil society’**

Tebanyang Arukol<sup>61</sup>: [4:23] There is a challenge with that. Ekéno has been used by IRC, by KDF, by KADEP, by Mercy Corps, by World Food (Program) and on different thematic areas: health, HIV/AIDS, peace, security... This one person is all that! Even his own identity is lost! Ekéno for example is a... We know him, because we have gone to him in the Kobébe area. If he is not there, or if he has shifted - because most of the time he is shifting and moving all over- he is known... If he is not there, your meeting will not take place that day. Because he has either moved somewhere and you have to trek for so many kilometers on foot to find him and have a meeting.

Or even help him package... use him to help you package the information. If you are, for example, going for male circumcision: he is the one you have to equip to tell all details used for communication by very many sites of organizations. So somehow he loses identity. But we know him as a person.

IE: What do you mean by “He loses identity”? I don’t get that idea. [5:31]

TA: Because if you want to use him as an ambassador for peace, like Mzee Imana, for example, across [the border in Turkana] whom we also know, then when they come from there for mass vaccination, like mass live-stock vaccination, he is the very one who comes to talk about the same thing. And the next day he is the very one who comes to talk about male circumcision because he is the person that we already know. So the identity I am talking about is: Are you a peace ambassador? Or are you the male circumcision ambassador? Or are you an HIV and AIDS activist? Or who are you? So his own expertise, even locally, is lost on ‘What do you know best?’, or ‘How do you construct your message to your own society best?’. So that would be the challenge: That over time, maybe for the last three decades, he has gone through so much messages. And probably he focuses on nothing at the end of the day. Before you came... That’s just my other challenge with him. And that is why it would be good to go elsewhere. Of course with the fear that you might overlap him or bypass him and then you will be asked questions. And being prominent and having being used, he might become a challenge to your intervention or to your way of... [6:55]”

As would come out clearly later in the discussion, KDF shared our concerns. But in his first spontaneous reaction Teba brought up something I had not thought about. I don’t know if this notion of “losing identity” by working on many different issues was originally his own concern or if he picked it up somewhere from a discourse on these issues that sounded hip to him. While the course of the discussion did not favour a direct reaction to it, I want to say here that this seems an inter-cultural problem to me, one caused by Teba’s own alienation from the culture of his pastoralist relatives. Pastoralist culture knows professional specialism only to a very low degree. Some people might be better than other in building herds or fighting with enemies, finding the best pasture for cows or curing camels, cultivating sorghum or carve chairs, but everyone does basically the same, apart from the task divisions along lines of age, gender and general ability. Even *ngimuròk*, who could be seen as a major exception because they do important things others don’t, and war leaders, to whom that applies in a different way, are most of the time herd-tending managers of extended family economies – just like their peers.

People would not see a problem because someone advises others not only on where to graze the goats but also on how to behave towards rival communities. They might be more known or credited for merits in one or the other, but people don’t think that having sound opinions on one thing reduces someone’s expertise or credibility in the other. It’s not like people go either for a degree X in *Advanced Bushfighting* or in *Holistic Goat Keeping* – these courses are at the same time a universal part of the pastoralist curriculum and at the same time specialisations people can pursue at their convenience. Deep and complex division into myriad specializations is, however, a central and defining feature of global modern society. Here, it is what opens access to lines of work and livelihoods.

People like Ekéno are not specialists in the sense Teba associates, thus projecting an alien idea on pastoralist society, with the different services he provides to outsiders like Teba, government organisations and ourselves. But in a way, he has integrated into modern global and local society, including its resource circuits, as a different kind of specialist. He specialises in providing these services as *trusted connector*. Whichever interest an outsider might have, Ekéno can connect him with the considerable amount of people who trust in his reliability as a *mediation specialist*, in a sense a *professional connector*. As our experiences and interviews show, his position is neither uncontested nor exclusive. But it seems he has something special that keeps him in this position to this day. This is certainly a combination of many factors and we can of course only address them approximately and

inconclusively. One element that is not easy to grasp but still important came to the fore in the following part of the interview.

### Is acquiescence of a community proof of its trust?

But why would the community still continue mentioning them if they are... If they think they are being used differently? Why would they still use them as their reliable [inaudible] persons? [7:09] Because we also know our people, that they can actually speak their minds. You cannot bribe them. And this is usually spoken in public meetings. So if you feel like you have overused these people or you are thinking they are misleading either our communities or... why would they still continue being [inaudible] ...

Hannah is making an important point here and the contestation that follows was only meant to relativise it, not to contradict the point as such.

IE: But I just made an observation when we had this meeting in Urùm. Do you remember that young guy with the blue-and-white t-shirt who was already drunk when we came and then got up to speak there and so on? I think he said a number of things in that meeting that were actually nonsense and that I don't think people really agreed with.

HL: They will shut you down.

IE: But they didn't! And that is the point! They didn't shut him down! And when we asked others, they gave us a totally different opinion and they were also not shut down. So my take on that is: Okay, that guy seemed to be related to the local chief, yes? And the situation that we created when we came there and called people was different from a traditional pastoralist meeting. So he was somehow representing the absentee chief and the views of the chief. And I feel he was also one of the (very few) people who were on the side of modernization, right? So although he was not able to speak English, he was one of those people who had embraced a number of these reform concepts, like switching to agriculture instead of pastoralism, creating army posts –which is not something that pastoralists normally will wish for–, underlining the role of the chief – whereas my observation was rather that in societies where the traditional system works really well that chiefs are normally not especially regarded. For example in Topòsa land: when the chief was talking, everyone was talking his own stuff, but then there were some guys, (when they talked) everyone started now listening...

The role of chiefs is quite different in the different nation states and pastoralist communities, but a general point is that someone who is accepted as a *mediator* with the government does not necessarily enjoy the highest levels of trust, support or appreciation. However, his position might give him a kind of power that, at least in some contexts, holds people back from speaking their mind.

IE: So I thought this was because the meeting was called by us and because people had certain expectations of what we wanted to hear. These framing effects, yes? I (actually) also had this idea of the frank pastoralist who speaks his mind and all that – and I think to a large extent that is true – but apparently in some situations it doesn't really work like that. Because although probably most of the people disagreed with a number of things he had said, they didn't contradict him openly. And I am not a hundred percent sure where that comes from, but that was something I think we have to understand better. I don't know, what is your idea about it? I would expect that you observe similar phenomena here in Karamoja even more strongly because you have this strong security factor; that when there is a meeting where you have police or military or government officials present, most of the people will not say certain things in public and will not contradict certain statements even if they don't agree. Now, we were not government officials or anything, and I think there was no military present, and yet I felt that there was such an effect.

### Trust in relations with pastoralists

Simon Longoli (KDF)<sup>62</sup>: [11:24] I mean, because pastoralists will not... It takes for them a time to trust you and understand exactly why you have come, which is why work should be based on the intent to deliberately build the relationships over the long term. If you worked with pastoralists - and for me I have done overnight stays at kraals – it's only around mid-night there, after six, seven, eight hours of talking that they eventually open up on some topics. Because they really want to get to the bottom of what you are trying to understand from their community. Because for them information is broad as well and their community knowledge is quite well-treasured. They want to give when they know exactly what they are trying to do. So, of course they have also these traditional chiefs. Ekeno is a product of their societal setup. And they are not wrong to point to him

as the change maker in their community. But in our experience, we also get quite a lot of useful stuff talking to ordinary everyday people, which is why we recommend that we go beyond talking to figure heads or talking heads for every TV or whatever product. We get into talking to other persons as well, because their point of views is as valuable – or should be treated as as valuable as any other person's. So every kraal has a kraal leader, and every kraal leader tries and represents the best interests of their kraal. And that person in that kraal will always tell you that their kraal leader is the person to speak to. So, again: a democratic kind of thing, but also itself a weakness – that you have to talk to that guy, probably, who is experienced, whose opinion is shaped by something else. But of course, it's awareness about these limitations and hoping that it can be factored into any design. And that is our advocacy point." [13:55]

This degree of critical consciousness, which often remains the domain of academic researchers with little impact on practice, and the ambition to find better solutions to problems like these is where KDF excelled among our interlocutors.

#### 4.4.3 'Respected connectors' between formal & pastoralist contexts

The following sections use a few individual examples to hint at the wider spectre of social types and functions of individuals with in connecting roles.

##### The leader of a local women group

Nasurò<sup>63</sup>, probably in her late 50s, heads a small neighbourhood women group under the auspices of the local Catholic parish in Lorugùm. Grown up a pastoralist, she fled Turkana with her small children during a devastating drought in the 1990s to join her mother, who had left during a previous drought, to work of skinning animals for a slaughterhouse in the fertile Kenyan highlands. After threats to Turkana migrants in the wake of competitive elections, they all returned to Loima and settled in Lorugùm, a rural centre at some 50 km from the Ugandan border. Together with her mother and her daughters, she built a compound and started living the life of women in Lorugùm and similar centres, based mainly on the provision of relief food, the feeding of children in the local schools, sale of charcoal and firewood to the schools and the mission and servicing pastoralists coming to sell animals, buy food, stuff and local beer, receivers of remittances and the few people with actual salaries.

Her husband remained with the family herds in the mountainous undemarcated frontier along the Kenya-Uganda border (Lotäre) where higher humidity helps the survival of the animals even during long dry spells, using pasture as far as the relations with neighbouring communities in Uganda (Jié, Mathenìko and Tepèth) permit. During our stay he had taken them to Jié land, but we could meet close relatives in Urùm. As many responsible daughters, Nasurò had decided to settle in Lorugùm take care of her mother who had become too old for the high mobility of nomadic life. Nasurò enjoys the respect of her neighbours because of her integrity, modesty and readiness to help wherever she can. While others tie any assistance to repayments with interests or use any opportunity to exploit others, Nasurò is known for not accumulating wealth in spite of hard work as she shares whenever she receives and doesn't have the heart to refuse a solicitant. She is not only a magnet for the children of her neighbourhood and extended family, but has also been nominated by her women neighbours to lead their little prayer group. Of the personalities portrayed in this section, Nasurò represents, in spite of her sedentary life and low integration in the pastoralist economy, within the framework of our inchoate typology of connecting figures the type most strongly attached to traditional pastoralist culture and the one least focused on connections with the wider world.

### A women council chairwoman

Regina Akeru is the elected women's chairperson for one of Turkana's sub-counties. She is also a business lady and leading member of a community-based women group. Her homestead in the centre of proto-urban centre is a haven travellers and one of the very few places where beverages and meals are served. Renowned for her sociability, hospitality and straightforwardness, Regina is an important connector in this important sub-regional centre. Among her duties as chairwoman are the collection and transmission of critical information regarding all kinds and levels of crises, ranging from livestock diseases, drought and insect plagues to conflicts and insecurity. In times of food shortages, she is also responsible for the fair and equal distribution of relief food. While she claims that she doesn't "know the hearts of the people" when asked about her popularity and electoral success when running for that position, she supposes that truthful and straightforward behaviour is crucial in gaining people's trust and respect. In our conversation, she made some memorable remarks that reveal how the sedentary way of live is changing behavioural patterns among once mobile people. In contrast to pastoralists who always enjoy a good argument, she explains that people 'in town' are becoming more cautious in their utterances, not just because of a closer proximity to formal institutions but because of the aggravated consequences of conflicts where moving on spatially is not any longer an option. Used to the pastoralist culture of strong individual friendship it was puzzling to hear that for her 'all people are the same' and she does not discriminate, and naming colleagues in other settlements she admittedly does not know very well when asked for her most trusted contacts. This neutrality also shines through her take on education: schools are good but pastoralists also need children they educate in their own ways in order to enable them to continue the family enterprise.

### A caring migrant businesswoman

Mama Amina, as she is known to most, is a Somali business lady<sup>64</sup> who lives in Kibish and has played an important role for many people in this region over the past 10 years. Besides running one of the main shops in Kibish, she serves food and provides accommodation to travellers that pass through the region. What is special about her shop is not the range of products on offer but the way Mama Amina conducts business. She acts as a "trustee" for most



Turkana families who receive monthly benefit payments, which helps the beneficiaries to manage their finances prudently and reserve it for food and other essentials instead of being persuaded to sink it into the merry drinking feasts that are the favourite disport of too many people in this problem-ridden location and unfold remarkable social pressure on anyone with a coin in his pocket. This concept of financial safekeeping is indeed a 'win-win' deal as her protégés buy what they need largely in her shop, while they can rely on her for credit when the payments delay or people get into financial problems. An illustrative example of her readiness to help is a stranded couple from Uganda we interviewed that found shelter in her homestead as it was denied crossing into Ethiopia. This attitude has earned Mama Amina huge respect. She is also an important force in favour of good cross-border relations, from which she obviously benefits as a businesswoman. The administrator of Nyan-gatom woreda even named his daughter after hers, Amina. Amina herself has, after studying in Nairobi, set up a construction company and become one of the most successful entrepreneurs of the region, no mean feat for a woman in her society, connecting cultures and sectors in her own way.

