



UNIVERSITY OF GOTHENBURG

Pokot Young Pastoralists at the Crossroads

Tradition, Modernity and Land Tenure
Transformations in East Pokot, Kenya



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Abstract

East Pokot, in North-Western Kenya, falls under the Arid and Semi-Arid Lands (ASALs) of the Sub-Saharan region. Due to the yearly prolonged dry seasons, pastoralism has traditionally guaranteed the most reliable source of livelihood. Marginalised and excluded since colonial times from the map of economic policies, East Pokot has only recently been integrated with the rest of the country by large-scale infrastructural and technological investments and services. In recent decades, the region has been transformed by population growth, changes in the ecosystem, progressive diffusion of modernity and the ensuing land tenure transformations. Pokot pastoralists who populate the region are often portrayed as backward, violent, and hostile to modernisation. This study investigates how young Pokot pastoralists assess tradition, modernity and land tenure changes. The investigation was conducted during nine weeks of fieldwork in a confined area in central East Pokot. The study adopts qualitative research methods and considers differences in gender, access to education and family background, while prioritising young people with a pastoralist background. The theoretical framework is informed by Bourdieu's theory of practice and Foucault's approach to power and power-knowledge. The findings disrupt the view of pastoralist resistance to modernity and self-exclusion, highlighting not only young pastoralists' welcoming attitude towards technology, but also their fragmented perceptions and practices towards tradition, modernity, the shifting economic system and land tenure. The findings also unearth the emergence of new elites and expose misconceptions and stigmatisation of pastoralism, which surpass the contingency of the local context.

Key Words: Pastoralism; Youth; ASALs; Africa; East Pokot; Land tenure; Modernity; Tradition.

Abbreviations

ACK	Anglican Church of Kenya
AIC	African Inland Church
ASAL	Arid and Semi-Arid Land
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organisation
FGM	Female Genital Mutilation
GDC	Geothermal Development Company Ltd
IUCN	International Union for Conservation of Nature
KESSP	Kenya Education Sector Support Programme for 2005-2010
KNA	Kenya News Agency
LAPSSET	Lamu-South Sudan-Ethiopia Transport
PAG	Pentecostal Assemblies of God
SDA	Seventh Day Adventist
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SIDA	Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency
UN	United Nations
UNECA	United Nations Economic Commission for Africa
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNESCO-UNEVOC	International Centre for Technical and Vocational Education and Training

1. Introduction

The Arid and Semi-Arid Lands (ASALs) of North-Western Kenya are sparsely populated semi-desert landscapes, traditionally dominated by pastoralism. The region is typically chronicled by mainstream media and transnational organisations as plagued by poverty, droughts, famine and conflicts (FAO and ECA 2018). These humanitarian crises are ascribed “to the changing climate, to environmental degradation, to overpopulation, to political interference, to geopolitics and conflict, to aid agencies failures and more” (Catley, Lind and Scoones 2013, 1). Marginalised and isolated from the rest of the country since colonial times, the area lacks many services and sufficient infrastructure. However, the governmental recognition of the potential the ASALs in recent decades has sparked a number of development programmes and large scale investment (Odhiambo 2013, 158-159; Achiba 2019). This process has subsequently unleashed growing interest in competing land uses with pastoralism, including mining, agriculture, infrastructure, urbanisation, wildlife and tourism (UNECA 2017, 12). The fate of the pastoralists with respect to the humanitarian crises and these intertwining interests have catalysed intense debates within academia and policy makers.

The crux of these debates revolves around the impact that the ongoing land tenure transformations have on pastoralism, the ecosystem and the social fabric of the indigenous communities in relation to food and land security. While some scholars caution the negative consequences of privatisations and enclosures on pastoralists due to the potential increased risk of dispossession, unfair land distribution and land fragmentation (Achiba 2019; Boone 2019; Binot et al. 2009; Galvin 2009), others promote these practices as a means to reduce environmental degradation, and enhance diversification and land security (Mureithi et al. 2015; Nyberg et al. 2015; Wairore et al. 2015, 1-8).

On the other hand, a long-standing debate pivots around pastoralism. Some scholars emphasise pastoralists’ dynamism, entrepreneurship and innovative capacity (Catley, Lind and Scoones 2013, 2), their ability to make “the most effective use” of the ASALs (Waller 2012, 21) and achieve feasible and sustainable livelihoods in this high-risk eco-system (Zinsstag et al. 2016, 693). The role of pastoralism in protecting ecosystem services, cultural and biological diversity is increasingly recognised (UN-GSDR 2015) likewise its contribu-

tion to economic growth and its potential to attain the United Nations (UN) Sustainable Development Goals (Zinsstag et al. 2016, 693-695; Republic of Kenya 2017, 10). At the same time, new “narratives of pastoralism in crisis” (Waller 2012, 21) are still intertwined with outdated “national prejudices and discourses of pastoral mismanagement” pursued by formal education programmes (Archambault 2014, 204, 207-208) and Christian churches (Greiner 2017, 84, 86; Bollig et al. 2014, 71-72). Numerous misconceptions portray pastoralists as *primitive* and unwilling to sell animals, accusing them, *inter alia*, of poor productivity and use of “archaic” techniques (IUCN 2008). These prejudices resume the early and middle twentieth-century “grand narrative of environmental degradation” due to overstocking (Waller 2012, 10-12) driven by pastoralists’ “ignorance and cultural conservatism” (Waller 2012, 8). In addition, a parallel discourse on securitisation of the pastoralists portrays a minority, especially young people, as unruly, violent and involved in illicit activities (UNECA 2017, 12-15, 49-53; Bruyere et al. 2018, 2; Greiner 2016, 537-538).

Young people constitute the largest share of African population (Durham 2000, 114) and, as future policy receivers, they represent crucial stakeholders who should be involved in policy-formation. The UN warns about the underrepresentation of young people in policy making and exhort governments to include them, especially young women, in governance at the local, regional, national and global levels (UN 2015). In particular, policy makers are urged to promote inclusive development for pastoralism encompassing female, poor and young pastoralists (UNECA 2017, 51-52), while political institutions are spurred to “undertake deliberate efforts to increase the participation of pastoralist communities” (Ibid., ix). Power in Kenya is still largely withheld by the older generations at governmental level (Wilson, Stanton, and Mwau 2014, 1379-1383) and within indigenous communities (Archambault 2014, 205; Bollig 2016, 21, 28; Lesorogol 2003, 532). Although the current government has initiated a specific flagship programme directed to foster women and youth inclusion in business (President’s Delivery Unit. n.d.), studies have rarely been conducted from a youth’s perspective (Durham 2000, 114).

Kenya’s Pokot people populate the West Pokot county and East Pokot, in the Northern Baringo county (Appendix 1a). While research has mainly focused on the developments in

the former, the latter has received minor attention. Michael Bollig's seminal ethnographic work (Bollig 2006) provides a historical and in-depth account of the Pokot culture in East Pokot in terms of ceremonies, social structures, habits, environmental transformations and coping strategies against hazards. Subsequent studies on East Pokot have focused on Pokot community dynamics, in relation to environmental, socio-economic and land tenure changes. Only a few studies, however, have attempted to unpack pastoral communities' social structure. Some scholars have investigated young pastoralists expectations among the Masai (Archambault 2014) and the Samburu (Bruyere et al. 2018) or from a gender perspective (Karmebäck et al. 2015). However, the perspective of Pokot young pastoralists and the deconstruction of this social group is still largely overlooked in literature.

2. Aim and Research Questions

The scope of this study is to fill in this gap and shed light on how Pokot young pastoralists in East Pokot relate to tradition, the progressive penetration of modernity and the ensuing land tenure transformations towards privatisation and enclosures. The intention is to provide a cross-sectional overview of young pastoralists' perspectives, with particular attention to the most marginalised voices. It is also an ambition of this work to generate recommendations for policy makers to be included in the governance process. The research questions will explore:

- 1. In what terms do Pokot young pastoralists reproduce, negotiate or resist tradition and modernity?*
- 2. How do they evaluate and relate to the traditional land tenure system and the impact of the current ongoing transformations?*

2.1. Delimitations

My investigation was limited to Mondri Division (Appendix 1b) particularly the hatched area indicated in Appendix 1c, except for a short detour to Paka. This restriction was dictated by the necessity to streamline the fieldwork due to time constraints and logistic aspects and by the intention, from a methodological perspective, to increase the comparative potential of the background of the sampled individuals and the validity of the results. Finally, this choice complements existing academic literature which has mainly investigated the bordering regions of Tangelbei and Churo.

Another delimitation occurred regarding age and generational aspects. The UN defines *youth* as a “period of transition from the dependence of childhood to adulthood’s independence” (UNESCO-UNEVOC 2014), which Western perspective generally links to age. An age-based definition of *young*, however, is hardly applicable in Pokot culture where children are assigned considerable responsibilities and can marry already at young age. Additionally, individuals are often unaware of their age (Bollig 2006, 68). Hence, I eventually resorted to a definition of *young* as an *unmarried teenager*, as these individuals are partially involved in the community dynamics without being fully recognised as mature community members.

In addition I did not address directly the issues of inter-ethnic conflicts, cattle rustling or weapon ownership, unless the topic spontaneously emerged, in order to favour trust and confidence and to avoid tensions or suspicion in the interviewees regarding my role as student.

Finally, the dissertation’s length constraints compelled me to delimitate the notion of modernity. For the same reason, the data collected during the interviews could not be presented entirely in this work¹.