### **A senior politician**

Many of the qualities inducing pastoralists to endow a person with authority, like those associated with the ‘traditional lawyers’, generosity and foresight, are also important in the realm of modern politics, not least because pastoralists –even if far from all of them– vote and because even those who have gone through the formal education system are commonly still attached to many aspects of the indigenous culture. And among the modern politicians of the pastoralist communities, some share and cultivate more of such traits with their herding peers. Immanuel Imána Ichòr, or Imana as most simply call him, is an outstanding example. Known throughout the wider region, he hails from the where the Turkana historically originated from, i.e. the Loima borderlands where his Ngíkàmatàk section has its centre. Imana’s father, an important regional leader of his time, had an important stake in forming the much celebrated peace of Lokiriáma (1973) that has –as one of few inter-community peace treaties– persisted to this day, persisted to this day and transformed the enmity between the Matheniko Karamojòng and the Turkana into a strong alliance and enduring friendship. Imana had an important stake in maintaining this peace that allows many Turkana today to survive even extensive droughts with their herds today thanks to the pasture and water of Karamoja.

Imana, who can express the analyses of his perceptive mind in impeccable English, became Loima’s leading modern politician during the process of gradual democratisation towards the end of the Moi regime. Although crafty and well-connected opponents managed to keep him away from power for most of the time, his character gained him wide support in spite this recurrent failure. His friendly disposition, straightforwardness, generosity and sharp-sightedness secured him a secure space in the hearts and minds of the Turkana, and an expression of this esteem was his nomination as Peace Ambassador by the current county government, although he kept a critical distance that ensured his independence of judgement. The interview we recorded with him (see the annex) testifies to that. His decision to combine the urban life of the modern elite with keeping herds in his home region is another important feature of his continued attachment to pastoralist life and values. His readiness to look at things ‘from a pastoralist point of view’ and his persistent advocacy for the interests of the vast illiterate part of his community makes him an important connector.

### **A veteran peace & development activist**

Darlington Akabwai is a well-known personality across the Ateker region. A veterinary professional hailing from Uganda’s Teso community, which forms part of the Teso-Turkana language family but differs from Ateker cultures in its sedentary lifestyle based on farming in a more humid environment, he started working with the Catholic Diocese of Lodwar in the late 1970s and gained a reputation as a successful peacemaker. Through his long years of living and working intimately with Ateker pastoralists, he developed a unique understanding of indigenous culture, knowledge and practices. According to Darlington, animal health care is often a perfect entry point for projects with pastoralists, as they often care more for their livestock’s well-being than for their own. He made efficient use of that strategy for decades across the Ateker borders of Uganda, Kenya, and South Sudan. Using indigenous institutions to promote, e.g. for the African Union, livestock health and adaptive development had remarkable success in controlling animal diseases. Most notably, his work was critical in the eradication of Rinderpest in Ethiopia, Kenya, Uganda, South Sudan. Starting from the use of Community Animal Health Workers (CAHWs) as peace messengers, he also developed ingenious conflict management and peace building strategies, tapping into the vast potential of traditional institutions, engaging local authorities and different sectors of local (civil) societies, including women in what has

become known as ‘Women’s Peace Crusades’, in some case achieving lasting peace, as f.i. between the Dodòth of Karamoja and the Didinga of South Sudan.

Since 1995 he has supported the prominent Karamoja research group of Feinstein International Center (Tufts University, USA) as its main local collaborator and co-authored many important texts.<sup>i</sup> Due to recently drastic cuts in public research funding under the present U.S. administration, his decade-long engagement with Tufts University came to an end. While Darlington is, beyond doubt, a pioneer and role model in several respects, many view his recent involvement with the Chinese-run donkey hide and meat business in Turkana and Karamoja<sup>65</sup> highly critically. While it helps him to provide for his extensive family and many dependents, most people we spoke with were very concerned about the ‘donkey doom’ and its repercussions for local communities and felt that his thus far impeccable reputation as an advocate for community interests had suffered. His unique capacities combined with this dilemma make for strong reasons to consider him in any project whose staff could learn from him how to work efficiently with pastoralists and their institutions, how to develop an adequate understanding of their culture, skills and experience.

### **A university professor**

Prof. Michael Lokurùka, a son of Loima, is among the first and still few Turkana who have received a high academic degree, reached professorship and work on subjects related to their community. Having earned a Ph.D. from the prestigious Cornell University in Ithaca (USA), he was the first Turkana scholar to publish scientific work on the history, culture and economy of Turkana and their neighbours. Teaching food sciences, his expertise extends to education, governance, economy and livelihoods. He is regularly asked by both the National and County Governments to provide advice on development related issues. He has also contributed to conflict resolution between Turkana and Karamojong, Rendille, Borana and Sambúru. After decades of academic work with Egerton and Karatina Universities, technical and management roles in the Kenyan Food and Fisheries Industries, he now serves as a Commissioner with the Public Service Commission of Kenya. While this success alone makes him a role model for many, his mild, humble and peace-making personality has earned him far-reaching respect and support among elites and locals, youth and elders alike. He is concerned about the environmental changes the region underwent since his school days in the early 1960s and considers changing climate and population growth as central challenges to his people. He believes that focussed cross-sector cooperation is urgently necessary to fully use the potential of pastoralism and other livelihoods and adapt to change, and that rigorous inter-disciplinary scientific research has a key role to play in the development and implementation of appropriate strategies. He is very passionate about building a research network around the nascent Turkana University College in Lodwar that would not only educate new generations but also form a hub of academic activity focussing on issues of key importance for his people and the other dryland communities of the region.<sup>ii</sup>

### **Connecting worlds, continents & times through construction innovation**

“When I first came to Turkana, I thought this land is the poorest place I have ever seen, there is nothing here [...] but after five years your eyes open. I discovered that there is a lot of wealth. It is just that you have to learn

<sup>i</sup> Akabwai 1992; Akabwai & Ateyo 2007; Akabwai et al 2007; Akabwai & Carlson 2011; Stites et al 2016, 2014, 2012, 2007; Stites & Akabwai 2012, 2010, 2009;

<sup>ii</sup> See also the chapter 6.5. [Participatory Action Research & Debate](#).

See also the transcriptions of the full interview and the section “Pablo Moñino’s lime building project” in the transcribed discussion of the author with Nicoletta Buono and Maurice Kiboye of VSF-Germany in Nairobi on 27th of July 2017.

how to make use of it, and then you have to empower the people to do this as well.” (Interview with Pablo Moñino Lostalé, Labúr 23 July 2017)<sup>iii</sup>

Among all the people we met, Pablo Moñino was the one to whom the term ‘change maker’ in the sense of innovator applied most closely. Trained as a civil engineer, he earned good money building bridges in Spain when he found, after years in the profession, his life lacking meaning and decided to join the Missionary Community of Saint Paul the Apostle (MCSP)<sup>ii</sup>, which is running a network of vibrant missions in Northern Turkana, in a remote pioneering outpost in Nyàngatom. After five years ‘in the outback’ he found his vocation: introducing the ancient arts of dryland constructions that have provided highly adapted housing for the civilisations of the Mediterranean and Asia for over seven millennia but have remained unknown to this day in the –climatically very similar– ASALs of Eastern Africa where the nomadic way of life required other qualities until colonial state building introduced different settlement patterns. Since then, he has scoured libraries, apprenticed to old specialists and built a local team systematically exploring new ways of implementing the old knowledge. Together they developed a set of skills, experience and capacity that is unique in the region and has the potential to revolutionise construction in African drylands on a number of levels.<sup>iii</sup>

There is much more to say about his ideas, the technologies he is exploring and their potential for improvement, but one thing is clear: Pablo’s passionate unrelenting search for the application of ancient knowledge to the problem-ridden environment he found in the region has made him a shining example of how much benefit smart ways of connecting of worlds and times can provide.

### The head of a successful CBO

Samuel Èkal Adomé, or Sammy, as his friends and colleagues call him, is a son of pastoralists from North-western Turkana, where the local Turkana sections (*ngitèla*) interact with the Topòsa of South Sudan and the Dodòth, Jie and Ìk of Uganda. Growing up in a traditional pastoralist environment, he started herding livestock at a young age but was sent to school in Kákuma together with his elder brother, as the first children of the family to receive formal or ‘modern’ education. His father, Èkal Adomé, had attended ‘adult classes’ while being detained as freedom fighter during Kenya’s struggle for independence and had come to see the growing importance of formal education. As a schoolboy, Sammy used to spend the many months of holidays in the moving home of his nomad family migrating across Western Turkana and even across the invisible border between Kenya and Uganda. He remembers that after long months of a poor school diet of only maize and beans, he and his brother came to their family’s homestead in an emaciated state and were then fed by their mothers with the hearty protein-rich diet their siblings enjoyed in order to recover and ‘put on strength’.

After finishing high school in 1989, Samuel enrolled with the teachers’ service commission and was deployed in Turkana. With his first salary he then started supporting his extended family financially, as several households of his father’s kraal had incurred serious losses due to drought, disease, and raids in the late 1980s. His command of English, Kiswahili, and Turkana, as well as the support of his community in Kákuma qualified him to become a project coordinator for the Kakuma Pastoral Development Project (KDP) that was initiated by OXFAM in the 1990s. KDP started out as a community

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<sup>i</sup> MCSPA, founded and led by Catholic missionaries from Spain, is made up of priests and lay people from different parts of the world with missions in Kenya’s Turkana county (Nariokòtome, Tòdonyang, Lobúr, Kokuselei), Ethiopia (Muketurri, An-ode, Mizen Teferi, Nyangatom), Malawi, South Sudan, and the Philippines. See: [www.mcspa.org](http://www.mcspa.org).

<sup>ii</sup>See chapter

based organization with a regional focus on pastoralist issues in North-western Turkana and eventually became a national NGO supported by several international donors.

In 2000 KDP was renamed Turkana Pastoralists Development Organization (TUPADO), based in Lodwar, and has since been working under Sammy's calm, friendly and diligent leadership across Turkana and its borders. TUPADO is involved in a wide range of activities aimed at improving pastoralist livelihoods and inter-community relations and has been able to keep working and building a sound reputation of seriousness and reliability for over 30 years while many other CBOs rose and perished in short intervals. Unlike many others, Sammy has not used the considerable social capital he was able to build with his work in order to make money and enter politics. Instead, he enjoys being a 'reference point' community members turn to for advice, including in regard to developments and projects they are not sure about. Thanks to his steadily built reputation, he has become a trusted connector between communities and development actors.<sup>66</sup>

#### 4.4.4 Youth connecting spheres and cultures

There are many bright, responsible and active people in the region, not least among the youth. In pastoralist civil societies of proximity, promising young people are spotted and often groomed by leading elders for 'assistant-' and successorship. For those graduating from the formal education system, the process is, again, less straightforward. While it seems an obvious move to try and bring them together to boost and use their capacities at maximum, such an attempt has not been made. In our discussions across social boundaries, there was consensus that it should be, and we have made detailed suggestions as to how this could be done. While their public discussion will have to wait until the stakeholder meetings envisaged for next year, some short portraits of youth from the region who cooperated with the project team might give an impression of the scope of potential.<sup>67</sup>

##### A young communicator from Kibish

**Etán** is a friendly, social and intelligent young Turkana from the borderlands with Ethiopia and South Sudan. Although he had various offers for working elsewhere, he prefers to live on a modest salary in the taxing environment of Kibish that officers from other parts of Kenya famously like to buy their way out of. This is because, as he confesses in our interview, he feels, in spite of his long years in school, deeply rooted in and attached to his rural home community. In that, he resembles his father who has been a respected chief in this particularly remote part of the region since the 1980s. This deep attachment, the wide and general respect he enjoys from the communities of his home region, his extensive social capital and his excellent communication and translation skills recommend as a connector between his native community and the world of formal organisations.

##### A young Matheniko education activist

**Morris** is a young man in his late 20s from the Matheniko Karamojong community. His parents are pastoralists but now old and frail and spend much time in his family compound at the outskirts of Moroto town where the mud-and-grass houses typical for the sedentary societies of Uganda have replaced the more airy 'stick weaving' style of Karamoja's pastoralist culture. They say that Morris was destined to grow in the formal sector one day. 'He was a quiet child', they say. "Quiet, friendly and attentive. When others would run about, scream and fight, he would be there observing." As many pastoralist parents, they understood that while the tough and aggressive boys would make good herdsmen who keep the large herds together in the thorny bush and protect them against whatever would threaten them, Morris was the kind of child that would rather thrive in school. And

they were right. He was eager to learn and loved the reading and writing and languages. Their joint determination helped them to overcome all obstacles and bring him all the way to graduation. After that, Morris became himself a teacher at a primary school in one of the region's small centres where he is now teaching for five years. As teachers are poorly paid and he has a family to feed, he started a business two years ago and supplies pastoralist kraals of different communities, e.g. in Kobebe, with tents, animal drugs, solar chargers, foods stuffs and other goods and connects with them on weekends. In this, he was supported by NGOs who helped him gain extra skills in entrepreneurship, savings and investments, community engagement and environmental preservation. When we visited the kraals, he proved himself an excellent communicator and pleasant co-operator and showed vivid interest in the communication-, learning- and instruction-centred modules of the envisaged project structure we discussed with the locals. We believe he has significant talents for connecting roles.

### **A young businesswoman from Loima**

Caroline, a daughter of the Loima borderlands, grew up in Namórupus, went to secondary in Loru-gum, did a bachelor in Economics and Sociology at Egerton University Eldoret and founded a small construction company with her husband in 2014, building class rooms for schools and Early Childhood Education Centres in the mountainous and remote border areas on behalf of the county government. However, the competition in the construction business in Turkana is about as tough as the competition in Turkana politics and she is struggling to keep her young family with three beautiful small girls afloat. In our conversations in July she developed a keen interest in learning [Pablo Moñino's alternative building techniques](#) and introducing them in her home area. We encouraged her in this ambition and thought her company could be instrumental in building construction cooperatives in the Loima-Karamoja borderlands that could make use of the rich lime deposits and fight the high youth unemployment in the permanent settlements by providing new work opportunities.

### **A young professional from Kaikor**

Loyapàt is a committed young Turkana from the borderlands with Ethiopia and South Sudan who has proven his unusual diligence and reliability as research assistant of the author for now 6 years. Currently finishing a Bsc. course in Petroleum Exploration & Production, these characteristics brought him assignments in short-term projects e.g. with Equity Bank's Social Payments program, as IEBC Deputy Presiding Officer during the 2013 general elections, as clerk in the 2012 IEBC Biometric Mass Voters Registration, as Field Officer in Merlin's 2011 Supplementary Feeding Program, in GoK's Ministry of Health's 2013 Annual Nutrition Survey, and so on. He is convinced that people like him are supposed to liaise between competing visions of different factions of society in order to mitigate conflicts of interests, including related to different forms of resource use, equitably. Therefore, he perceives, for example, future oil production as both a challenge and a chance for a healthy and sustainable development of Turkana's economy. Intimately familiar with the needs and troubles of the pastoralists and rural poor, he is looking for ways of contributing to this vision. He would therefore be happy to participate in any project that would plausibly do so. His qualities recommend him especially for data processing and editing, organisational and coordination tasks.

### **A female disaster preparedness student**

**Amanikor** is a young Turkana woman from Loima pursuing a degree in Disaster Management, Conflict Resolution and Humanitarian Assistance, some of the qualifications in high demand in regions like Turkana, at a university western Kenya. Her parents are from the Turkana-Karamoja borderlands

where her aging father tends to the modest family herds while her mother struggles to bring through an extended females-only household with two adult daughters and many children by –as so many others– gathering and selling firewood and charcoal burning and modest remittances from her school-educated daughters who are still struggling to find employment. After having attended a local secondary school and receiving a short IT training, she started studying. She is also chairperson of a local youth association. She supported our study as a field assistant and translator, which helped her paying the fees for the coming term, and excelled in communication-related tasks. Following our work with community members and professionals closely, she developed interest in working in the community communication projects we discussed, which she understands not least as an opportunity to complement the theoretical lessons her college studies provide with crucial direct and practical insights, an opportunity to learn from pastoralists, from whom she was secluded in long boarding school years, and also help them acquiring useful knowledge she could provide.

These youngsters share many of the mentioned features with a multitude of young people in the region. We can talk about them in detail because we know them, but naturally a thorough selection process is needed to determine which candidates would be best suited for a specific kind of work, and experience suggest that résumés and first impressions can be deceptive. An appropriate trial period seems therefore advisable to ensure appropriate performance.

## 5 Views of development & ways of empowerment

This study was meant to explore local forms of empowerment and ways of supporting them by amplifying the positive influence of people who enjoy general respect due to their high integrity, exemplary behaviour and practices benefiting their environment, trustworthy connectors and hard-to-reach champions of the study region's diverse civil societies of proximity; ways to make existing beneficial practices more visible and reinforce them rather than changing them. It developed visions of cross-border and cross-sector exchange and cooperation on such practices, e.g. cross-border networks of local people and trustworthy personalities increasing the extent, efficiency and resilience of communication, mutual understanding and cooperation between groups and societies. Based on discussions with a wide range of actors, it develops detailed propositions how to do so. Not least because of the confidence and enthusiasm our interlocutors in the region and among specialists shared, we are confident that these goals are achievable. The following sections discuss key issues of development in the region; certain problems with dominant approaches and popular measures; considerations on how to counter them; and a number of models developed to that end.

As the goals are multi-layered, we suggest to tackle them with an integrated set of modules that address different types of actors; different scales and local contexts; different types of problems and different kinds of strategies; but also one overarching structure to bring them into synergy. Such a structure allows funding and implementing agencies a maximum of choice, as they can decide which modules they would like to use without incurring major feasibility costs for leaving out others, or coordinating a task division with other stakeholders that would allow their full implementation within the framework of a consortium, as is sensibly practiced by many already.

Interventions need to be adapted to local conditions. Thus a holistic understanding of the situation and the dynamics of the wider region, as well as appropriate knowledge of local details are crucial. While some are sketched out here, much more systematic work on this is needed. Nevertheless, the analyses and suggestions regarding key avenues of intervention discussed here are applicable to a wide range of African pastoralist regions.

## 5.1 Responding to people's priorities: restocking plus

If an intervention is to be needs-based, how can the needs on which it is supposed to be based be best identified? Debates among practitioners and researchers have led to increasing consensus that local populations should play a central role in making such decisions. They know not only the local conditions and the history of local change making attempts better than anyone else. Also, their genuine interest and support is necessary for interventions to succeed. Consequently, their **change-making priorities** should be taken seriously and inform any intervention design and implementation.

### 5.1.1 Restocking as subjective priority in local society

One universally recurring result of our conversations with members of the pastoralist majority was the centrality the disposition over an appropriate family herd had in their perspective. Such a herd, normally a combination of goats, sheep, cattle, donkeys and, partly, camels enables them to live a self-reliant, materially and socially empowered and thus desirable life. A herd is living and growing economic capital that provides not just food but vital social capital, empowering reciprocal relations with relatives, friends and associates that function as insurance against loss, calamities and disasters, opportunities for gaining prestige, symbolic capital, e.g. through ritual offers at community feasts, as well as a sense of dignity and independence.<sup>68</sup> In Kachakachòm, an elderly women explained:

' [...]. The best empowerment is support that can help rebuilding the herds. Relief can also do what livestock did before the drought: provide food for the children, the herdsmen, the husbands, the visitors, as we build up herds. Those who receive relief food can sometimes say: "I have half a bag of maize, I can exchange it with you. I give you the cereals, you can give me a goat." They can start with a goat, continue and continue [...]. With a few goats the recovery process begins. ... People can go back to active pastoralism. With maybe 10 goats per household or maybe 15. You get ten, soon you have 15. A goat produces 2 times per year. So with 15 goats, in a year you have about 30 goats. You rebuild your herds very fast. That will make you able to sustain the household in terms of food. For me as a women, when I have livestock and the milk is there, I am happy and can do other things that will improve our livelihood. [...] According to the Turkana way of life, what brings happiness to a women is livestock... When the cows and goats and camels come in the evening, we milk them and there is plenty of milk. We put milk into a gourd and make butter. ... The butter is preserved and the milk can be distributed to the young children, then to the herdsboys, to the husbands, the relatives and even visitors. When all the people are fed, the women can happily relax and say 'I have done my responsibility, I've fed the household.'

Many basic features of this process are older than "development". When people lost their herds, and if restocking through the traditional reciprocal livestock exchange system of relatives, in-laws and bond-friends<sup>69</sup> failed, they always tried to do something that would allow them to start over,<sup>i</sup> normally with goats, as these are the animals that multiply most quickly. When their numbers are sufficient, the owners start exchanging them with slower-breeding cattle, camels and donkeys. But mega-droughts like the current one often wipe out stock across the region and bring many family herds back to where they had started. Aid organisations haven often problems accepting the recurrent character of these disasters and the recovery cycle and look for strategies that could bring more stability. Therefore, many of them have shifted focus towards other forms of interventions like small business start-ups and the formation of saving groups.

<sup>i</sup> Some communities, like the Nyangatom and Dásanach who used to grow impressive harvests of sorghum with the floods of the Omo river, used the cultivation and exchange of grain for re-stocking, as did many destitute Turkana working in irrigation schemes, or fishing or paid labour. As formal education normally precludes pastoralism, support from 'the educated' is often scant and 'external', e.g. as intra-family capital infusion or as lobbying, with the exception of affluent elites who have herds of their own cared for by others.

### 5.1.2 Saving groups & the problem of sustainability

Saving groups were regarded as beneficial by our partners, both among pastoralists and in formal organisations. However, while the problem with small businesses is that they rely on a very slim local base of purchase power and do not normally contribute to its growth but only redistribute it, lowering the average margin available for traders in the process, the problem with saving groups is not a wrong approach as such but the low level of effect. Initiatives like saving groups are positive in as far as they help to reduce the wasting of resources, e.g. when men go drinking away money after selling animals for other purposes, a habit that has spread fast as local distillers in the mushrooming settlements and cross-border traders are bringing hard alcohol –which had been absent before colonization and sedentarization- ever closer to the pastoralists; or when not selling off stock before disasters hit. It is a step in an important direction because better coping with the impact of disasters requires developing insurance mechanisms that can protect pastoralist livelihoods when traditional mechanisms networks of reciprocal exchange relations temporarily crumble under extreme stresses that hit the entire region.

Unfortunately, such mechanisms have not yet been developed in the region to any satisfactory degree. Development practitioners and scholars agree, however, widely that the reduction of these losses is key to making an otherwise well-working system more resilient and productive. Exploring how this could be achieved is therefore a question with a very high potential for investment returns, even if there can be no guarantee that a revolutionary solution will be found in the very next project targeting it. This uncertainty of immediate high-level of success might well have to be accepted for the sake of the mid- and long-term prospects of achievement. But in order to speed up the learning process by making it more efficient, the analytical potential the sciences provide has to be integrated much better into the core structure of interventions.<sup>i</sup>

### 5.1.3 Citizen Science Restocking

When research is part and parcel, knowledge amplification and progress in understanding settings and problems increase the chances of the intervention to overcome difficulties and achieve actual improvement. Therefore, if development actors support a measure like re-stocking, i.e. a strategy that is highly valued and desired by the beneficiaries and at the same time facing serious sustainability challenges, action research is a plausible answer because it aims most directly at exploring, through trial-analysis-adaptation sequences, how these challenges can be overcome. The training of locals in working with different functions of mobile communication gadgets like recording images, GPS and other data could produce large amounts of information of high value for the analysis, understanding and support of mobile livestock economies and document key patterns of resource availability and use, its intra-social and inter-social negotiation, migration and exchange patterns, patterns of failure and success, and thus generate lasting benefits of use far beyond the involved partnering groups and independent of the material outcome of this particular restocking endeavour.

### 5.1.4 Building sustainability by extending networks

Where cross-boundary migration opportunities continue being a prime way of saving livelihoods, it makes sense to look to building and extending cross-border networks to mediate this life-saving ac-

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<sup>i</sup> See the [section on sustainability](#) below.

cess and strengthen the existing vital grass-roots structures of inter-community cooperation, conflict and resource management.<sup>i</sup> But how could the problem with sustainability be addressed?

The easiest way of restocking a community is to buy suitable animals and hand them over to the beneficiaries. Fortunately, this is comparably inexpensive. Goats can be purchased, depending on location and time, at prices even below 20,- € per head. According to our partners, 10 to 20 goats can help a family back on its feet in a few years. The main problem is that after an uncertain number of good years, a series of dry years can wipe out much of what had been built – if the stock cannot access pasture and water. Presently, the Turkana herders who have emerged from the present megadrought with the least amount of damage are those who could use the resources of Karamoja's more forgiving environment. This confirms a well-studied and widely recognised fact: Success and efficiency of dryland pastoralism depend critically on mobility. In a landscapes of communal land tenure regimes like the ones of this region, mobility depends on good relations between communities and their members – and these in turn are built on communication.

The stressor with the most negative impact on the pastoralist economies is the periodic severe resource scarcity that recurrently kills off up to over 80% of the stock. That implies that there is a vast potential for multiplying pastoralist productivity in reducing these losses. The technically – even if not necessarily socially – easiest way to do so is providing access to more humid ecosystems during such periods. Western Turkana, for example migrate into Karamoja and other borderlands for that purpose, many Karamojong have their own routes into neighbouring parts of Uganda with higher humidity like Acholi, Teso, etc. These routes and the relations with the communities along them have been disrupted by colonial and post-colonial governments and conflicts, but their economic and social potentials remain and are revitalised whenever conditions permit. Once development actors integrate them into their approaches, they can be further extended, including through communication mechanisms such as those we propose, to include even Turkana, and thus help boosting production and cross-border integration. Other suitable strategies are fodder production and reliable destocking-restocking mechanisms. But until they have not made substantially more progress, the most plausible strategy is to extend the reach for pastoralist migrations and develop structures through which herd owners can save their stock while – in one or the other way – paying for the access to resources in animals and their products.<sup>ii</sup>

## 5.2 'Alternative livelihoods'

The previous section was dedicated to the numeric majority of the inhabitants of the two border regions who are able or try to maintain their pastoralist lifestyle. But the combined effects of population growth and losses of livestock and resource access to recurrent disasters, conflicts and questionable development policies, resource alienation and attempts to replace pastoralism with 'alternative livelihoods', lead to deteriorations of human / resource ratios through which the percentage of peo-

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<sup>i</sup> Since Hogg (1987, 1985, 1982) first raised expert attention to these facts in the 1980s, studies continued showing that irrigated food cropping in drylands like Turkana is not only far more expensive as a livelihood restoration strategy, it has never become self-sustaining and continues depending on constant external subsidies to this day.