3. Relevance to Global Studies

As remote and scarcely populated areas in Africa, the ASALs of Kenya respond to the commonsense idea of places excluded from modern globalisation. Nevertheless, transnational development agencies, bilateral aid and non-governmental organisations have been conducting specific, but often unsuccessful, policies and programmes in these regions since the 1990s (Campbell 2008). Since the turn of the new millennium, however, national and global attention towards the ASALs has rocketed and globalisation has been more prominently penetrating these areas, making the subject particularly relevant to Global Studies.

Aid programmes by transnational institutions and international donors have been focusing in recent decades on the Sub-Saharan ASALs, recognised as vulnerable hotspots to the forecasted harmful consequences of climate change (IPCC 2018, 55) and the negative impact of invasive species (Anderson and Bollig 2016, 11-12). Yet, alarm has been raised by the de-

¹ More topics were investigated during the fieldwork such as dress codes, family intra-relations, leisure and concept of beauty.

celeration, and even inversion in the ASALs, towards the UN *2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development* to eradicate poverty and hunger (Sustainable Development Goal 1 2019; Sustainable Development Goal 2 2019; FAO 2019). At the same time, the view of pastoralism is going through a rehabilitation and increased recognition by transnational institutions at a global level for its ability to produce high quality food, steward the rangelands and defend the ecosystems and biodiversity (UNEP 2017). Meanwhile, as the natural resources of the ASALs catalyse international interests, globalisation penetrates these regions through the tentacular mushrooming of infrastructure, industrialisation, green energy power plants, technology, banking, education and governmental policies. Modernisation creates in parallel new wealthy educated elites, often in urban areas, widening the social gaps with the uneducated population. Therefore, the unifying and uniforming forces of globalisation in fact produce in these regions a different experience of rupture, inequality and segregation, as observed elsewhere in Africa (Ferguson 2006, 48-49).

The aim of this study is to break away from top-down narratives in order to embrace instead, a bottom-up perspective of globalisation. This work evidences the entanglement, rather than the dichotomy between *modernity*, furthered by discourses on economic development, literacy and human rights (Parkes et al. 2016, 158), and *tradition* symbolised by *the rural* and pastoralism. It is no less a point of this investigation that a grassroots understanding of the difficulties and expectations of young pastoralists could represent a landmark for the development of future inclusive policies, beyond the global restructuring policies of “inclusion and gender-sensitivity” adopted lately by transitional organisations (Marchand and Sisson Runyan 2010, 5).

4. Background

I have identified the following aspects as being crucial to understand the situation in East Pokot and to contextualise the subsequent discussion.

4.1. Development

The progressive isolation of the ASALs of Kenya from the rest of the country began during colonial times with the creation of the Northern Frontier District (Republic of Kenya

2017, 11). After independence, Kenya strived towards rapid economic growth, increased productivity and high-salaried employment, focusing on light and intermediate industries (Ngui, Chege, and Kimuy. 2016, 72-73) leaving behind the ASALs. The Kenyan governmental shift in attitude towards the ASALs began in the early 2000s following the recognition of their potential value of in terms of “livestock production, fishing, mining, tourism development, trade and industry” which translated into the 2003 *Economic Recovery Strategy for Wealth and Employment Creation 2003–2007* (Odhiambo 2013, 159-160). Successive political initiatives, such as the 2008 *Kenya Vision 2030*, the 2009 *National Land Policy*, the 2010 *New Constitution*, the 2012 *National Policy for the Sustainable Development of Northern Kenya and Other Arid Lands* (Odhiambo 2013, 158), or the 2017 *The Big Four Agenda* (President Republic of Kenya. n.d.) converged in bringing development to these regions through accelerated investments. In addition to education and health-care, Kenya’s blueprint in the Northern ASALs rests principally on technological and economic development interventions including public-private and private investments. Of major importance is the construction of new infrastructure (Odhiambo 2013, 161), such as the large-scale Lamu-South Sudan-Ethiopia Transport (LAPSSET) corridor infrastructure project (Bollig 2016, 37-38), and the energy extraction industry in the form of wind or geothermal power (Achiba 2019, 2; Greiner 2016, 531) or the recently discovered crude oil around Turkana lake (Enns and Bersaglio 2015).

4.2. Education

Kenya’s policy makers have always interlinked education and employment to serve industrial development and economic growth, orienting education towards vocational, agricultural and technical specialisation (King 2007, 360-361). The 8-4-4 education system, based on 8 years primary education, 4 years secondary and 4 years higher education (Ohba 2011, 403), was launched in 1985 to extend the tuition of practical subjects to all levels of education and, therefore, favour young generations’ employment (Sifuna 1992, 134-135). However, due to the limited economic resources, insufficient materials and ill-equipped prevocational background of the teachers undermined this ambition (Sifuna 1992, 143). By the early 2000s, by aligning with international legal frameworks (Ohba 2011, 402), the World Bank and the UN Millennium Project, primary and secondary sub-sectors were separated in scope to reduce poverty and inequality (King 2007, 361-362) and *Free Primary Education* in 2002 and

Kenya Education Sector Support Programme for 2005-2010 (KESSP) were enforced (King 2007, 361-362). However, “a significant proportion” of children in the ASALs have not attended school (Republic of Kenya 2017, 21), although research revealed young pastoralists’ interest and appreciation for education (Archambault 2014, 207; Bruyere et al. 2018, 4). While a few African countries have abolished school fees also for lower-secondary education (Ohba 2011, 402), school fees are still levied for secondary school in Kenya.

4.3.Land Tenure

The debate on land tenure in Kenya harks back to colonial times when British authorities, disregarding the indigenous *communal land* practices, introduced private property and assigned the most fertile lands to the Europeans (Odote and Kameri-Mbote 2016, 2). Article 61 of Kenya’s 2010 constitution includes *community land* as a formal category of land ownership along with *public land* and *private land* (Kenya Law 2013) in an effort to secure land rights to marginalised communities. Yet this ambition was weakened by vague formulations and inexistent references to the rights of individuals in vulnerable categories, such as youth and women (Odote and Kameri-Mbote 2016, 3-5, 11, 13). Nevertheless, the 2016 *Community Land Act* has partially curbed some issues and clarified, for instance, the definition of *community*, the mechanisms of local governance and the implementation of benefit sharing (Odote and Kameri-Mbote 2016, 13-14). While today institutions and the media promote agriculture and urban occupations and strongly suggest that “customary collective tenure is anachronistic and not in keeping with the nation’s modernising trajectory” (Archambault 2014, 206-207), increasing national and international contending interests in land surface-use and subsoil resources have sparked an ever growing competition around land-rights, distribution and ownership. The devolution, despite shifting the deliberative power on land assignment from president to county governments, has, in fact, not depoliticised land-allocation and the risk of land conflicts due to politics of distribution and redistribution persists (Boone 2012, 76, 94). It follows that the protection of the most disenfranchised individuals and pastoralist communities is constrained by the understanding of land use and land governance in community lands, and by its inclusion and integration in the statutory legislation.

5. Previous Research

5.1. Pokot and Transformations in East Pokot

East Pokot, the northern-most district of Baringo County, borders with Turkana to the north, West Pokot and Marakwet to the west, Marigat to the south and Laikipia and Samburu to the east (Appendix 1a). It displays diversified landscapes characterised by semi-arid lowlands, mid-hills and highlands (Greiner, Alvarez, and Becker 2013, 1480) and the estimated population varies between 82 000 and 130 000 people (Save the Children 2010, 6). During colonial times, ethnic territorial demarcation policies assigned the region to Pokot pastoralists (Bollig 2006, 66-67). Described in 1907 as “wealthy herders ‘exceptionally vain and exceptionally generous’ ” (Bollig 2016, 28), the Pokot traditionally despised agriculture (Österle 2008, 88) and by the 1920s, counted among the wealthiest pastoralists in East Africa (Bollig 2016, 29). Their social structure built upon a complex gerontocratic hierarchy and patriarchal values, which colonialism strengthened by “hardening [...] gender roles that emphasised and reinforced a male pastoral ideal” (Ibid., 30). Colonial pastoral policies, while reinforcing ethnic identity to increase a “colonial legacy of control” (Lynch 2006, 60) and specialised pastoralism, also contributed to its decline due to several regulations introduced in the 1920s and 1930s such as the curtailment of previously freely accessible extensive grazing lands (Bollig 2016, 31). The Pokot adapted to colonial government until the modernisation programme in the 1950s (Ibid., 29-30), when their vehement rejection of modernisation gained them the stigma of “pastoral resistance to change” (Österle 2008, 81).