<sup>ii</sup> The continuous small-scale theft of Turkana livestock by Karamoja's host communities and the 'stolen-cow scheme' in which Karamojong pastoralists collude with rogue elements in the security system in extorting stock from Turkana herders in Karamoja by first luring them into a favourable exchange of animals along traditional lines to then claim the exchanged animals had been stolen and benefit from "compensation" payments are widely seen as 'informal taxation' pattern that helps the Karamojong to recover from the devastation of their livestock economy by the military occupation and anti-pastoralist policies of the last decade. (Confirmed by numerous recorded interviews of the author on both sides of the border with pastoralists, NGO workers and government officials in July and November 2017).

ple that can live of local resources is increasingly shrinking. This process has gone furthest in Turkana. Karamoja has been slower and Nyangatom was always 'last' but is now facing its most radical enforcement through top-down development schemes. The pre-colonial Turkana population of c.30.000 could use non-pastoralist activities to survive until there were enough domestic animals back in the system, and probably around ten times as many Turkana are still able to do so today. But this has become impossible for a total population of Turkana county that has passed a million recently and is racing towards the next doubling.

For those socialised into the system, going back to it remains usually the most attractive vision, but many have resigned to their fate and built an existence in the often precarious environments of permanent settlements, drawn not least by pull-factors like food relief, permanent water supply, medical services and school meals. Thus, settlements have continued to grow and multiply since the first famine camps, among them Lorugùm, the site of Turkana's oldest Catholic Mission, were converted into some kind of village or proto-urban settlement. Although there are no reliable figures available, the observer finds out quickly that most of their inhabitants have come to eke out a precarious but at the same time intriguingly steady living.

"**Small businesses**" have been promoted by aid organisations, government institutions and other development actors for decades, but the reason why they can't solve the problem is simple: if you live off selling goods to others, you depend on their purchase power. Purchase power in areas like these, however, is not only very limited, it forms a largely closed pool of resources for which the sellers of goods compete. The more the number of sellers increases, the small becomes the average amount of resources per seller. Therefore, unless a measure increases the productivity and or inflows of capital in a region, it doesn't create more income for its total population. Nevertheless hopes for betterment millions of Africans in such environments continue to be fed with the narrative that small retail businesses and other redistributive economies could be the socio-economic solution for those dropped out of producing economies like pastoralism.

Another popular hope-growing narrative is the **expansion of farming**, in drylands like these where rainfall patterns make that extremely difficult, and where there is as good as no wage labour available, sedentary life and resource scarcity make it impossible to rely on livestock, firewood, charcoal and relief food are the main licit ways of survival and no significant alternatives are at the horizon, especially through the introduction of irrigation schemes.

### 5.2.1 Irrigated cultivation

For decades, almost all development actors have looked to cultivation as central alternative to pastoralism. This is an obvious perspective for people from areas where farming is the dominant form of agriculture and where it yields higher nutrition returns than livestock breeding, and for people socialised in schools with curricula –as in Kenya– purporting the same notion, with no genuine understanding or appreciation of mobile pastoralism whatsoever. Consequently, up to 80% all funds in government budgets in Turkana have been spent on a few irrigation projects – which after decades of one revival or improvement attempt after the other have failed to become economically feasible.<sup>70</sup> Nevertheless, irrigation might still have a place within a spectre of measures to cope with the growing needs of a still rapidly growing and still increasingly aid-dependent population. But the problems and risks have to be clear, the impact has to be assessed and monitored and consequences drawn from occurring failures.

Two important lessons from experience are: (1) irrigation can do more harm than good when it infringes on resources of key importance for the pastoralist economy, the only economy so far that is able to use almost 100% of the area productively; and (2) irrigation has to be implemented at a **small scale** in order to prevent significant damages to the surrounding socio-ecological systems. (3) Even small-scale projects can have negative impact when their sum changes scales through proliferation.

Neighbourhood gardens don't exceed the scale of the traditional rain-fed ones that Ateker women plant everywhere whenever possible. The infringement on pasture would be next to zero. The main problem is likely to be water consumption. While the theoretical availability in a place like Lorugum is relatively high (where the normally dry wâdi of river Kòsipir gathers underground run-off of a large region), there are still significant problems of ensuring adequate water supply for the growing population of several thousand. Even at a small scale, drawing water from a common borehole and using it for irrigation when there are still recurrent problems with adequately supplying everyone with drinking water is likely to create tension and conflict. This could best be avoided by a thorough impact assessment preceding planning; the simultaneous implementation for several groups and sites of a settlement; the creation of separate water points for the beneficiary neighbourhood and the integration of non-participants of the garden project into the range of households supplied.

Careful preparatory analysis, planning, implementation, supervision and evaluation are crucial. Impact amplification through proliferation should be one of the concerns addressed by the preceding eco-social impact assessment, including the possibility of switching from irrigated cultivation to other avenues if indicated, and by action research accompanying project implementation. This will produce important results regardless of the outcome of the project itself. It should integrate project data with other available data and knowledge to assess hydrological, economic and social impacts, including the reduction of groundwater downstream in the case of model proliferation.

Neighbourhood garden projects could work with existing (e.g. women) grass-roots groups, institutionalise them with a formal structure and e.g. the specific purpose of a joint garden project, assisted by trainers for a kick-off period in connection with action research. There are job-seeking school-educated daughters of destitute pastoralist women who could be taught how to run the administrative side of such a venture. It could include additional elements like marketing strategies, saving-group components and or community hostels run such associations, possibly built by community construction projects like the one developed by Pablo Moñino and working in synergy with cross-border network and communication structures like the ones discussed with our partners.

### 5.2.2 Networks for regional civil society

To foster understanding and exchange on important practices across social and national boundaries, measures like neighbourhood gardens, etc., should best be tested simultaneously in different locations where good personal relations with the target group already exist. Most inhabitants of the regional centre Lorugum, for example, have family and friend in more humid areas along the Ugandan border and in Karamója. The communication models like the one the author developed based on discussions and analyses could establish regular communication between them through which information on experiences with and insights about the garden project, etc., could be exchanged, thereby also strengthening the existing cross-border relationship and –if successful– promoting good and innovative practices. Every family has its own contacts, and the integration of a whole neighbourhood into such a system would lead to an expansion of existing relationship networks. Close

documenting supervision and instructive packaging of resulting lessons (written video and audio) can and should multiply the value of any such small scale project.

One of the spots best suited for hosting an inter-community and cross-border communication network project is the **Nakadanya** region of central Karamoja, where the new Kobebe dam is located. Nakadanya has special importance in the common history of the region's Ateker communities. It is thought to be the place where the ancestors of the present ethnic groups lived together for the last time before a long process of fissions, conflicts, migrations and socio-cultural amalgamations led to the set of ethnic societies, or ethnosystem (Fukui) existing today. It has therefore great symbolic significance for the surrounding Ateker speakers and would be a suitable eponym for a structure aiming at, in a way, 're-unifying' their descendents here through amicable resource sharing.

This study has clearly shown that, while there are benefits of this resource sharing in the former battlegrounds around Kobebe, there are also difficulties that have the potential to undermine or—in case conditions take a turn for the worse— even destroy the arrangement. Although at their base, there are tangible material interests, especially of the communities (here mainly the Matheniko) who—in spite of histories of resource sharing with their neighbours in the same area— can make claims to exclusive rights due to their status as community most directly associated with the administrative unit to which it belongs, i.e. Rúpà sub-county, the existing conflicts of interests can obviously be reconciled. One crucial element of that is the benefits they receive in return that incentivise them to continue embracing an arrangement where they 'allow' members of other communities to use 'their' resources. The other one is communication.

Among the incentives for Karamojòng pastoralists to share them are the opportunities the presence of others provides for re-stocking after the devastating losses inflicted during the era of forced disarmament and attempted radical transformation, from which the Turkana were spared thanks to their Kenyan citizenship. Those who migrated to and integrated into Karamója are now comparably rich in stock and invest into their relations with individual Karamojòng through the traditional mechanism of gifts of livestock, thus creating an important network of positive relations. However, as the traditional system is built on reciprocity and thus often requires reciprocal gifts, while simultaneously the more privileged status of the autochthonous communities as citizens of Uganda and pool for the recruitment of law enforcement officials provides them with opportunities of circumventing the giving part, a new form of scam, the 'stolen-cow scheme' described above, has spread like a wildfire where Turkana live in close proximity with them. Inter-community councils, cooperating with government representatives from both sides and pertinent NGOs, are regarded a prime candidate for coping with this by our pastoralist and expert interlocutors.

Such council consist of representatives of selected by the different communities and have proven capacities to regulate relations those involved in local and regional resource sharing. For Nakadanya, personalities like Ekeno, Kodet and Lomoe (see their portraits above) would very likely to be elected into such institutions. But, as also discussed above, it would be advisable not to break from the pastoralist tradition of plural leadership, i.e. ensuring a multiplicity of voices to be heard instead of monopolising representative power. Other communities that would need to be involved are the Bokòra Karimojòng, the Jíe and the Tepèth. It would certainly also be desirable to get Piàn, Pokòt, Tésò, Labwór and Achóli on board, as this would significantly expand mobility opportunities for all involved, but it is probably good to build such a structure slowly and expand it when it has found a reliable working mode that can support a greater range.

NGOs that would likely support and cooperate on such a project and should therefore be considered as partners are KDF, MADEFO, KOPEIN, TUPADO, APAD, the Catholic Dioceses of Kotido and Lodwar, as well as Turkana County Government and GoU OPM. Kobébe has already evolved as ‘natural’ meeting point, as it is the largest and most reliable water source for a large and important grazing area. This could be materially institutionalised through the construction of a gathering hall, e.g. by a community construction organisation, where participants could assemble and be accommodated even in bad weather. The latter is mainly a problem of visitors from the formal sphere who struggle to adapt to the housing conditions of pastoralist environments, as a few bare cement rooms inhabited by a UPDF platoon are the only non-nomadic option. Of course, adapting to local conditions, breaking through the entrenched patterns of inter-cultural seclusion and getting into a one-to-one relationship with pastoralists hosts could be an important process of socio-cultural rapprochement, too. But even pastoralist would appreciate a facility where they can come together dry-shod even during bad weather. In the northern part of the Turkana-Ethiopia frontier Kibish would be an obvious spot for such a structure, in the southern part Tòdonyang would probably be best.

### **5.2.3 Business & Production: Civil Drylands Constructions**

#### **Needs: inappropriate housing, unemployment, import dependence**

*Chokaa* (‘lime’ in Swahili) is the basis of his project. It addresses at least three central issues: First, the buildings commonly constructed by ‘modern actors’ in the region, a combination of rectangular concrete walls and roofs of corrugated iron sheets, is actually unsuitable for the extremely hot climate. Without electric ventilation –which, due to lack of power and means– is a possibility for only very few people, the stored heat in such buildings is very hard to bear. Consequently, people normally avoid being indoors as much as possible and do everything outside, including sleeping. Second, the materials are produced outside the region. Their production does not create jobs here and their import drains resources, the more so as the deplorable state of the transit roads forces up prices. And third, the necessity to acquire materials through the channels of the formal economy bars a majority of the people from becoming independent actors in the construction sector.

#### **Response: better quality through know-how, local materials & local labour**

Pablo’s answer to these problems is simple: Use existing knowledge and local materials to build houses and buildings with much better climatic characteristics; houses that remain cool and well-ventilated even in the most violent heat; houses that can be constructed and maintained by people without formal education and or extensive seed capital. All you need is: know-how, mud and lime.

Limestone is readily available and easy to mine in several parts of Turkana, so Pablo turned to introducing and refining the manufacture of lime.<sup>71</sup> With MCSP he constructed East Africa’s first lime kiln at Nariokòtome, near where the famous human fossil Turkana Boy was discovered,\* to process the local varieties of limestone he and his colleagues had found. But when, after three years of experimentation, the attempts of producing lime still kept failing, he went back to Spain to learn the ancient secrets of pitfiring. Old Iberian limeburners taught him the arcane language of the pit fire and regulate the distribution of heat in the kiln observing the colours and sounds of the flames. When he used his new skills in Nariokòtome, he produced Kenya’s first load of lime.

#### **Grass-roots entrepreneurship**

Pablo’s methods convert local resources into an alternative to imported building materials. They have the potential to form the technological base for a grass-roots construction industry comple-

menting agro-pastoralist food production and the public sector and kick-start a start-up entrepreneurship movement among the large jobless populations of the settlements, thus boosting self-sufficiency in local economies. In an environment with extreme unemployment rates and an abundance of very cheap labour, it is an advantage that his production model is very labour-intensive. He kept that element consciously and prefers transport of materials by donkey that further strengthens local livelihoods, as mechanised transport would make people dependent on more powerful economic players and high investments that could likely trigger debt trap dynamics.

Promoting the sustainable use of local materials by local people means that every Shilling invested in such a project has a local impact. The global trend away from unhealthy and environmentally harmful building materials, such as cement, further increases the potential of the project. But would such a shift also be economically viable? Pablo takes a realistic view on this. “Everybody looks at the money in the end. You can build houses that are very beautiful and well adapted to local conditions but if they are not cost-efficient, one cannot succeed”<sup>72</sup>. He has tested that and found that his team can actually compete with the prices of conventional construction. In addition, their lime production has a fivefold better Carbon emission record, consumes far less water than cement and even adds value by firing the kilns with invasive species like the *prosopis* shrub<sup>73</sup> that has infested the region, ruined vast pasture lands and poisoned uncounted animals after it was introduced by well-meaning development innovators. And what they have built so far in Lobúr shows: these houses are really incomparably more pleasant to stay in. Now: Why would anyone still cling to concrete and iron sheets? The problem here is largely cultural, but we believe it can be solved.

### Challenges & strategies partners

A key challenge is the strong convention that has developed since the times of colonisation to build in cement and iron sheets. It has been established as an icon of modernity and though people know that mud is cheaper and far superior in terms of creating a pleasantly cool indoor climate, those who can afford cement normally use it because using mud carries, as so many other reasonable strategies, a stigma of ‘backwardness’. In our discussions I suggested –and received approval– that the best chance for a breakthrough with the ‘mud-&-lime revolution’ is to set a trend – and that it can only be set ‘from the top’. If the governor, the ministers, the members of the parliament and members of county assembly start building their houses in that fashion (and they have been seen appreciating the superior indoor climate of non-concrete constructions), other people will want to copy them and follow. And if the elites can be convinced to start building certain public buildings with lime, there emerges a vast market to be filled by the start-ups. The challenge there will be that construction is a main avenue for the elites to get money from public coffers – and while Pablo is an outsider, local grass-root initiatives are neither part of the elite nor their easiest way to access public funds. But on the one hand, non-government development actors, including RBS<sup>\*\*\*</sup>, could come in and give them a chance with head start contracts, and secondly they are still well positioned to get the train rolling, even if more powerful players might jump on it later on. The overall effect will still be positive.

## 5.3 Communication, media & people

For all the above activities, communication is crucial. For humans generally, it is the most important mechanism of passing on knowledge of crucial importance for survival, the organisation and regulation of cooperation, innovation and improvement. Thinking about communication, we found it vital to emphasise two-way learning as a core aspect of improved approaches to development.

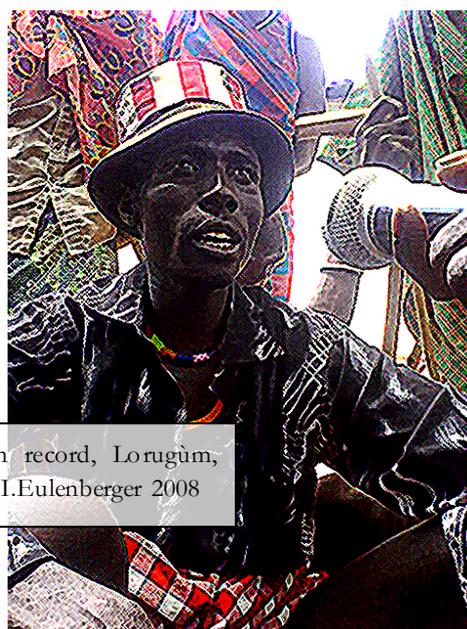
To assume that formally educated people have invariably better understanding The views on pas-toralists in mainstream news media is often negative. "As a scholar and missionary with years of expe-rience in Karamoja puts it, \*\*\*

More than 20 million pastoralists in the Horn of Africa occupy the bulk of its land, but are challenged as out-dated, despite the sustainability of their livestock enterprises [...] Herders from the Red Sea to the Nile are regarded habitually as requiring the attentions of the state, and those seeking power in it." (Knighton 2006, 269)

When their affairs are covered, it is almost always either on hunger and poverty, disaster, conflict or 'underdevelopment'. Thus the wider public learns next to nothing of how successful millions of pas-toralists master their lives as independent, resilient and highly efficient masters of an extremely diffi-cult environment; pride they take in their personal and cultural sovereignty; that they and their chil-dren are in average far healthier than sedentarised people and non-elite urban populations<sup>74</sup>; how much skill, knowledge and wisdom, happiness, solidarity and productivity is enshrined in their way of life. Asking average Kenyans, Ugandans or Ethiopians one gets answers revealing astonishing igno-rance regarding the people of their pastoralist regions, and all too often ill-informed disdain.

On the other hand, the vast opportunities today's media technologies offer for providing important information to local populations, including pastoralists, and to connect them with each other and important actual and potential co-operators have largely remained unused. There are many organisa-tions, professions and institutions that are well positioned and ready to work with pastoralists with sound prospects of high benefits, but a lack of access keeps them disconnected.

Well-designed connectivity and media production, ac-cessing regional, national and international audiences and resources, social, cultural, economic and symbolic capital is likely to provide high payoffs. Connecting local people through systematic communication with a larger public and influential partners can help strengthening empower-ing practices, containing anti-social behavioural trends and ensuring the sustainability, equitability and efficiency of resource use their societies need to function well. However, for this to be successful, it is critical to under-stand, acknowledge and work with local culture and tradition. The obvi-ous lack of understanding between



Young Turkana on record, Lorugum, Loima sub-county © I.Eulenberger 2008

local societies and regional, national and international elites asks for structures providing the rural majority with chances to participate in decision making processes in ways that make good use of their capacities and accommodate their interests. This can help correct-ing approaches to borderland management that affect the region's economy and cross-border rela-tions negatively. It would increase awareness of the enormous value and potential local knowledge has for efficient and sustainable value creation and social regulation. It can contribute to a better utilisation of scientific expertise on pertinent matters, especially capacities to tap into local poten-tials, and to more practice-focussed cooperation between different sciences, different scientists and locals, as well as between scientists with socio-cultural expertise and development actors. It can contribute to building organisational structures that facilitate cross-sector cooperation.

As at the core of these needs is communication across social and national boundaries, systematic and targeted communication of and with the pastoralist majority of logistically remote and discursively marginal regions should be a linchpin of responses. We found such a merging point of different interests and capacities of our interlocutors in the cooperative development of a vibrant cross-sector communication network that integrates borderland populations and educated elites, development actors, policy makers and researchers, combines inclusive feedback mechanisms with participatory development innovation and analysis, action research and citizen journalism with cross-border institution building, and sustains itself through win-win cooperation.

Such a structure could work with ‘trusted connectors’ as focal points but should make sure democratic mechanisms counter dynamics generating or stiffening hierarchies based on arbitrary privilege instead of merit and integrity. Apart from local ‘internal’ connectors among the borderland communities, such a structure requires external connectors. The author developed a rather complex model of such a structure prior to the study and in discussions with our interlocutors that will be sketched out in the following.

### 5.3.1 A communication network model: Community voices & messengers

At the core of the structure we envision are three elements which we chose to mark with local terms: (1) the voice (*etoíl*), (2) the messages (*ngikoyò*), and (3) the messenger(s) (*emeera*, pl. *ngímeera*).

(1) refers to the main local (internal) connectors of the project among the borderland communities, identified according to the recommendations of the local population. They should be generally respected for being integer, pro-social, un-selfish, knowledgeable and eloquent. As the borderland population consists mainly of nomadic pastoralists living in mobile herding communities, commonly referred to as *cattle camps* or *ngadakarìn* (sing. *àdakar*), the term preliminarily chosen for them within the program framework is *etoíl ngadakarìn*, i.e. ‘voice of the cattle camps’.

It appears recommendable to cooperate with organisations active in the region in different pertinent capacities and use an inception phase to discuss with partners and stakeholders across national, social and professional sectors, which forms of interaction, organisation and division of responsibilities are best suited to achieve the program objectives. They should then form a consortium and a project team. Later, a commission could identify a first group of young, reliable and dedicated graduates hailing from the target communities to play the central role of messengers (*ngímeera*) who regularly (e.g. monthly) visit the *ngítóiliò ngadakarìn* (community voices) in their temporal locations. We further agree to suggestions we received in the field to look for expat interns, PhD or other junior researchers from suitable lines of study, especially cultural, social and ecological sciences, to work closely with the messengers, reflect on their observations and pursue specific questions.

Stakeholders across national and sector boundaries, especially from the NGO, education and research sectors could organise the training of the messengers and supervise their performance. The messengers should –with possibilities of later self-reliance of the system always part of the action research component– be provided with means to cater for their transport to the location, even if it is rides that partners give them or the fee for the cheap public transport or a motorbike. Parts of the trip will likely have to be made on foot with a local pack donkey to transport recording and screening equipment and food (e.g. a sack of sorghum, maize, beans, sugar, etc). The messengers interview the *etoíl* and locals that have gathered for the occasion, representing the *ngadakarìn* of a larger area, on

a certain set of questions, important occurrences and aspects of the present situation, as well as issues raised by other participants of the communication network.

The interviewees use the chance to speak to those others, e.g. in neighbouring or far-away communities, elites and representatives, development actors and decision makers, as well as specialists and researchers, both answering and asking questions, *reacting* to requests and *making* requests. The *messengers* receive training to operate the video and audio equipment professionally; use and instruct others on GPS functions, e.g. in cooperation with development actors and researchers; store and process the data; and handle all social aspects of the project work appropriately. In regard to the latter, it is critical to build their awareness of socio-ecological and cross-cultural issues through anthropological and action research training and supervision. The Lands of the Future and Omo-Turkana Research Networks have brought together a large coalition renowned and dedicated academics working on pertinent issues in the region that would be well qualified for that.<sup>i</sup>

### Citizen media & inter-cultural expertise



Scene from "Shooting with Mursi" by Ben Young

KDF has started exploring similar approaches but paused for lack of funding and human resources. In a strategic discussion with the author, the internationally renowned film maker **Ben Young** ("Shooting with Mursi") has declared his readiness to train *messengers* in top-end filming and editing techniques and jointly produce a professional film documentary that could put the model on the agenda

of a wider public. Many of our partners could certainly make important contributions, including regarding professionalism and ethical integrity in the work with information and across sector boundaries. However, it is important to have stakeholders in appropriate position that can ensure that socio-cultural bias is reduced. Critical minds like those of KDF, ecologists and social anthropologists<sup>ii</sup> as well as specialists in inter-cultural dialogue like Hans Stoks or the anthropologists working with OTuRN and LoF are, therefore, crucial.

### Data collection, transparency & maximal accessibility

Both the raw data and edited selections of the recorded messages (*ngikoyò*) will be made publicly available, e.g. by uploading them on their own YouTube channel where community members across borders and professionals across sectors can access them. In cooperation with the line managers, the messengers will also record urban actors and professionals who want to communicate with the pastoralists and screen these recordings together with those made with other communities during the next *ngikoyò* meeting with the *ngítólliò ngadakarín*. That way, a full cycle of communication is being maintained between different communities of borderland pastoralists, between them and regional elites, as well as with national and international stakeholders of the network.

<sup>i</sup> See Lands of the Future Research Network 2017 (<http://www.eth.mpg.de/lof>); Omo-Turkana Research Network 2017 (<http://www.canr.msu.edu/oturn>).

<sup>ii</sup> The Lands of the Future (LOF) and Omo-Turkana (OTuRN) Research Networks are important focal points in this direction.

### 5.3.2 Nomadic Civil Journalism & Mobile Video Schooling

#### Nomadic Civil Journalism (NOCIJO) as a pro-democratic model

In response to the concerns about the level of democracy in identifying communication partners, opinion formation and equitable empowerment, we suggest that instead of working with individuals who are likely empowered much above the average, e.g. those that are already identified as leaders by all sides, it would be better to open up the circle of interlocutors to –at least potentially– all members of the local society. We could call the main strategy we identified as capable of doing that in the discussions “**Nomadic Civil Journalism**”. Benefitting not only from a potent network of partners with complementary capacities and an efficient structure of cooperation but also from a sufficient amount of time to find the most interesting cases, the messengers will be going from kraal to kraal and from settlement to settlement **looking for role models**, not only in terms of personality but also of action. It would also provide an important stage and a **new public forum**.

Simon Longoli looked at the video connector module from an emancipation perspective:

[[27:10]] I think this would be a contribution that opens up public space. It would get more voices heard and could challenge even dominant opinion or the opinions of kraal leaders. And in that, we see a conversation, a creation of knowledge and transfer. The more information comes out, the more persons are involved, [the more] this increases the quality of a given conversation. So I think any contribution towards democratizing or increasing participation in that sense will be welcomed.

#### Inclusive knowledge exchange through mobile messengers & messages

In this mobile fashion, the messengers will **record problems** that are there, but also document and publicise experimental **solutions**. In order to use the full potential of existing **emancipatory practices**, this should not be limited to technical or practical **innovation** but also include exemplary applications of time-seasoned strategies like **communal resource management systems** and mechanism for local **conflict resolution**. For example, even exemplary mediations of rather mundane kinds of quarrel between people can be instructive for others.