Since the 1980s Pokot society has undergone a process of profound transformation and fragmentation (Bollig 2016, 31-32) attributable to the concomitance of several socio-economic and ecological factors which escalated over time. Part of these changes include severe episodes of drought (Ibid., 31), the acceleration of the ongoing deterioration of vegetation from grassland to thorny bushes (Bollig 2006, 77-83) and the rapid increase in population between the end of the 1990s and 2009 (Bollig, Greiner, and Osterle 2014, 58). The growth of primary schools - from 34 to 100 between 2007 and 2011 (Ibid., 58) - and secondary schools promoted students’ mobility from disparate regions and, accordingly, “influences from outside—including global trends in music, clothing, and worldview” (Bollig et al. 2014, 71). Numerous Christian churches gained influence in recent decades (Greiner 2017, 84), “especially Protestant fundamentalist churches” strongly critical of “what they perceive as

‘traditional’ Pokot culture” including not only polygamy and initiation ceremonies but also youth dancing and singing meeting ceremonies (*andongo*)” (Bollig et al. 2014, 71-72). At the same time, churches also promoted modern practices, and arenas for discussions of discordant ideas from community practices, especially among women and youth (Bollig et al. 2014, 72). This wide spectrum of transformations is also affecting Pokot social structure as the gerontocratic authority is challenged by the new educated elites (Greiner 2016, 540)

Alongside these developments, the discovery of natural resources, such as minerals (Greiner 2016, 538) and geothermal energy have sparked heavy investments (Bollig 2016, 35-38), chief among them the construction of power plants along the extinct volcanoes of Paka and Silali by the governmental *Geothermal Development Company Ltd* (GDC) (Ibid.). At the same time, the construction of the Loruk-Barpelo highway, which connects the region to the rest of the country, was initiated and is now almost-completed (KNA 2019), bringing increased mobility, settlements and technology. This complex context intersects with an ever-growing debate on land ownership, despite the East Pokot *communal land* regime (Greiner 2017, 79). After the gradual migration of poor Pokot in the 1970s towards the highlands (Greiner, Alvarez, and Becker 2013, 1485), this region progressively turned into agro-pastoralism and rain-fed crop agriculture (Greiner, Alvarez, and Becker 2013, 1485-1487). Alongside an improvement in the standard of life, a process of sedentarisation began in this area, followed by practices of land enclosures and informal privatisations (Greiner, Alvarez, and Becker 2013, 1479-1481). These exogenous and endogenous processes of change in land use have resulted in competition for the best land plots. The acceleration of the rise in price of land along the new infrastructure and future investments areas, has ignited intra-ethnic and to a lesser extent inter-ethnic conflicts, where the Pokot community is blamed for cattle rustling and increased insecurity of the region (Greiner 2016, 534-540; Lynch 2006, 52). Likewise from the 2000s also the dry lowlands have been experiencing a similar drive towards privatisation (Greiner, Alvarez, and Becker 2013, 1485; Österle 2008, 81, 86-88), although the lack of water during the dry season constrains the promotion of agriculture (Österle 2008, 88). Pastoralists’ adaptation to the changing context is reflected in the widespread diversification of livelihoods, the shift from cattle to goats and camels husbandry (Österle 2008, 83-86) or livestock trade as demonstrated by Nginyang livestock market, which is ranked as the second largest in Kenya (Bollig 2016, 32).

5.2. Modernity, Pastoralism and Youth in Africa

The current academic debate on *modernity* is marked by contrasting perspectives whose common denominator regards modernity as “somehow related to European expansion and its effects” (Blaser 2013, 549). The Eighteenth-century narratives on modernity advocated a natural trajectory of human civilisation from primitive and savage tribes towards commercial and industrial societies (Lauzon 2012, 4), establishing dichotomous and mutually exclusive notions of tradition and modernity. Twentieth-century modernisation theories continued this deterministic view by envisaging industrialisation, modern transportation and communication as pathways towards political democracy, individualism, secularisation and scientific rationalism (Ferguson 2006, 183). This teleological narrative introduces simplistic temporally-dependent hierarchies of status, envisioning poor countries, “at the bottom” and “at the start”, in their historical “upward” evolution towards modern societies, from a condition of “backwardness” and “savagery” to an ideal of Western “civilisation” (Ibid., 178-179). In many places in Africa the failure of the promises of economic prosperity announced by post-colonial and post-independent developmentalists has led to disillusionment and the resignation that Western lifestyle represents, in fact, a “first class” privilege confined to the elites (Ferguson 2006, 185-187). Kenya has also experienced a similar disenchantment with the development prospected during the 1950s to the 1970s (Christiansen, Utas, and Vigh 2006, 119-121), but despite this, governments propose and envisage for the undeveloped areas the very same evolutionary pathways towards Western modernisation (Kenya Vision 2030; Big Four Action Plan; Odhiambo 2013).

Against this backdrop, pastoralism is often counterpoised to progress, represented by modern educated society. Progressive legislation defends, in principle, pastoralists' rights (FAO 2012; Kenya Law 2013) through legal recognition of pastoralism “as a legitimate form of land use and development” (Odhiambo 2013, 161-162). Furthermore interventions aim at protecting “local values and priorities”, “indigenous knowledge and practice” and “the role of traditional systems of governance and administration in pastoral societies” (Ibid.). However, “the state continues to pursue policies which, when not actually ‘antipastoral,’ are regulatory rather than enabling” (Waller 2012, 21). This scattered and omnipresent juxtaposition be-

tween pastoralism and modernity highlights how modernisation theory, although outdated as social theory, still needs “to be attended to as ethnographic datum” (Ferguson 1999, 84).

In this scenario, the notion of youth varies “in different times and places” and, in societies in rapid transition, entails “a position in movement”, between youngsters' struggle to interpret the world and to define themselves internally and externally, and familiar and societal relocation of their position (Christiansen, Utas, and Vigh 2006, 10-16). Contradictory representations of youth, as victims of political power, actors of violence or agents of change and resistance, emerge also in this post-colonial Africa scenario. It ensues the inadequacy of rigid categorisations of youth as a biological passage between childhood and adulthood or sociocultural constructs of the individual's role in society, in exchange for a more fluid and situated conceptualisation of power, knowledge and agency (Durham 2000, 113, 115-117). In contemporary Kenya, despite a diffused feeling of frustration, marginalisation and exclusion, youths stand as active agents of societal transformations and negotiation with modernity and tradition in relation to gender and generational relations, marriage, sexuality, AIDS, the tensions between *urban* and *rural*, or Christianity (Christiansen, Utas, and Vigh 2006, 118, 124-127, 131).

6. Theoretical Framework

The complexity of the research object necessitates a broad theoretical and methodological approach. Therefore, to interpret Pokot societal micro-scale dynamics and macro-scale discourses on pastoralists, I will interlock Bourdieu's social theory and Foucault's “analytics” of power (Foucault 1998, 82) and the relation between power and knowledge.

6.1. Theory of Practice

This thesis explores how young Pokot act, interact and react to the penetration of modernity, and engages in identifying a theoretical framework to decipher the regular but also unpredictable behaviours encountered during the fieldwork. This conundrum can be untied through Bourdieu's “theory of practice” and its synthesis of the dialectic between structuralism and existentialism, namely between a view of individuals' placement in static social spaces dominated by cultural norms and the championing of actors' will and freedom of

choice (Grenfell 2014, 43-45). Bourdieu argues that social structures and their historical development must be parsed together with the individual's internal mental structures which, simultaneously, absorb and are affected by the surrounding environment, albeit not deterministically determined by it (Bourdieu a 1990, 14). The theory of practice evolves around the three main interdependent and joint concepts of *habitus*, *field* and *capital*.

According to Bourdieu, actors are situated in a social space or *field*, which, similarly to a game or "field of struggles", is delimited by specific boundaries and is governed by unquestioned, unspoken and unanimously accepted tenets, conducts and opinions named *doxa* (Grenfell 2014, 56, 58, 68). Although the *field* establishes the agent's position in the game and sets the *doxic* norms, the agent acts like a good player who, having internalised the rules of the game at an unconscious level, can devise personal strategies and inventions to cope with different and never identical situations in conducting the game (Bourdieu a 1990, 63). This "free play" describes behaviours that are "objectively 'regulated' and 'regular' without being in any way the product of obedience to rules" (Bourdieu b 1990, 53). This appeared in my conversations with the Pokot who, although acknowledging tradition, nevertheless deploy often personal positioning and strategies. This "system of structured, structuring dispositions" is defined as *habitus* (Ibid., 52), which, in its constant evolution, intertwines "the social" and "the individual" and untangles "the paradoxes of objective meaning without subjective intention" (Ibid., 62). The heterogeneity of behaviours and attitudes that define the personal style, is a simple deviation of individual *habitus* from homology to the group (Bourdieu b 1990, 60).

Players endeavour to accumulate economic, social and cultural capital which, if endorsed with symbolic value, may entail an advancement in the social *field* (Grenfell 2014, 50, 67). In periods of stability, agents act naturally in the *field* reproducing existing social structures. In case of accelerated *field* transformations however, time lagging attitudes or cultural inertia towards the "new" *doxa*, defined as *hysteresis* (Grenfell 2014, 128-138), can arise, as much as unpredictable dispositions which do not conform, or even reject, the traditional *doxa*. Both these dissonant types of behaviours and dispositions emerged during the fieldwork, as a result of the rapid ongoing changes in East Pokot. Multiple and inter-dependent

fields exist, such as education, science, media or politics. For example, the *field* of education and economy interconnect when better job opportunities are assigned to individuals endowed with the most prestigious education (Grenfell 2014, 69). Similar *field* interpenetrations became evident during the fieldwork between the fields of education, economy, land tenure and private and social life.

The understanding of social dynamics hinges upon the concept of *symbolic capital*, intended as the value that social agents perceive allocated in some form of capital, and which engenders categories of opposition, such as “cultured/uncultured” (Bourdieu 1998, 47). Symbolic capital infiltrates the *doxa*, whereby a specific perspective is represented as universal truth, establishing power positions of dominating views (Ibid., 57) through structures of domination like “families, the church, the education system, the state” (Bourdieu 2001, 34). Thereby the dominated individuals apply unconsciously the dominant categories in a mechanism defined as *symbolic violence* (Ibid., 35). This view of power through hierarchical classification and *doxic* subjugation is integrated with Foucault’s insight on the mechanisms of power.

6.2. “Analytics” of Power

Foucault’s “analytics” of power and its path-breaking understanding of power dynamics helps to dissect the power relations in Pokot society which seemingly rest in gender relations, the gerontocratic system, wealth or education accumulation. Unlike the sovereign model of power which assigns power to an individual, group or structure, Foucault, while recognising the existence of sovereign power (Flohr 2016, 41), argues that power which is “assumed to exist universally in a concentrated or diffused form, does not exist” (Foucault 1982, 788). Power must be untied from juridico-political discourses centred on obedience through “modes of domination, submission, and subjugation” (Foucault 1998, 85). Rather, Foucault suggests that power is relational and that it “is everywhere; not because it embraces everything, but because it comes from everywhere” (Foucault 1998, 93). Power relations are embedded in every society and “are rooted in the system of social network” (Foucault 1982, 791, 793), because “power is ‘always already there’ ” (Foucault 1980, 141).

In particular, “power is tolerable only on condition that it masks a substantial part of itself” and “its success is proportional to its ability to hide its own mechanisms” (Foucault 1998, 86). Therefore, the exercise of power “is a total structure of actions brought to bear upon possible actions; it incites, it induces, it seduces, it makes easier or more difficult; in the extreme it constrains or forbids absolutely; it is nevertheless always a way of acting upon an acting subject [...]. A set of actions upon other actions.” (Foucault 1982, 789). As in Western society, the same mechanisms are observable in Pokot community where, while some fathers use coercion over family members, other families and the community, independently of gender and age, most often leverage on recognition and approval to steer and control other members’ behaviours. In this way, power objectifies the subjects or “makes individuals subjects” (Foucault 1982, 778, 781) through mechanisms of surveillance, normalisation and control which create self-regulated and self-disciplined individuals who, having interiorised the rules of the system (Dore 2010, 742), enact them without direct enforcement.

Foucault emphasises the centrality of the exercise of power “only over free subjects” (Foucault 1982, 790). “The relationship between power and freedom's refusal to submit cannot, therefore, be separated” (Ibid., 790). This “certain degree of ‘freedom’, i.e. a form of situated agency, [...] is what Foucault refers to as resistance” (Flohr 2016, 50), indicating also that “there is a plurality of resistances, each of them a special case” (Foucault 1998, 96). Therefore, although domination from hegemonic hierarchies occurs, Foucault sheds light on the resistance and continuous tensions which originate from below in a process of reciprocal shaping of the social bodies. Pokot youths’ reproduction, resistance or accommodation of the system through acceptance, rejection or re-elaboration of traditional practices or modern values, embody Foucault’s concept of “subjection” that is “the reciprocal relationship between power and subjects” (Flohr 2016, 44), because the subject is “both the passive target of the exercise of power and the active agent of its exercise, enactment, and potentially also its contestation” (Flohr 2016, 45).

6.3. Power-Knowledge and Discourse

The Pokot’s access to Western epistemology, mainly through schooling and technology, has generated new internal hierarchies of power strengthened by a discourse over Pokot cul-

ture and pastoralists. According to Foucault, discourse is created by disperse, heterogeneous, multiple and uncoordinated sources, statements and forms of statements all referring to one and the same object. “Whenever, between objects, types of statement, concepts, or thematic choices, one can define a regularity [...], we will say, for the sake of convenience, that we are dealing with a discursive formation” (Foucault 2002, 41). The invisible relations between these statements emerge not from an interpretation, but from “the analysis of their coexistence, of their succession, of their mutual dependence, of their reciprocal determination, of their independent or correlative transformation” which form “the ‘unconscious’, not of the speaking subject, but of the thing said” (Foucault 1994, 309). Therefore, “power is tolerable only on condition that it mask [sic] a substantial part of itself” (Foucault 1998, 86).

Like every society, both Pokot and Western ontologies pivot around regimes of truth and “ ‘general politics’ of truth“ (Foucault 1980, 131), where the Western episteme is marked by “scientific discourse and the institutions which produce it”, is generated under the control of, among others, universities, and widely diffused through schools or media (Ibid., 131-132).

7. Research Methods

7.1. Research Design Overview

The ethnographic character of this study involves notions of social and symbolic spaces that are best investigated by research methods where “the theoretical and the empirical are inseparable” and mixed methods are applied (Bourdieu 1998, 2). Therefore, instead of imposing the validation of a preconceived lens of observation, which would direct my gaze in search of hypothesised results, I adapted *grounded theory* to my time constraints and endeavoured to conduct a continuous and flexible process of data collection and analysis (Charmaz, and Mitchell 2008, 160, 162-163) in order to identify the best suitable theory to interpret the empirical data. To that end, it was necessary to construct the social world from different stances and positions in the social space (Bourdieu a 1990, 130). The impossibility to mobilise mixed methods, due to the limited time, suggested that qualitative “multimethods” (Hesse-Biber 2017, 3) in the form of focus groups, interviews and participant observation, would be more appropriate to explore alone the research questions, than the rigid frame of quantitative methods. Focus groups and interviews required the assistance of an interpreter. While this limits the collected information (Bryman 2016, 493) and might impact

on the informants' answers, it offered a shortcut to access aspects of culture and habits, otherwise inaccessible in the time-limited fieldwork. During the study I engaged in the partial transcription of the recorded material and the annotations of anecdotes and informal conversations. At regular intervals I distanced myself to reorganise, code and analyse the emerging themes. This inductive method which departs from the empirical reality to delineate the "logic of the social world" (Bourdieu 1998, 2) underpins the internal validity of the study, intended as the correspondence between observations and theory (Bryman 2016, 384). A positivistic reproducibility of results is not suitable for qualitative research (Charmaz, and Mitchell 2008, 161; Bryman 2016, 384). However, although the data is inherently non objective, the involvement of more than sixty informants during the fieldwork, while encapsulating unpredictable subjective specificities, reconstructs a meaningful social context within the inevitable limitations of reflexivity (Charmaz, and Mitchell 2008, 162-163) and generates, nevertheless, the hologram of a collective reality.

7.2. The Role of the Researcher

The debate on reflexivity and the situated production of knowledge can elicit a sense of *cul-de-sac* regarding the impartiality and validity of research production (Rose 1997). However, the inevitable distortions deriving from my privileged position as a Western researcher can be partially curbed by both a sense of responsibility and vigilance in the research process (Rose 1997, 317) and the awareness, not only of the colonial and postcolonial history, but also of the current neo-colonialism carried out through Western hegemonic knowledge and economic supremacy. The younger generations of the Pokot are embedded in "intersectionalities" (Marchand and Sisson Runyan 2010, 2), which translate into multidimensional power structures and power asymmetries. First, the dominating narrative of modernity situates pastoralists as one of the most marginalised communities on earth. This position is exacerbated by the racial component and the stigma surrounding Pokot ethnicity. Furthermore, the Pokot gerontocratic social structure marginalises young people. Finally, power differences endogenous in young people emerge through categories of gender, school attendance and family background. In the attempt to unpack this entangled ladder of power, I felt that, while all voices had to be included, the recognition and acknowledgment of the narratives and counter-narratives originating from the bottom of the power structures should be prioritised, not only

to promote new transformative (instead of simply explanatory) paradigms (Ackerly and True 2010, 36-38, 60-68), but also to provide “the most inclusive paradigm for thinking about social justice” (Mohanty Talpade 2003, 510). Therefore, the perspectives of young pastoralists without education, particularly pastoralist girls, have been prioritised compared to the voice of students from elite families whose perspectives are more likely to be heard.

7.3. Participant Selection

Based on this rationale, I involved over 40 uneducated pastoralists and 12 pastoralist students, although I also included 8 students with a non-pastoralist background. Pastoralists without education were randomly selected at the Nginyang livestock market and at different water points in the area. The interviews in the inlands aimed at reducing the risk of sampling individuals more accustomed to modernity. That said, some individual’s denial to be interviewed, mostly pastoralists girls, may have undermined this intention. Students were always accessed through schools and were selected based on subgroups which I created through a quick initial surveys related to age, location of origin and family background. The schools involved in the fieldwork were *Nginyang Girls Secondary School*, *Chemolingot Boys Secondary School*, *Cana Girls Rescue Home*² and *Chemoril Primary School*. With both research groups I tried to observe the youth definition provided in paragraph 2.1. For the pastoralists who could not provide their age, my translator and I made an assessment. Though efforts were made to interview unmarried individuals in a few cases it turned out that the informants were married or were soon to be married. For more details about the different groups of interviewees, see Appendix 2.

7.4. Qualitative Multi-Methods

The fieldwork was conducted over the course of nine weeks from the end of January to March 2019. The area is a broad valley of dry lands, sand and rocks, with sparse thorny bushes and acacia trees, surrounded by high mountains and crossed by the seasonal Nginyang riv-

² *Cana Girls Rescue Home* is a centre in Nginyang, linked to local church, where some pastoralists girls have sought shelter. The owner and director of the facility explained that girls escape their homes to avoid female genital mutilation practices, forced marriages and forced child labour. The girls sleep in a big room on old bunk beds and cook their food, mostly maize and beans, in a separate building with traditional wood-fire cooking methods.

er. Families live in *bomas*³ beyond their neighbours' sight. The 30 kilometres of tarmac road from Loruk, the southern gateway to East Pokot, to Nginyang is devoid of urban agglomerations until Nginyang, an administrative centre and the site of a lively livestock market.