#### Mobile Cinema & Mobile Video Schooling (MOVIS)

Our partners frequently underlined the importance of the advice and instructions well-versed and experienced people provide, for example, in the art of making the family herds flourish; how to adequately assess situations and how to choose the right action strategies; how to build and manage relations; how to manage and master one’s own impulses and other social, psychological and life skills; etc. While **children** and **youth** in **pastoralist areas** receive these important knowledge transfers at least to some extent from their respective proximity environments, **school children**, even if only a few meters and a fence away from their world are often deprived of them. Distributed through **mobile phone video clips** and **mobile cinema**, they can reach not only basically everyone in the project region but even in the regional, national and international public in **user-friendly formats**.

We thought that, therefore, that not only should such important **knowledge packages** be circulated among the pastoralists but also be made available to the many children missing out on them as they spend their days in schools and settlements. Although that would counter-balance the extreme cultural selectivity of the instructions they receive only to a small degree, it would still be an important step in this direction. And we are 100% sure that, in the format of (as entertaining as informative) **evening lessons** through **mobile cinema**, it would meet with a huge lot of excitement and enthusiasm of the children and adolescents as it breaks the monotony of life in boarding schools and villag-

es, providing even important insights they'd otherwise miss to **teachers** from other parts of Kenya and sure to attract many curious and social adults in the settlements.

On the other hand, **organisations, professionals and experts can use the same system** to design and send important messages and knowledge packages to the locals reached by the mobile messaging system. The range of worthwhile **topics** is as wide as the range of issues pertinent to the people of the region. From animal health and resource issues, human health, HIV/AIDS and family planning to legal issues—on which the knowledge of most people is extremely low—and voter education.

### **Messengers as mobile community teachers**

At the same time, the messengers could *teach* the people they interact with many useful things, too. This includes **how to use** all available **functions of mobile phones** to their benefit, e.g. document agreements and transaction through images; strengthen and expand cooperation networks; inquire in the availability and negotiate access to pasture and water; get information on weather, prices, conflicts, social, economic and political developments, and other things people are interested in. Preferences areas of interest should be a central element of the action research component.

### **Publicity and multi-stakeholder cooperation as avenue to sustainability**

The knowledge transfer and exchange component also provides a game-changing opportunity for development actors and researchers establish close and stable connections with target populations. They could utilise the messenger system to acquire and update relevant information in a seminally direct, continuous and comfortable way and communicate with their local development and research partners without leaving their daily work routine and having to travel hundreds or thousands of miles for days and weeks. This model offers a tool that can be used to develop a whole new approach of close community involvement in development planning, implementation, evaluation and research on all kinds of issues. This is also important because it is one of the avenues of networking and functional interconnection with the highest potential of making the system sustainable. Given the large spectre of potentially interested parties, and provided smart publication and public relations work is undertaken to generate awareness among pertinent organisations and the wider public, this project could kick-start a media revolution in development work and research with local populations.

## **5.3.3 Multi-media strategies of a multi-purpose system**

### **Mobile phones, video clips & Ateker Citizen TV**

Where there is **mobile network**, many pastoralists are already using mobile phones extensively. While we are not aware of any serious studies of the use of mobile phones by the region's pastoralists, we repeatedly recorded their keen interests in using and getting better acquainted with that technology and its multiple uses and functions, many of which they are only vaguely aware of. Thus the **instruction** of pastoralists in these uses evolved as one of the key functions of the CIVICO *messengers* within the project. The results of its implementation will be **sustainable** as the knowledge the *messengers* transfer will not only reproduce and spread among the communities and go on spreading through the relations of the instructed in a **snowball effect**, it will have opened windows of conscience and opportunity that will not close again but become bridges across which the people will go on exploring by themselves.

Where there is no network, the messengers will, in addition to using mobile cinema, give people the opportunity to **upload clips** onto their devices. This could be free of charge in the beginning and contribute to **sustainability** once the system is established and popular by charging small amounts

for providing clips. Other possible strategy to that end that could be tested are (1) **advertisement fees** by entrepreneurs and – probably even more promising – (2) payment for **dissemination and communication services** by regional, national and international development and research actors. Simply uploading the clips on to a YouTube channel would not only make them available and commentable wherever there is internet, it could also create a veritable **Ateker Citizen TV** at no cost!

### Radio & social media

**Radio** is an additional avenue we explored during the study and using the same recording in audio formats is as viable as using video. As data packets for uploading and mobile distribution, the lower data volume is an advantage, even if video is somewhat more attractive. Radio is also popular wherever it reaches and as someone who has worked in this sector in the region, I can testify to the high demand for high-quality programs in local language by stations that rely mostly on improvising life programs and mainstream music clips without further informative or cultural value.

Among the **organisations** with experience in this field who signalled their interest are; Akicha Radio Lodwar; Maata FM Lodwar; Karamoja Information Centre; Turkana Times (Lodwar); and Nation Media (Nairobi), one of two leading Kenyan news agencies; VSF-Germany, for whom the author was running a 2005-2008 cross-border radio program for Ateker pastoralists outside the reach of FM stations; Hivos. KDF and Hivos were also interested in exploring the use of **new social media**, especially **WhatsApp** and **Facebook**. Both would have obvious advantages, but the potential for use by pastoralists is naturally higher in WhatsApp, not least regarding its video functions. Among the ideas we discussed were also **blogs** (including video and audio blogs), generating high publicity through linkages with **partners organisations** and social media, in which key partners from among both pastoralist and non-pastoralist stakeholder could publicise and debate messages and key themes.

### Additional uses

- Document –and ‘certify’– livestock exchanges, the exclusive use of prosopis and other invasive species for building, charcoal burning and fuel wood production, etc.
- Early warning, emergency preparedness & recovery

Turkana County is prone to droughts and floods disasters, with the resultant persistent famine. Given its remoteness from more developed infrastructure, and owing to its sparse nomadic populations, levels of vulnerability to disaster risk is disproportionately high. The joint UN effort shall, by 2016, work with the County Government to develop early warning systems, capacity for emergency preparedness and recovery strategies (Turkana County – United Nations Joint Programme 2015-2018 p.19)

## 5.3.4 Making the project sustainable by making it attractive

### Tapping long-ignored pools of creativity

Pastoralists are not only creative in solving problems, they excel in musical creativity (virtually everyone is a composer and composes his or her own songs!), re-narrating or inventing entertaining, often educative and sometimes funny stories<sup>i</sup>, developing new fashion designs in dressing, beadwork, hairstyles, tattoo-style scarifications, etc. There are plenty of popular sports, games and dances that have not yet received any significant attention outside their communities of origin, although they are not only valuable and vibrant cultural heritage but also material from which bridges be-

<sup>i</sup> Many of the few existing books and booklets in Ng’Ateker language are collections of prominent (or individual) stories that exist in uncounted variations and are a favourite medium of entertainment in pastoralist proximity contexts. Academic work on this important cultural field is, in contrast, rather scant. One exception is the recent book by Mirzeler (2014).

tween the cultural spheres of mobile pastoralism and acculturating settled populations could be built, not least in the nursery, primary and secondary schools of the region that are so weirdly cut off from their surroundings that even students (especially from other parts of the country) who spend many years in schools in Turkana leave them with having learned next to nothing about the culture at their daily doorsteps. The mobile cinema component could integrate them and the boarding school Turkana youth at least to some extent, and the stigma of inferiority and 'backwardness' that clings to pastoralist culture could be reduced by giving it the official recognition of the formal education system, even if only as a 'spare time activity'.

### **Videos, stories, discourses & popular arts as social bridges**

The video-clip distribution and messaging system provides an opportunity for tapping into this pool of cultural creativity and ingenuity. Using it through integrating its products into the spectre of clips on offer could produce a number of positive effects. For one, it would bring the project system closer to the hearts and minds of the people because it promotes and strengthens their own culture, practices and ideals instead of imposing aliens ones on them. On the other hand, it would give them a stage in the modern sphere, increase mutual understanding across social, cultural and national boundaries and contribute to re-balancing widespread stereotypes about them.

### **Ateker Charts & the competitive edge of creativity**

The system can be further popularised through selections of (as voting for) songs, stories, jokes and comedic performances, designs, performances, lessons and discourses, etc. by popular request at the regular local video staging events, events for larger audiences at special occasions and in larger settlements, by using clip upload (and, as the case may be, purchase) counts and counts of 'likes' on YouTube and social media to experiment with '**Ateker Charts**' as cultural pendant to the ones familiar to us from commercial music. The selection process itself and its participatory, empowering nature are sure to make the system as such more interesting and attractive to both rural and urban populations. The 'charts' principle can be applied to all the said social spaces (neighbourhoods and settlements, schools, regional, national and international media audiences) and cultural forms. This will not only lead to a substantial valorisation of rural Ateker culture among *ariàng* and in the wider public but also create dynamics that are likely to lead to further integration.

### **Fashion**

One example is fashion. The predilection of pastoralists for creating new designs has been observed since the first writing outsiders we know of visited the area. It is not less conspicuous and impressive today, although the materials they use are different now and in fact change every couple of decades. On the one hand, the striking autonomy of style is an asset for both the creativity and the self-assurance of the pastoralist societies. They create their own fashions and set their own styles. They pick up elements from the *ariàng* world but use them in their own specific way and thus underline their sovereign agency. This is more important for them than for the national *ariàng* majorities because they are the ones in need of strength in containing destructive encroachments of powerful social and economic predators, while the *ariàng* world doesn't have to worry about pastoralist efforts to overrun their culture and take over their resources. Therefore, pastoralist fashion pageants could inspire settled Ateker people and create both a commercialisable cultural movement introducing new designs rooted in rural cultural aesthetics and a market for its products. Individual and collective start-ups could, with very little seed capital and great publicity through the CIVICO clip mes-

saging system, tap into existing structures of f.i. Kenya’s renownedly creative and successful grass-roots arts industry, the vibrant East African fashion scene, the global fair trade movement and even international fashion shows. (There are already several prominent models from the region.) Properly implemented, a project could set that ball rolling.



**Photo:** Young Turkana pastoralist woman from the Loima borderlands at the anniversary celebration of the Lokiriama inter-community peace accord © Immo Eulenberger 2011

### Humour

Another important avenue of both popularising CIVICO among people of all ages and lifestyles is using people’s strong sense of humour. Ateker people, often used to hardship and socialised into a healthy attitudes of serene defiance, are fond of teasing, mocking, laughing and joking. As much as they can get quite serious, they often like being larky. There is a fascinating series of books in Turkana language that has been printed by what we could call cultural civil society activists (Turkana Comedy Group 2016) that gathers a large number of jokes and funny anecdotes and seems to be so popular among literate Turkana (who are in their majority not affluent) that the printing and distribution costs can be discovered. Humour is a priceless device of ‘common people’ but also intellectual elites to counter power imbalances by pointing out flaws in social and political conditions in an entertaining way. They are one of the ‘weapons of the weak’ (Scott 1985) that can be lifelines of public moral consciousness under oppressive regimes as much as, as we can see ever more clearly, in leading democracies. We can also see that when they are, they often enjoy enormous popularity. A project like this should not miss out on the great opportunity of using the great potential of humour to heal –or at least alleviate– social ills and empower the clear-minded to use entertainment for the common good.

#### 5.3.5 Ateker debate culture & telic production of understanding

Ateker culture, the indigenous culture of the study region, is a culture of debate.<sup>75</sup> The most influential men and women in Ateker communities usually excel in convincing others through the art of

speech. Due to the harsh natural environment, Ateker pastoralist cultures have adopted attitudes of pragmatism in many regards that favour debate because they do not submit decision making to exceedingly detailed normative regulation but still require careful consideration of all factors and possible outcomes. In societies where collective decisions have often to be taken on matters of life and death, identifying the best possible course of action is a central concern for everyone because ‘wrong’ choices can often prove disastrous. Thus, making the most plausible arguments, and being repeatedly proven right by the subsequent course of events, is a quality communities should treasure above all. And they do. Even the diviners (*ngimuròk*), the most successful of whom hold the greatest sway over the affairs of the communities who turn to them for orientation, are ultimately defined by this ability, no matter how much ritual comes with it.<sup>i</sup> Giving successful advice is a ‘natural’ (in the sense of logical) determinant for influence and leadership in environments where consent cannot be coerced but has to be found in order to protect the survival and prosperity of a community.

Due to the far more complicated, diverse and opaque structures of publicity, knowledge, decision making power and institutional authority in the *ariàng* sphere, this mechanism is not working out in that way there. Being a convincing speaker is certainly also an important tool for success in local and national politics and even in the development sector. But there is structural difference in how *ariàng* in positions of influence gain support (i.e. social capital, however ephemeral), e.g. through promises of mediation services, usually for one or the other form of aid or investment, and not so much through discussing and advising on important alternatives in the course of collective action. The asymmetry of power, i.e. access to key resources, is mirrored by arrangements where the people sitting in *ariàng* chairs give enlightened speeches to the *rayá*,<sup>ii</sup> as *ariàng* often refer to ‘the uneducated’, especially those ‘from the bush’ (i.e. active pastoralists), in which promises of things the locals actually wish for are mixed with advocacy for development schemes governments, aid organisations and donors favour.