7.4.1. Focus Groups

Focus groups served as operative entities to identify the spontaneous associations and perspectives of young pastoralists in relation to the main themes of the research questions. While the *moràns*⁴ contributed to the focus groups with vivid discussions, silence generally countermarked the focus groups made up of pastoralist girls and most of the students. Therefore, I decided to reduce the number of participants to facilitate the participation of everyone in the discussion. The focus groups with pastoralists were conducted in secluded places in the proximity of the water points or at a near distance from the market in Nginyang, while the school groups were gathered in separate rooms for discussion. The data retrieved during those sessions is presented as part of the results in chapter 8.

7.4.2. Interviews

The experience of the focus groups revealed the Pokot young people's inclination to a precise and hermetic use of the language, which impaired the effectiveness of semi-structured interviews with open-ended questions. Therefore, I decided to conduct the research through unstructured interviews (Bryman 2016, 467-468), while recognising that this method demands a more focused interviewing technique since the resulting unstructured answers requires an immediate adaption of the subsequent question to fill in any gaps in information. The resulting discursive conversation, however, allowed a more natural dialogue, which made the informants more comfortable and reduced the risk of an excessively positivist approach to interviewing (Pinsky 2015, 283-285, 291). The impossibility to cover all topics

³ *Boma* is the homestead of a familiar nucleus and consists of few small circular huts with straw roofs, built with mud and straw on a structure of branches.

⁴ *Moràns* are defined as Pokot warriors (Greiner 2016, 537-538). In my experience, *moràns* are the young Pokot teenagers, responsible for the family's animals during the dry season, guarding and herding cows, goats and camels even at long distances in search of pasture and water. They frequent the Nginyang market selling the animals. They dress with colourful tartan pieces of cloth folded and wrapped around the hip to form a short skirt to cover half thigh, belts sometimes with cases for their mobile phone, T-shirts usually of European football players, several colourful beaded armbands and necklaces, large circular metal ear-rings, often double, and dark pork-pie-hats with colourful embroideries and, sometimes, a feather.

within the same interview compelled me to conduct numerous interviews, although I rarely succeeded to arrange follow-up interviews since the interviewees were often untraceable afterwards.

7.4.3. Participant Observation

Participant observation was conducted during two days at the *Cana Rescue Home* and during three days in the *boma* of a pastoralist girl interviewed at a water point. There, I shared her daily errands including cooking, eating together with her grandmother and siblings, collecting firewood, walking several kilometres with her and her friends to the water point, cleaning the clothes at the water point and carrying back my 10 litres water. I also participated in the Saturday morning class at the local school and in the religious service. While this participant observation was limited, due to practicalities and the impossibility to stay overnight, it was conducive to my understanding of living conditions, practical issues, intersubjective relationships and the relation with the environment, which could not emerge from the interviews. The participant observation was conducted without an interpreter. Although I lacked knowledge of the local language, which prevented me from following conversations, this turned into serendipity as it allowed other channels of communication to be developed. Furthermore, placing myself in the position of *not knowing* was conducive to building trust, inclusion and connection. From this position I could observe the relaxed and cheerful behaviour of the girls in my presence or with some young boys we met along the road, compared to their silent and composed attitude in the presence of other adults, especially men.

7.5. Data Analysis

I transcribed 30 of the 45 recordings and listened to the remaining material. During the fieldwork I paralleled this activity with a process of initial coding (Bryman 2016, 574-575) of the accumulated information, which yielded to 33 codes including *sapanà*⁵, *nietunov*⁶, *andongò*, *male circumcision*, *female genital mutilation*, *marriage*, *number of children*, *family relations*, *gender equality*, *duties*, *leisure*, *Pokot values*, *animals* or *dress code*. These codes were subsequently grouped into categories such as *ceremonies*, *values*, *livestock*, which I

⁵ See below.

⁶ See below.

identified as the main characteristics of Pokot tradition. A similar process was established for the areas of modernity and land tenure. Instead of developing a new theory, which was impaired by time constraints, I identified a theory which encompasses the emerging results.

7.6. Ethical Considerations

Ethical principles, particularly when researching underage, are imperative. My position as a researcher was acknowledged by the authorities in front of the community. Nevertheless, securing a signature from a parent on the informed consent form (Bryman 2016, 129-131) posed an insurmountable hurdle. For the illiterate pastoralists, I was hindered by the significant distance of the family's *boma*, the parents' absence from the *boma* during the day and the lack of or unreliability of mobile phones. Secondary school students, on the other hand, were interns and their families often lived far away. Therefore, I decided to tackle the issue by receiving all legitimate alternative authorisations and by assuming personal responsibility to protect my informants. First, I obtained the official approval from the highest Baringo governmental authorities, including County, Sub-county and Division levels. Furthermore, no interview or focus group was conducted without first consulting the elders present at the water points and being granted permission, although at the Nginyang market this was not feasible. Every school activity was allowed and co-arranged with the school heads or deputies. Second, prior every interview, I explained my research to the interviewees, I informed them about their rights according to the informed consent form (Bryman 2016, 131) and asked for permission to record. Third, I preserved anonymity and confidentiality by anonymising the interviewees, particularly when controversial opinions would clash with families, communities or the authorities. At the beginning of my fieldwork I had planned to engage a female interpreter to interview pastoralist girls but, unfortunately it was impossible to find a female translator with the required availability. I therefore had to resort to using male interpreters. If sensitive questions arose however, I always reminded the informants about their right not to answer. I also decided to remunerate the non-educated pastoralists, first with sugar and later, to spare them the inconvenience of transportation for many kilometres, with the equivalent in currency. I dispensed a pecuniary compensation to the school director of the most involved school to purchase food for students.

8. Results

The results will be presented based on the three main themes of *tradition*, *modernity* and an intersectional area between *tradition* and *modernity* as they emerged from the coding process.

8.1. Tradition

8.1.1. Pokot Ceremonies

Ceremonies mark life-stages among Pokot, conferring upon the individual a progressive increased inclusion, respectability and status. I will confine to the ceremonies most relevant to the research questions, leaving out other rituals.

8.1.1.1. Female Genital Mutilation and *Nietunov*

Female circumcision, or Female Genital Mutilation (FGM⁷), a deeply contested practice from a Western perspective, is central in Pokot tradition. FGM is banned by the government and is thwarted by schools, churches and organisations. A girl at the *Cana Rescue Home* reported an episode of pastoralist parents forcing their young daughter to undergo FGM and causing her death due to haemorrhage. She also spoke about FGM being as compulsory for marriage. However, pastoralist girls claim that daughters are not forced to undergo FGM but rather, as an act of courage, they must formally request the permission from the father. The decision bestows honour to the family, and all the girls circumcised during each season are celebrated through the ceremony of *Nietunov*⁸. Crying during the practice is an intolerable shame. The pastoralist girls in Group 2 explained:

“You will be asked if you can do it or not, and if you feel that you cannot do it, then you be left until you feel it is time.”

Janisette and Faith, two pastoralist half-sisters, commented that if a girl refuses:

⁷ FGM (Female Genital Mutilation) is practiced in 30 countries in Africa, Middle East and Asia through procedures which vary from the partial to the total removal of the female external genitals. FGM can cause urinary problems, infections, delivery complications (World Health Organization. 2018). It is also said to reduce or eliminate female sexual pleasure, although some studies' findings claim that “Most informants did not believe FGM reduced women's pleasure during sexual relations” (World Health Organization. 2019).

⁸ *Nietunov* is the graduation ceremony for all the girls who have undergone circumcision during a season. The girls are gathered in a single place, generally the home of an important family very recognised by the community, and a celebration takes place.

“[The parents] will still take care of you ... and you will be married like that.”

Lucy, a pastoralist girl who escaped the day after being forced to marry an older man, confirmed that she was married without having undergone FGM. However, she added:

“When you deliver [a baby], that’s the time when you will be cut.”

Ken, a *moràn* unconnected to a school or church, said the same:

“The first delivery you cut it, but the others to come you can’t cut it, it will be just a normal birth.”

When I reported to him my conversation with a nurse working in the nearby health-centre about the health risks related to FGM, he commented:

“So, you tend to accept everything she was saying? ... You might have been cheated.”

He regards FGM as imperative for marriage and explained that Pokot perceive circumcised girls as clean. He also referred to an increase in male sexual pleasure. More frequently, however, other attitudes emerge, like the *moràns* of Group 6:

“For us as men we don’t see actually the importance. Ok, the society or the community prefers that a girl should be circumcised if she should be married, but [...] if it wasn’t the community that requires that a girl should go a circumcision, then it is not a problem, we would marry that one.”

Angela, a circumcised pastoralist girl who attends the Saturday morning school, said that although in the past FGM was compulsory:

“Currently some of them [*moràns*] are saying ‘No, is no need to go for FGM.’”

Brian, a *moràn* who is not attending school, and his friend Robert reject FGM both for their spouses and any future daughters. Brian answered, in reference to his father’s position on FGM:

“My wife has already not gone for it so, who is father now to convince my wife to go and yet I have said she is not going to go? My wife is also saying ‘I am not going.’”

Social pressure on FGM is generally strong. John, a *moràn* who attended secondary school for some years before dropping out due to economic reasons, explains that, although he will not force his daughter to have FGM she will ask him:

“Because the friends, maybe the other group age maids have gone it [FGM], so it will be hard to remain alone.”