One key difference to the pastoralist system is that a pastoralist leader advising on a course of collective action shares the conditions of his fellows and is often him- or herself subject to the consequences. In contrast, *ariàng* interacting professionally with a pastoralist community neither share their daily life, nor their living conditions, nor the impact of the failure or success of the action he or she advocates for. Simultaneously, his or her influence is largely based on his or her ability to mobilise and redistribute external resources, an ability the pastoralist leader commonly lacks. In that regard, the *ariàng* leader has more power – but at the same time his influence among pastoralists is often considerably lower. It is an influence of a different kind. That difference, however, could change if debate on the issues that bring them together – e.g. what kind of interventions should have priority, how they would best be structured and implemented, which forms of cooperation would serve the agreed purpose best and how challenges could be overcome – would be subject to serious and genuine debates resembling more closely the local pastoralist practices of decision making through consensus formation in open debates in which they would be far more equal partners than in the top-down procedures that still dominate the interaction of formal organisations with local societies.

But not only the cooperation with locals could benefit from emulating pastoralist communication practices. Openly, frankly and extensively analysing situations facing the people of the area and the available options, the *pros* and *cons* of deciding for one or another is also not nearly as common

<sup>i</sup> On *ngimuròk* see chapter 5.3.2 section [‘Spiritual Leaders’ or ‘Seers’ \(ngimuròk\)](#) and the references cited there.

<sup>ii</sup> *Rayá* is derived from the Kiswahili / Arabic word for “herd”, here used in the notion of feudal statehood that the governed belong to the governing in the way a flock belongs to a shepherd.

across sector boundaries between, for example development practitioners, policy makers and experts, as it should be to use the existing potentials for synergy. Here the ambitions for more extensive, more systematic and more targeted discussion of key issues shared by academic associations like the *Lands of the Future* (LOF) and *Omo-Turkana Research Networks* (OTuRN), uniting indigenous and international scholars; regional research institutions and initiatives like IRID, TUC, ACIREL, TBI, BIEA or SORC; CBOs like KDF, MADEFO and TUPADO; international consortiums like the once formed by VSF, Mercy Corps and others; donor organisations; government bodies like Kenya's *Border Management Secretariat* or its *International Boundaries Office* (KIBO), county, district and woreda governments; regional cross-sector initiatives like the *Borderlands Working Group* (BWG) and activists for cultural dialogue like Hans Stoks, all of whom are keenly aware of the urgent need for jointly developing strategies to address the many severe challenges with more circumspection, higher and more equitable local participation and, consequently, less negative 'side effects', provide a magnificent chance to maximise impact by bringing all these actors together through a structure organising their joint discussion of key issues posed by the rapid changes the region is undergoing.

While we suggest communication-centred project modules that would contribute greatly to its efficacy and impact, an additional mechanism is needed to provide a framework in which these discussions can be initiated, structured and coordinated. It could be created by a consortium of these organisations, including a committee in charge of organising meetings, workshops and conferences for such debates that unfold additional impact through their publication in print and online, as audio and video files, etc. While it would seem logical to hold these events in different locations in the region, possibly including cost-saving online video transmissions of contributions, as well as to involve locals in these debates, whereby messengers, internal and external connectors collaborating with project teams could play an important role, several of these stakeholders have also started discussing the establishment of a regional focal point for these efforts associated Lodwar's emerging TU College.

The urgently needed debates on the region's future comprise topics from development strategies and priorities, analyses of practical problems, why they are not being solved at present and how they can be solved, all the way to philosophical and ethical questions regarding contrasting cultural values, approaches and convictions and contrasting views on what kind of future would actually be the most desirable one and what efforts would be best suited to bring it about. But there are obvious traps, too. If this debate is too open, petty politics could seep in very quickly, poison the communication and send it down a slippery slope. If it is too broadly conceived, it could lack coherence or lose direction. And if it would become subject to excessive specialism, this could alienate the interest of a wider audience, as could 'buzz word buzzing' in one or the other lingo. Relevance, intellectual quality and accessibility need to be at high levels simultaneously.

Also, not only including pastoralists, even the renown 'public analysts' among them, requires abilities that have to be secured through the participant selection processes, as well as partly acquired in a process of mutual learning, also the risk of sliding into the shoals of formulaic 'empty' talk needs to be prevented by ensuring a mix of participants that is both suited to highlight areas of disagreement, crucial knowledge gaps among the different social and professional discourse communities and zones of catalysed synergy reactions where solutions emerge from merger.

## 5.4 Participatory Action Research & Debate: Mobile phones, citizen science & cross-sector communication

One of the most important models of empowerment we discussed with our interlocutors in the study is the integration of school-educated youth in networks of systematic cross-sector and cross-boundary communication. One central element of this communication is the access participants gain to a wider public, entailing more influence in decision making and policy making processes. Another central element is a process of systematic mutual learning. Building on traditional models, young people can act as *messengers* in both. Pastoralist partners acting as voices (*ngítóiliò*) of their communities (*ngadakarìn*) could be provided with robust solar-powered outdoor cell phones which, apart from using the direct communication opportunities of the expanding range of mobile networks in the borderlands (reaching almost full coverage e.g. in most of the Turkana-Ethiopia borderlands already), can be used for locating the *ngítóiliò ngadakarìn* by the *messengers* in the vast roadless borderland wilderness; as message-recording and message dissemination devices, as event- and mobility diaries; and as data collection devices (e.g. mapping of livestock movements, migration routines and key resources through GPS tracing; photos and videos documenting the state of resources, of livestock and of human health over time; etc.), thereby making the borderland communities part of a citizen science endeavour that increases the inclusiveness of local, regional and international knowledge production dramatically. This can also be important to document the messages of the *ngítóiliò ngadakarìn* or to gather data requested by the professionals partnering in the network.

### Regional-international academic cooperation & institution development

Among the most encouraging experiences were the very fruitful and promising discussion with partners interested in such uses of communication technology and community messaging systems across sectors by local government, NGOs, research and academic institutions, including the nascent *Turkana University College* (TUC) in Lodwar whose leadership is interested in integrating *messengers* into their graduate programs in order to both provide academic supervision in cooperation with others and enable them to convert their work and experience in the project into parts of degree work. Professor Lokuruka and others are also part of the *Drylands Research & Qualification Consortium Initiative* (DRYREQCOI) which aims at establishing inclusive, transparent and high-class research, cutting-edge participatory citizen science and action research methods, on and with the people of the region from the onset as key part of TUC's profile, explore models of collaboration with reputed international research institutions and develop long-term cooperation opportunities, including to facilitate academic exchange, undergraduate and post-graduate research and intensive information transfer. The same applies to an initiative by Ethiopian scholars to establish a centre for pastoralism research at a university in the dryland belt and the well-known *South Omo Research Centre* (SORC) in Jinka, the headquarters of South Omo Zone, with which such relations do already exist and which is to become part of the nascent Jinka University. While there are no such institutional opportunities in Karamoja at this point, collaboration with the reputed social science department of Makerere University can be explored. Institutions like the *Lands of the Future* (LOF) and *Omo-Turkana Research Networks* (OTuRN) and cross-sector initiatives like the *Borderlands Working Group* (BWG) could provide crucial human, social and cultural capital for such important processes of international knowledge exchange and amalgamation. There have also been discussions with *The Borders Institute* (TBI), the *Institute for Regional Integration and Development* (IRID) at the Catholic University of Eastern Africa (CUEA), the British Institute for Eastern Africa (BIEA), the Rift Valley Institute (RVI) and oth-

er vibrant research institutions in Kenya on cooperation in processing results of the project analytically and contribute to current debates on cross-border communication, networking development.

## 6 Conclusions & Recommendations

The pastoralists of the region form a specific type of civil society that is of high value not only for members. People everywhere could learn from their success in maintaining very high levels of participation in decision making, social pro-activeness, economic self-reliance and ecological sustainability. This report can only provide a glimpse of how and why they do so. It suggests to tap their potential for efficient and equitable development planning by involving them closely in joint efforts of CSOs and researchers, aid organisations, policy and decision makers through innovative communication and support structures detailed in our internal report and up for discussion with potential stakeholders in the next stage of the larger project of which it forms part.

Virtually everyone in the region takes it for granted that services are provided by NGOs, churches and other civil society organisations, that governance is often understood in the narrow confines of official administrative and policing work, although local politicians are largely effective through activities outside the realm of accountable and transparent formality, and that armed civilians take care of security. This is not in itself a problem. The problem is that a closer and better regulated cooperation and task sharing between them could yield much better results for everyone. A key tool to this end is, obviously, communication. This is why we made communication a core issue.<sup>i</sup>

For any intervention, not so much the size but the degree of adaptation and adaptability of its design and implementation to the context will decide about failure or success. Risk management in that sense has to make sure to work with an adequate coalition of stakeholders across sectors to jointly and diligently develop the best answers to the question what kinds of improvement, and in which combination, have the best chance to produce benefits sustainably, instead of being choked or outweighed by 'side effects'. Here again, systematic cross-sector communication is crucial.

### 6.1 Loima as model for Elemi

One central difference between the two border regions we studied is the freedom of the people of the **Loima frontier** to manage their own affairs, including cross-border relationships and cross-border mobility, largely free from restrictions imposed by the state or elites while enjoying remarkable stability, socio-economic resilience, and relative inter-community peace. This contrasts sharply with the securitised, authoritarian, costly and dysfunctional boundary regimes of the **Kenya-Ethiopia frontier** where cross-border and inter-ethnic violence remains virulent and local economies are under severe threat. Governments and development actors should therefore promote cross-border resource sharing, migration, cooperation and close coexistence. The comparison between the Karamoja-Turkana frontier, where that has become a reality, even though it is presently facing certain challenges and setbacks, and the Turkana-Ethiopia frontier, where we can clearly see the effects of the opposite, is instructive. Interaction, sharing, flexibility and (at least temporal) proximity are critical. The project models we suggest are designed to promote exactly that.

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<sup>i</sup> It is worth noting that none of the NGOs working in Karamoja, Turkana or South Omo seems to be presently engaging in the field we suggest to centre on, community empowerment through communication (EUTF 2016; KRSU 2016; list of NGOs working in Turkana in the Annex, Eulenberger et al forthcoming). As we know that KDF has started exploring this, we conclude that there is interest among local CBOs and populations in this but the approach is innovative in addressing a critical gap in development work and as such of special merit.

## 6.2 Sustainability

There is no project concept that can guarantee full success by any measure. Moreover, the further a concept moves away from established strategies in order to develop alternatives, the less certainty can there be about the spectre of outcomes. However, unexpected or disappointing outcomes should not be understood as failure to produce important and valuable results. Humans have achieved present-day levels of sophistication in countless matters because they have relentlessly tried to improve things and learned from the results. In many cases, countless unsuccessful attempts were necessary to finally find an important solution. They have also perfected the art of learning by doing in the development of scientific methods and knowledge. However, the potential of the sciences, including those studying social relations, to not only recount and reinterpret facts but to accompany, analyse and help guide their change to make learning from action more efficient is as deplorably underused, especially where societies struggle with very serious needs, as is the potential of these societies themselves. To tap those potentials far better should, therefore, be a central concern.

## 6.3 Wider policy issues

In regard to the wider policy context, we agree with the recommendations distilled by UNEP & IUCN (2014) from their analysis of pastoralist systems, their stressors and opportunities, promoting a systematic and multi-dimensional empowerment approach:

“... solutions can focus on enabling sustainable pastoralism on healthy rangelands to provide a significant share of livestock products in local and international markets [although its value as resilient livelihood for hundreds of millions of people should not be neglected, even where it produces more for regional subsistence than for export markets, not least in view of the destitution of millions of jobless people around them; IE]. Investment in enabling sustainable pastoralism will rest upon the following six pillars:

1. Providing sustainably-derived technologies for the provision of basic services that are appropriate to the production systems of pastoralists, including renewable energy, mobile health and veterinary services, long distance schools and communications, and safe water for humans and animals;
2. Recognizing land and natural resource rights by legally protecting collective and private rights to manage grazing areas, water sources and livestock movement corridors, wildlife management, risk management and resilience, and enabling land use planning and ecosystem management by pastoralists
3. Building equitable value chains and market access that provide economic opportunities to pastoralists through information, diversification, certification, niche markets, payments for ecosystem services, sustainable tourism, and local and sub-regional marketing infrastructure;
4. Empowering pastoralist institutions and systems through respect for indigenous knowledge and breeds, enabling knowledge sharing and networking, professional certification of herders and shepherds in sustainable management, and ensuring Free, Prior and Informed Consent;
5. Enabling fiscal policies and fair trade by creating a more level playing field with other sectors in which subsidies are fair, tariffs are levied for environmental costs of different sectors, and banking, credit and insurance are available;
6. Promoting awareness of consumers and producers that respects the environmental values of rangeland biodiversity, genetic diversity of breeds, the cultural values of pastoralism and the health benefits of pastoral products.