Lucy reports that her friends, including some of the learned ones, judged her *stupid* for not wanting to be circumcised, although her mother supported her decision. Nevertheless, other girls feel compelled to FGM as a form of respect to their mothers who have undergone the procedure. Others perceive refusing FGM as a taboo and an act “against the community”. An uncircumcised girl may be belittled, humiliated and excluded from social activities by other women. Ruth, a pastoralist girl attending the Saturday school, foresees that, while she could accept *light* gossiping due to her decision not to marry, she will not resist the *heavy* repercussions not to undergo FGM “because it hurts”. However, Angela, when asked about social pressure on FGM, answered:

“It was my own decision to do that. I decided for myself, people did not pressure me”,

and she objects she would have been isolated if she hadn’t undergone the procedure. Schools inform students about the implications of FGM, as Linda, a student belonging to the educated elite, told:

“In the school we have been taught about the consequences of FGM”,

but many pastoralist girls and moráns seem unaware. One male student with pastoral family background from Group 7 told me:

“I don’t like it [FGM] because it is against the law”,

and shared concerns in relation to health issues. Male students with non-pastoralist background condemn FGM and are determined to marry girls who have not been circumcised. In contrast, students with pastoralist background include individuals willing to marry a uncircumcised girl, either to abide the law or for conviction, but also students who aim to marry a circumcised girl. The deterrent effect of governmental legislation against FGM, is also explained by Kokón:

“The actors of these things, the ones who circumcise, [...] they have been questioned by the government so they fear, so nobody is still encouraging such practices.”

Habits are changing and when asked about her daughters, Angela envisages:

"I think by that time the FGM will be something of the past."

8.1.1.2. *Sapanà* and Male Circumcision

Unlike FGM, the ceremonies of *sapanà*⁹ and male circumcision, also a prerequisite pre-conditions for marriage, are not controversial. *Sapanà* brings honour and respect, permission to attend councils, to approach the elders and receive task assignments. A boy who does not undergo *sapanà* is ignored and unheeded in the community. The importance of the subsequent male circumcision¹⁰ ceremony is likewise recognised across the social fabric of the Pokot community, as a prerequisite for any future activity. Some school boys also referred to the benefit of circumcision as a prevention of diseases. Mercy, a pastoralist girl who abandoned her home to attend school, explained that:

"The boys going to school do that [circumcision] through church, they are going to pray or there are bishops. But the others when they are going outside, they wear these things",

referring to leather cloths. A county official from Silali validated that, while pastoralist boys undergo circumcision far from home, in bushy isolated areas, educated people nowadays go through it in churches.

8.1.1.3. Marriage

Marriage represents adulthood, maturity and independence. Singleness is taboo, and although cases of cohabitation, generally among alcoholics or drug addicts, exist, these unions are not recognised, similarly to home-arranged marriages with uncircumcised brides. Among pastoralists, while *moráns* are allowed to choose their wives under the condition of approval of both his and the girl's father, some girls claim they could marry their *morán* but it is up to their father or parents to decide. If a *morán* really intends to marry a girl he will strive to arrange an agreement with her family, although another man might step in. Other pastoralist girls however, portray more gloomy realities. Lisa is the first-born and has been attending

⁹ *Sapanà* is the initiation ritual which marks the boy's entry in society, and it consists in the voluntary sacrifice of an animal on the part of a relative or someone in the community. All the community is invited and food is offered and shared with everyone, including the poorest and most disadvantaged.

¹⁰ Male circumcision is very important from two main perspectives. First, during the traditional circumcision ceremony, boys to be circumcised gather in isolated bushy areas, are taught about tradition, ways of life and family management. Secondly, male circumcision creates *age sets* [*pn*] in Pokot language] identified by names such as *Kaplelach*, *Korongoro*, *Chumwo*, which establish family-bonds among the peers who have undergone circumcision at the same time, and foster fellowship and the oath to protect each other.

Saturday school for the last two years. She said she will have to accept the decision of her father, because:

“With my father [...] I won’t win anything”,

and then she added that if:

“The father is doubting the person [the groom], he will ask her mother, but also if her father has got hundred percent this person is good, her mother will not win anything.”

Moráns' fathers' opposition to a marriage is not grounded in economic reasons, but on the existence of family bonds¹¹ or on “chaotic” conditions of the bride’s family, such as drug or alcohol problems. The *moráns* in Group 1 said that they accept their fathers’ decisions:

“Because they know more.”

In contrast, economic reasons might steer the girl’s father decision since it relates to the conspicuousness of the dowry. The interviewees in Group 1 comply with these rules and, when questioned about marriages between a young girl and an older man, they suggest that an experienced man will take care and protect her. The pastoralist girls’ stance on forced marriages is different. The girls in Group 4 described resigned anger and sadness and added:

“What shall we do? We have to go with what the family has decided.”

They mentioned acts of rebellion including shouting or escaping, but then the fugitive will be chased and, if caught, beaten, taken back home and closely monitored to prevent her from self-poisoning or suicide. These girls might flee to a rescue home to obtain shelter or access school. Janisette and Faith explained that they would not be prohibited from dating a *morán* they really like, as long as they inform their parents. The girls claim that this could also lead to a marriage. When asked about their parents they answered:

“They are loving us because they don’t quarrel to us ... If a goat gets lost ... We go and look for it and once we find it’s ok, nobody will question us and tell us.”

While I met some girls with authoritarian fathers, such as a girl I visited in her *boma* who was confined there without access to money or freedom to visit the market, I also encountered more liberal families. In my three day participant observation, for example, I ob-

¹¹ Belonging to the same age set [*pn*] creates family bonds among the group members which forbid marriage with the daughters of *pn* fellows.

served the father, sitting on a stone closely surrounded by all his daughters, laughing together while looking at a video recorded by the girls on my mobile phone.

Among the Pokot, polygamy is traditional. As an organisation worker told me playfully in a casual conversation:

“They [the Pokot] have many wives, we instead have lovers.”

The *moràns*, James and David said:

“We Pokot we marry more wives”

Lewis confirmed:

“We are not like people who marry one woman, if we have animals then we marry as many women as possible like five or six.”

Marriage is also regarded as a place for peace and harmony, as James and David said:

“You cannot think bad things about your partner, because you feel very well and stay very well.”

Nonetheless, Brian, whose father has seven wives and altogether forty-three children, said:

“One [wife] is enough.”

He is attending the local Catholic church, together with his friend Robert. Robert however, plans to have two wives. When the possible contradiction between polygamy and the Church precepts was suggested, he was not concerned:

“Because even my wives [...], they wish to go to church.”

Girls have no decision over being the first, the second or third wife. Polygamous men move continuously among the various *bomas* where the different wives and children are settled with their animals, because as James and David said:

“I cannot go in the same house too often, repeatedly.”

The pastoralist girls in Group 2 agree that it is advantageous to be many wives to reduce the workload, providing it is peaceful. They say jealousy is not a problem and they might even become friends of those who have the same character and conduct themselves the same way. While marriage is the social norm, some interviewees assert they don't plan to marry.

Some female students break the taboo declaring they don't want to marry after observing the difficulties and hardship of some married acquaintances. One of them said:

“To me that like forced marriage, circumcision, that's male dominated... I don't like it because most of the time you will be submissive.”

Unexpectedly, such positions also arose from an uneducated pastoralist girl who doesn't want to be exploited and, instead, plans to live with her parents, although she still wants two children. When asked about the community reactions she claims not to care, while with respect to her parents' opinion, she answered:

“They cannot oppose [...] my decision.”

8.1.2. Livestock

The Pokot pastoralists' survival system has historically pivoted around livestock, whose value extends to the social and familial dimensions, through its integration as dowry for a girl's marriage. This habit, a cliché which stigmatises Pokot pastoralists, is widespread as explained by Daisy, a pastoralist girl in stylish Western dress, whose husband, a college student, also used this practice. Referring to pastoralists, Lewis explained:

“Animals are the source of everything in their life. Like, if you get malaria, they sell the animals so they can afford hospital, like food animals, everything is animals.”

The *moràns* in Group 1 highlighted that animals represent:

“Their daily bread, they have nothing else to depend on, as source of income.”

A disastrous drought in 2017 has been a crucial teaching for many *moràns* and as Eric, a *moràn* without education or connection to church, stated:

“I have developed wiseness [sic] this time, [...] this drought it has taught us so many things.”

In relation to the number of animals, Lewis said that:

“It is good to keep animals, to keep cattle [...]. If we could have pasture here ever, it would be good to keep animals. But now we don't know when the drought comes.”

For this reason, he plans to avoid overstocking and save money in a bank, but he also added:

“[I] don’t know how to do in the bank.”

Similarly, Steve confesses that, before the 2017 drought, he owned three hundred to four hundred cows, but now he is left with only twenty. He and his illiterate elder brother devised to sell the weaker animals before the start of the dry season and deposit the money in a bank with the help of their educated younger brother. Despite the father's resistance, they believe they will succeed in persuading him. Other *moràns* share the idea of selling the animals before at the end of the rainy season, while the animals are still strong, in order to maximise the profit. At the same time, Lewis admits he will face an internal resistance to sell his animals when they are strong and beautiful. Other *moràns* reject the idea of banks and opt for keeping the livestock. James and David, for example, in addition to the fear of being robbed, refer to the inability to assess their wealth through the bank deposit, while the visibility of their animals allows them better control of the expenses-ownership ratio. The possession of plenty of animals has traditionally been synonymous with success, but the massive animal loss in 2017 has marked a change in perspective for some. As Lewis stated:

“He doesn’t want to keep a lot of animals because before he has a lot of animals but they all died. But now he cannot see it as a prestige, because one day one time drought can come and crush them all.”