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**Photo:** Friends across borders (left: Chief Jacob Èkal Nachéwa of Koyàsa, Turkana North; right: Johnny Achichio, member of Nyangatom wòreda leadership (Ethiopia) © I. Eulenberger; Lokitaung, Turkana North, Kenya 2011)

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## 9 Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> On resilience and adaptation see e.g. Adger & Hobdod 2014; Barbier et al 2015; Berkes 2004; Berkes et al 2003, 2000; Plummer & Armitage 2007; Ten Napel et al 2011; Walker & Abel 2002; Walker & Salt 2006.

<sup>2</sup> See e.g. REGLAP Secretariat (FAO) 2012; Ugandan ASALs include, however, also areas where agriculture is dominant, e.g. in Acholi and West Nile, whereas Karamoja contains the driest 10%.

<sup>3</sup> See Turkana County Government 2015 (<http://www.turkana.go.ke/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/Annual-Development-Plan-2015-2016.pdf>)

<sup>4</sup> See GoK 2007 (<http://www.vision2030.go.ke>) & Turkana County Government 2013 (<http://www.turkana.go.ke/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/Turkana-CIDP-Final-1.pdf>)

<sup>5</sup> See Turkana County Government & United Nations. 2015

<sup>6</sup> See Mugabi 2004 (<http://unpan1.un.org/intradoc/groups/public/documents/UN/UNPAN029080.pdf>)

<sup>7</sup> See e.g. Khisa 2013; Klasen 2005; Mwenda & Tangri 2005; Steiner 2006

<sup>8</sup> See e.g. Prunier 2004; Schlee & Watson 2009; Lubulwa 2015; Mwenda & Tangri 2003; Schomerus 2013; Tangri & Mwenda 2013;

<sup>9</sup> A comprehensive list of the NGOs working in Karamoja and their fields of intervention is provided by KRSU 2016.

<sup>10</sup> See also Akabwai et al 2007; Bevan 2007; Carlson et al 2012; Czuba 2011; FEWS NET 2005, 2010; Gelsdorf et al 2012; Knaute & Kagan 2009, 2008; Knighton 2010, 2003; Levine 2010; Nangiro 2005; Stites et al 2016; Stites & Huisman 2010; Walker 2002; Verswijver 2004; the latter discusses some of the worst assaults on pastoralists and their culture in Karamoja, including when thousands were killed by the military on direct orders of dictator Idi Amin for refusing to change to modern forms of dressing, an experience still frequently cited in conversations because it brings a certain attitude to the point.

<sup>11</sup> See e.g. ICNL 2017b (<http://www.icnl.org/research/monitor/uganda.html>)

<sup>12</sup> See e.g. Van der Beken 2013; Abbink 2011; Turton 2006.

<sup>13</sup> See e.g. Looney 2015 (<http://hdl.handle.net/10945/48237>).

<sup>14</sup> See e.g. ICNL 2017a (<http://www.icnl.org/research/monitor/ethiopia.html>)

<sup>15</sup> See e.g. Daily Nation 2017.09.01.

<sup>16</sup> See e.g. *ibid.*, Akech 2011; Hope 2017; Gathii 2009

<sup>17</sup> Dyson-Hudson 1966; Gulliver 1951\*

<sup>18</sup> In our interview, I. Imana complained about an increasing weakening of traditional mechanisms of social regulation, crime prevention and containment of anti-social behaviour due to this forum-shopping especially by deviant and unruly youth; see [annex](#))

<sup>19</sup> The most critical stand is taken by Gebre Mariam 2008 and Kebede 2013. Plummer 2012, a World Bank report in cooperation with GoE, depicts the most positive image, claiming that “corrupt practice in the delivery of basic services is comparatively limited and is potentially much lower than other low-income countries”. Mengistu et al 2013 and Data Dea 2012 occupy space between these two extremes.

<sup>20</sup> See e.g. Abbink 2011b; Buffavand 2016; Carr 2017; Data 2012; EUTF 2016; Fana & Asnake 2012; Hodbod et al forthcoming; HRW 2015, 2012; Kamski 2016; Mosley & Watson 2016.

<sup>21</sup> See e.g. Eulenberger 2015, 2013.

<sup>22</sup> In-depth ecological studies of the regions are available only for the Dásanach (Carr 1977) and southern Turkána sections (Little & Leslie, eds. 1999, McCabe 2004, 1994b, 1984; Dyson-Hudson & McCabe 1985, 1983) but at a more general level also for the Karamojong (Dyson-Hudson 1966), Nyangatom (Tornay 2001:31-73, 1982:103-110; 1981:141-146) and the Turkána in general (Gulliver 1951:22-56, 1969; Oba 1992; Odegi-Awuondo 1990; Wienpahl 1984). While this represents a serious gap in our knowledge about the ecology and economy of the region, the available work enables us at least understand the general patterns.

<sup>23</sup> See Abbink 2000:535; Tornay 1982:104; 1981:142;

<sup>24</sup> See Cohen et al 2015; Dan Church Aid 2010; Fana & Asnake 2012; Gowlett 1988; Notenbaert et al 2007.

<sup>25</sup> See also e.g. Cohen et al 2013; Cordaid 2013; EU & FAO 2013; Fratkin et al 2004; Hogg 1987; Juma 2009; Oba 1992; USDS 2017.

<sup>26</sup> See e.g. Azarya 1996; Baker 1977, 1975; Barber 1962; Cohen et al 2015; Dyson-Hudson 1966, 1962; EU & FAO 2013; Galaty 2014, 2013; Gray et al 2002; Heald 1999; Hogg 1987, 1982; Huysmans 2004; Kenya 2005, 2003; Knaute & Kagan 2009, 2008; Lind 2005; Little 1985; Lokuruka 2008; Mamdani et al 1992; McCabe 1994, 1990b; Muhereza & Otim 2002; Notenbaert et al 2007; Nyanjom 2014; Schlee & Shongolo 2012; Schlee & Salentin 1995; Scoones 1995; Stites et al 2016, 2010; Turkana County 2014; Wolputte & Verswijver 2004.

<sup>27</sup> Abbink et al 2014; Abbink 2009; Adano 2009; Buffavand 2016; Carr 2017, 1977; Eulenberger forthcoming; EUTF 2016; Fana & Asnake 2012; Flintan et al 2014; Fratkin 2013; Gabbert & Thubauville 2010; Gelsdorf et al 2012; Gray et al 2002; Heald 1999; Hogg, Richard. 1987, 1985, 1982; Huysmans 2004; IRIN 2014, 2013; Krätli 2015; Little 2014; McCabe 1996, 1990a, 1990b; Mosley & Watson 2016; Mulugeta 2014; Hodbod et al forthcoming; Schlee 2013; Tornay 2009, 1981.

<sup>28</sup> This term, introduced by early ethnographers, is based on the oral traditions of these communities to point to Central Karamoja as the region where, in a long and rather complicated process, the different ethnic groups existing today first emerged as separate units.

<sup>29</sup> For the classification of the Nilotic language group see Greenberg 1955, Köhler 1955, and Ehret 1971.

<sup>30</sup> Ember et al 2012; Eulenberger 2013; Eulenberger & Glowacki forthcoming; Fukui & Turton 1979; Galaty & Bonte 1991; Gulliver 1951; McCabe 2004; Lamphear 1994; 1992:18-26, 1988, ; Little & Leslie 1999; Oba 1992:7f.; Witsenburg & Adano 2009;

<sup>31</sup> E.g. Barber 1968; Carr 1977; Eulenberger 2013, 2014, forthcoming; Gulliver 1951; Little & Leslie 1999; Lamphear 1994, 1992, 1988; Tornay 2009.

<sup>32</sup> An interesting study in this direction, though in a different cultural context, is Narvaez 2013.

<sup>33</sup> See e.g. Gurtong 2011

<sup>34</sup> See also the interview with I. Imana in the annex.

<sup>35</sup> See e.g. US Department of State - Humanitarian Information Unit 2017.

<sup>36</sup> See e.g. AFP 2016; Africa Review 2014; BBC 2014; Kimani 2014; Mureithi 2016;

<sup>37</sup> As recorded by my interviews, Serge Tornay, Jon Abbink, Gulliver and Lamphear;

<sup>38</sup> The main authority on Nyangatom is Tornay; see also Abbink 2009, Barber 1968, Carr 1977, Collins 2004, Eulenberger forthcoming, Gulliver 1951, Lamphear 1992, Mburu 2007, Pfitzner 2011, Rowlands 1951, Turnbull 1944.

<sup>39</sup> See e.g. Gabbert & Thubauville 2010; Buffavand 2016; Carr 2017, 1977; Donham & James 2002; EUTF 2016; Fana & Asnake 2012; Tornay 2009, 1981; for a brief overview e.g. <http://www.mursi.org/neighbours>.

<sup>40</sup> See e.g. Avery 2013; Buffavand 2016; EUTF 2016; Kamski 2016; Mosley & Watson 2016; Mulugeta 2014; Hodbod et al forthcoming.

<sup>41</sup> See also Schilling et al 2016; Oluoch 2015; Arnold 2013.

<sup>42</sup> See e.g. Africa Confidential Vol 58 No 7 (2017.03.31) '*Water Emergency*', online available at: [https://www.africa-confidential.com/article-preview/id/11960/Water\\_emergency](https://www.africa-confidential.com/article-preview/id/11960/Water_emergency)

<sup>43</sup> See references above.

<sup>44</sup> See Eulenberger (forthcoming); Eulenberger et al forthcoming.

<sup>45</sup> See for instance Richards, L. (2005). *Handling qualitative data. A practical Guide*, London: SAGE.

<sup>46</sup> Schlee 2014; Anderson & Broch-Due 1999; Dyson-Hudson 1966; Gabbert & Thubauville 2010; Gulliver 1951:88ff; Little & Leslie 1992.

<sup>47</sup> This observation lies at the core of the Halle School's theory of integration and conflict; see Eidson et al 2017, Donahoe et al 2009.

<sup>48</sup> Broch-Due 1999, 1991; Dyson-Hudson 1966:106ff., note sketch of compound on p.106; Gulliver 1951:74ff, including sketches.

<sup>49</sup> See e.g. Dyson-Hudson 1966:22-80, including figures 7-13 (maps); Gulliver 1951:37ff. and sketch maps.

<sup>50</sup> A fitting theory, including with data from Turkana, is provided by Baumard 2016, Baumard & Liénard 2011.

<sup>51</sup> See e.g. Dyson Hudson 1966; Gulliver 1951; Broch-Due 1999, 1991.

<sup>52</sup> On the institution of bond friends among Eastern African pastoralists see e.g. Gabbert & Thubauville 2010; Girke 2010; Wolde Gossa 2005, 2000.

<sup>53</sup> Eulenberger et al forthcoming will address this gap to some extent. For exemplary work on chiefs in South Sudan see Leonardi 2013.

<sup>54</sup> See e.g. Eulenberger & Roro 2015, González-Ruibal 2014

<sup>55</sup> On this, see e.g. González Ruibal 2014; Eulenberger & Roro 2015; Streck 1997.

<sup>56</sup> On Ateker spiritual leaders see Akabwai & Carlson 2011; Dyson-Hudson 1966:224ff.; Eulenberger forthcoming; Eulenberger et al forthcoming; Lamphear 1992; Novelli 1999; Knighton 2005.

<sup>57</sup> On these latter issues see the [section on the priority of restocking](#) as most longed-for improvement among (disaster-hit) pastoralists.

<sup>58</sup> For the general conditions of this place, see the section 3.4.2. [The Turkana-Nyangatom frontier](#).

<sup>59</sup> See Karamoja Cultural Organization 2016 (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zJacyZ1JDgY>).

<sup>60</sup> A reference to the term “hard-to-reach changemakers” presently popular in the NGO sector.

<sup>61</sup> For personal details see <http://www.kdfug.org/our-staff/tebanyang-emmanuel/>.

<sup>62</sup> Interview, Moroto, Karamoja (Uganda), 12<sup>th</sup> July 2017

<sup>63</sup> Name changed at request

<sup>64</sup> For the role of Somali traders see e.g. Scharrer & Carrier 2017

<sup>65</sup> See the chapter [Example of development issues: Donkey boom & donkey doom](#).

<sup>66</sup> See also the transcribed interview with Sammy in the Annex.

<sup>67</sup> Names changed at request.

<sup>68</sup> See also the study on the socio-cultural dimensions of food insecurity by Hadley et al 2012 and the interview excerpts on *the value of stock* in the Annex\*.

<sup>69</sup> See e.g. Adano 2009; Almagor 1978a; Girke 2010; Little & Leslie, eds. 1999, chapters 4 & 5; McCabe 2004; Schlee 2012.

<sup>70</sup> All pertinent problems were already laid out by experts like Hogg in the 1980s.\*

<sup>71</sup> For a more detailed description of the project see <https://de.scribd.com/document/333699226/Tierra-y-Tecnologia-nº-44-7c-Segundo-semester-de-2013>

<sup>72</sup> Interview by I. Eulenberger, Lobúr, Northern Turkana, 23<sup>rd</sup> July 2017.

<sup>73</sup> On the prosopis invasion see e.g. Muturi et al 2013.

<sup>74</sup> See e.g. Fratkin & Roth 2005; Stites & Mitchard 2011; on food security issues also Gathii 2012.

<sup>75</sup> See e.g. Knighton 2006; Mirzeler 2014; on similar cultures Strecker 2010 and Girke 2011.