Kelly and Isabel, two female students who aim to be a doctor and a teacher respectively claim they want a stone house and a car, but they still value possessing numerous animals and having them around their house. They would not sell the animals to deposit money in a bank or to purchase computers or other modern items, and they do not relate animals to prestige as they would keep them independently of the community perception.

8.1.3. Land Use and Governance in Communal Land

The dry and rainy season cycle defines land uses and social practices throughout the year. During the dry season, from November to April, the *moràns* herd livestock at increasingly far distances from the family’s *boma* in search of water and pasture. When asked about solidarity, Group 1 answered:

“There is not togetherness in the dry season, then it is survival.”

They also stated that during the dry season pastoralists share pasture:

“[We] value [our] land because our animals normally graze freely, there is no partition, no fences. There are no ranches. So [...] camels, cows, goats they can just go around where they want. They have the freedom to go where they like.”

The pastoralist girls in Group 2 confirmed the absence of sanctions and the possibility of grazing freely even if coming from far afield regions, as long as land is not destroyed and one is Pokot. A newcomer, however, has no grazing permit prior to formally notifying his presence to the elders and allowing them to relate with his family of origin. In this way he will be informed about the rules in force. Not complying with this procedure leads to caning and expulsion. Lewis added:

“It is ok even that other ethnicit[ies] come and consume the grass because in the dry season even the grass in Paka gets finished they move to other ethnicities. To meet with Samburu, to meet with Turkana sometimes.”

Despite free access to land during the dry-season, the lowlands are in practice subdivided and, as the rainy season approaches, each *moràn* begins to prepare his plot (*shamba*) by fencing it with trees and bushes to prevent animals from entering and destroying the crops later in the season. During this preparation work, and for the cultivation of the land, the *moràns* help each other for a fee. Providing one doesn't occupy someone else's *shamba*, one is allowed to cultivate as much land as one can manage, also by recruiting people. Before fencing an area, it is common practice to inform the neighbours and the elders and, assuming there is no conflict, the elders will grant the land and act as guarantors. This *shamba* will belong to the *moràn* and his children even in the future. Therefore, the *shamba* is in practice property of the *moràn* who holds decision rights over it during the rainy season, although he usually opens it for everyone to pass through during the dry season. Group 1 says that:

“It can happen that someone comes and takes it [your *shamba*] for some time, but he has to give something, whatever we will agree with him. But there is also friendship so you can talk and give the land to a friend for some time to use it, but it must be clear that the land is yours, not of your friend. The end of the renting to the friend coincides with the harvesting.”

Corridors are sometimes left for animals to pass though in case of adjacent *shambas*, although Brian claims that, if development arrives and he will be employed, he will not leave the corridors in place for those who have chosen to continue with pastoralism. When the rainy season begins further changes in land use occur as Group 3 explained:

“When it starts raining, there is a big meeting which is called by the elders to gather pastoralists and tell them a certain area in the mountain Paka during the rainy season should be protected and no-one should graze there to let the grass grow without disturbance so that at the end of the rainy season people can go there and get enough pasture.”

The protected area is not fenced and, generally, only a few infringements are reported throughout the year. The culprit is first warned without punishment, but if caught grazing in the protected area twice or three times, he will be caned and chased away. After the 2017 drought which decimated thousands of animals in the region, pasture in Paka is sufficient although it is suggested that “the system in the highlands should be improved”. During my stay in East Pokot, a fire destroyed one side of mountain Paka which highlights the fragility of the system. A few days later, an organisation's official who had arrived from outside to work in the area for a few days, ascribed the fire to internal disputes among the Pokot. He was surprised when I explained that a young *moràn* had, in fact, accidentally started the fire while harvesting honey, and his father had killed several cows and offered food to the elders and people in the region to ask forgiveness for the accident. The rainy season is marked by family reunions in the lowlands, big celebrations and ceremonies. In this period, the *moràns* engage in rain-fed crop cultivation of maize and beans, while children become responsible for herding. The elders interviewed in a dedicated focus group, explained that the practice of *shamba* was introduced in 1984, when the organisation *Freedom* distributed food and explained how to cultivate crops. They added:

“It has assisted us so much ... Now, since we operate our shambas and we cultivate it, we have got enough food and even the roads have been opened so many areas to transport these things.”

8.2.Modernity

8.2.1.Education

8.2.1.1. School

School is welcomed by Pokot youth. The *moràns* in Group 1 stated that:

“School is good because every development is allowed by school”,

and because it enables a dialogue with the government. The same opinion is shared by the pastoralist girls in Group 2 who affirmed:

“[School] transforms both mindset and life.”

Although one of them claims to have agreed with her father not to go to school, several uneducated pastoralists admit they would have liked to be educated. Some pastoralists had to withdraw from school early, in order to support their family. Robert, who studied up to class four in the Primary School and would have liked to become a teacher, said:

“I wished to continue there because I wanted to progress in my life.”

For many youngsters schools fees represent a concern. All the *moràns* intend to educate their children, although the majority will grant school attendance only to some children, of both genders, while the others will be appointed to animal rearing. Eric explained:

“I will send my children to school, but not all of them. Some of them will have to assist me in taking care of the animals and the same animals that will be taking care, will be the ones used to pay the school fee for these other ones who are going to school.”

However, the knowledge of the educated siblings represents an asset for the entire family, as exemplified by Steve and Ruth, who claim they will receive help from their respective educated siblings to deposit money in the bank. In parallel, other *moràns* assert that they will educate all their children. Brian, for example, stated his commitment to send all his children, boys and girls, to school and said:

“He wishes in the future his children will be successful in school.”

Information sharing between *moràns* and the siblings who attend school is limited. Ken mentioned:

“They don’t give us details, they don’t tell us more often, if we don’t ask them. And then, after that one [...] I normally go with the cows, I don’t actually associate with them that close.”

The *moràns* in Group 3 explained they don’t feel rejected, but pastoral students have a different mindset:

“We are different, we are exposed to sun and harsh conditions, very different from those who are going to school. They are relaxing and they are not used to harsh conditions.”

Moràns observe different attitudes in those who attend school such as reduced interest and consideration for tradition and ceremonies. In the same group someone told:

“Some people will have to remain to hold this culture not to be eroded.”

With respect to ceremonies, while a governmental official claimed, in an informal conversation, that educated pastoralists tend to be isolated, the *moràns* in Group 3 said:

“They come but they stay at far distance and watch. If there is something [food] to be given, it will be given where they are staying.”

Pokot knowledge is not recognised, and when asked about the topic, John answered:

“We have knowledge of the medicine, of the trees and in Pokot there is different things we can do. [...] We have knowledge of animals.”

However, the school’s attitude towards pastoralists is generally unfavourable. John, who liked mathematics, science and chemistry, explained:

“They see Pokot like animals, but when they come to school, they look ok.”

This representation of pastoralists was similarly expressed in an informal conversation with a young educated Pokot, active in the local administration, who said that, looking at the *moràns* at Nginyang’s livestock market, they appear to him like animals moving around messily without plan or purpose in life. Linda explained that trade does not flourish in the area:

“Because some people are bandits [...] many people are cattle riding”

but

“When we are getting learned, we will come and change the society.”

Lucy mistrusts the *moràns*’ statements on the education of girls and believes that:

“The *moràns* will not take the girls to school, they are just saying but then they would not do it in action”,

since their main goal is to enrich themselves through livestock. She adds that they can't even wait to marry off their daughters of even twelve years. Linda agreed with this viewpoint, stating that uneducated pastoralists:

“Think going to school is wasting time, wasting money, wasting resources.”

This description seems to apply to the elder generation, such as the mother of Joy, a pastoralist girl determined to attend primary school against the will of her parents. After attempting to deter her daughter with prolonged silent treatment, she eventually recruited some neighbours to cane the *disobedient* girl while she was heading to school. Meanwhile, Marion, an illiterate firstborn pastoralist girl who would have liked to go to school, states that all her children will be educated and, should her husband disagree, she will ask support from the community, and if necessary:

“She will try to meet a big people, like MCA¹², to support her.”

This statement led my translator to comment:

“This is a different knowledge, I have never heard.”

Marion also mentioned the possibility of separating from her husband and starting her own business so that her children can go to school.

8.2.1.2.School and Empowerment

School empowers many girls offering a different place in society than traditional roles. Pastoralist girls are responsible for fetching water, collecting firewoods, keeping the fire alight, cleaning, cooking, washing clothes and dishes, and herding goats to the water point. Angela said she enjoys assisting elders, looking after the animals and fetching water because they represent moments of social interaction. However, when asking Joy about her resolution to attend the primary school against the will of her parents, she answered:

“I just saw that life outside here is horrible”,

because one can be forced to marry and move far away where she will be assigned hard work. She added:

“When you go to school you will get good things.”

A local school offers free classes on Saturday morning. Lisa is attending these lectures to learn Kiswahili although she does not have high hopes, since she had not seen anyone attending Saturday school who succeeded in life. This school, however, affects the mindset of the participants. Kokòl explained that some of her friends decided not to undergo FGM because:

¹² MCA: Member of the County Assembly.

“They have been told so many things there, so [...] people thoughts have been turned to think differently.”

To be educated raises women social position and their decision-making, as Linda pointed out:

“You know, in this place we have people who are learned and people who are not learned. People who are learned, they can just tell you to decide for your life, but the others will force you to be married.”

Furthermore, education strengthens a girl's self-trust leading toward more independent decisions. Judith, a female student who supports the traditional order and obedience to parents and elders, can therefore imagine that, once she becomes doctor she will be able to defend her opinions, because:

“I am a learned person, I can explain.”

8.2.2. Development

8.2.2.1. Employment

Schools and churches promote education and employment. Judith summarised:

“School talks about to study hard and get a job, but the church only talks about help people, mercy.”

Christianity¹³ first arrived in the 1980s and 1990s and churches were built in the territory. Many of the Pokot welcome the message of the Church. Marion said that:

“She found very good words there”

and Brian explained that he likes church people because:

“It's humble people, they keep themselves clean, they don't quarrel with other persons, they are peaceful.”

However, local churches tend to oppose tradition and pastoralism. Linda said:

¹³ In addition to Catholic Church, several protestant churches have spread in recent years, including the Anglican Church of Kenya (ACK), the African Inland Church (AIC), the Full Gospel, the Pentecostal Assemblies of God (PAG), the Seventh Day Adventist (SDA). As explained by my local translator, they preach especially the New Testament, the original sin, the value of virginity, the Ten Commandments, they condemn suicide and the use of alcohol and drugs and, unlike the Catholic Church, they do not oppose family planning methods.

“I am a Christian, in religion, and I like it because to some points it is not supporting the culture which are [is] archaic and barbaric, actually it is not supporting it. It is against it. It is against animal rearers, forced marriages, genital mutilation.”

She also pointed out:

“In Catholic, they can say that you have no reason to leave your culture and your cultural practices, but the other churches cannot support it.”

In the same vein, Daisy reported:

“The pastors are saying don’t mix things, don’t go and dance with the traditional dance, we should leave and come to church.”

Judith added that the Church teaches that:

“It is good to be employed rather than herding cattle like pastoralists, because drought can come and kill all animals and you will remain with nothing.”

When asked about the Church’s view on pastoralism, Lisa said:

“About pastoralism it is good when rain, but now is very bad in the dry season”,

and she continued:

“The pastor is talking about employment, of jobs and then they will come and feed their homes, other are employed as soldiers, or like in the quarry, in the GDC.”

Daisy measures success through literacy and employment. She likes to socialise with girls who have gone to school and “talk about people who have success and have a good life”, that is people who have employment and who are able to purchase food, a car and to build a big block house with an iron-sheet roof and electricity. Employment is a vector towards a comfortable life and different opportunities, as Lucy explained:

“In the future she wants to have a good husband, ... 5 children, and wants to be a teacher and she sees herself driving a Mercedes Benz.”

This view is similar to those held by other students, like Kelly and Isabel, for whom a stone house and a car symbolise success and status. Brian envisages that a lot of job opportunities will arise in conjunction with the advancing development. In his opinion:

“If this kind of industrialisation, when it comes, they must employ some people, many people, and I expect also that I will be one of the people who will be benefiting, being employed.”

Regarding those pastoralists who will not adopt the new lifestyles and shift from animals to jobs, Brian thinks they will have to pay the consequences of their choice and will need to migrate. Though some, like Lewis, when asked about the perspective of employment and abandoning pastoralism, questioned:

“Why would they employ me? ... What about everybody else?”

He observed:

“We know that no one will afford to treat like the way you want, like to give you a job and give you medicines and take care of you.”

He predicts that he will be excluded in the new system, therefore refuses to change his life. Regarding the fate of those pastoralists who have not attended school, Judith, who first advocated employment and urbanisation, admitted that:

“They will have no use, they will remain with nothing to eat.”

She did not like this drawback and suggested that employed people could help those pastoralists by giving them maize.

8.2.2.2. Urbanisation and Industrialisation

Judith envisaged urbanisation in the near future and pictured big roads, cars and concrete houses, because:

“If all these kids are educated and finish their school, they will come and build the houses and build very big buildings and the area will be developed.”

Linda also values urbanisation as she foresees many people will be employed and move from remote to urban areas. She supports industrialisation regardless of the possible risks of pollution, trusting that the possible problem will be solved by technology, but regardless, she supports the development trajectory. The risk of pollution or unemployment is never prospected in the modernisation portrayed by the Church or schools. Despite this, Judith has her own idea that:

“If pollution [is] everywhere, we will have no rain.”

The extraction industry has opened some quarries in the region, one of them for the construction of the Loruk-Barpelo highway. Regarding quarries, Eric said:

“We are still young and if elders have accept it to do that way, for us maybe we could say it is not good sometimes.”

He seemed worried as he explained:

“If they tend to do that one in many places then our animals will not be having pasture and spaces.”

He doesn't reject the facility completely, since some of his friends are working there, but he doesn't want quarries to expand to other areas. When asked to measure the impact of employment against environmental consequences of the extraction industry, Judith, who supports employment and urbanisation, replied:

“We will refuse it so to preserve our environment, rather than getting jobs.”

8.2.2.3. Technology

Young pastoralists welcome technology for the life improvement it brings along, and create personalised blends of tradition and modernity in multiple niche-contexts. As an illustration I recall a *moràn* wearing a watch embedded in his traditional colourful armband. Others dressed in the colourful traditional clothes while riding a motorcycle or a bicycle, or a pastoralist woman transporting water in a restructured wheelbarrow. During my stay in the village of Chemolingot, I was surprised to discover a couple of humble huts, one with a straw roof, displaying large flat-screen televisions. My participant observation also revealed the girls' enthusiasm to photograph and film each other with my mobile, while the grand mother though smiling and glad, did not want to be photographed.

The *moràns* in Group 1 said:

“If somebody is sick somewhere, it is only boda-boda¹⁴ that can go there. Through phone you communicate with the phone and then the boda-boda comes, picks up the person. In that process you rescue a life.”

The health centres in Nginyang, Paka and Chemolingot have saved many lives and the prophylaxes and medicines for animals are largely employed. The emergence of shops in previously abandoned areas spares long distance walks to purchase food, and solar panel driven water pumps are vital although, in some areas, salty water springs forth. GCD's water-pipe, pumping water from lake Baringo to Paka for the cooling system of the geothermal

¹⁴ *Boda-boda* in Kiswahili or *piki-piki* in Pokot language are the local names for motorcycles.

power plant, is a blessing during droughts and the side pipeline-connection to *Chemoril Primary School* will relieve people in the surrounding area. As Lisa said:

“If the water was near, this would make [our] life easier.”

However, Collins explained that the task of fetching water is shared in his family between father, mother, the sisters and he also participated once a day using his bicycle, before having to move with the animals due to the dry season. Technology also reinforces class divides, as touch screen mobiles, luxury cars or solar panels are luxury items for Western dressed local elites.

8.2.3. Land Tenure

8.2.3.1. Land Security

The entire community is overwhelmingly positive about the water point built by GDC in Paka. With reference to the 2017 drought, Steve said:

“[I] was about to die during the drought up in the hills, because no water, no anything. But now it is better.”

Addressing GDC, he also added:

“They have created job opportunities, because now people are employed as watchman, some of them take care of this motor and also they promise [...] to compensate, but they have not yet.”

Some *moràns* reported that the water provision is intermittent, with issues almost every other second day but, during an informal conversation, GDC's attendants responsible for the maintenance and repair of the water pipe, accused pastoralists of breaking it to avoid walking to the main water outlet. Concerns arise at the same time for the future. The Pokot granted GDC employees the permission to dwell in Paka, confident that there was no risk of competition for pasture. However, Lewis worried about land use and said:

“What if GDC comes and builds houses around here and expands?”,

and he referred to the risk that grazing land might disappear:

“If many people will live in this area, pasture will be reduced because when the population come maybe the land will be extinguished.”

Lewis worried that, maybe due to bribing, some official or chief might sell the land:

“Then this land is going away and the land being destroyed and [...] comes a town and pasture gets finished.”

He also commented that:

“You know, those educated people value money, not like traditional people they value these animals.”

Steve mentioned a small sacred place at the top of Paka, where specific stones are not to be touched and one should not use abusive language and shout. He said:

“It is taboo to go and live in the sacred places there [...]. It is only a very small place in the up the hill, but now these people of the geothermal they are very near [...]. But if they didn't destroy the sacred places it is now ok because they give us water and creation of jobs.”

With respect to a possible future extension of extraction industry to other areas, Eric said he is afraid that this would negatively affect the pasture for the animals.

He also echoed Lewis, adding:

“We would like our animals just grazing peacefully in our land, but this now poses some threats, because it will not be like the same.”

8.2.3.2.Land Privatisation

Different attitudes regarding land tenure appear between the inlands and the more developed areas along the tarmac road and near the urban centres, where demand for privatisation has been raised. Brian and Robert are aware that in Chemolingot, Nginyang and Loruk people claim land ownership, but they ignore if they require title deeds. They acknowledge the advantage of living in those areas:

“Because once you are living near the tarmac road you can have your own shop there, transportation becomes easy to transport goods there, even the pipe water can reach there easily because it is water planning there.”

In conjunction with market demand for land ownership, land value has rocketed in these areas compared to the inlands. They added:

“You must have a lot of money when you decide to buy next to the tarmac road.”

Far away from the tarmac road however, the situation is different. Group 3 explained that enclosures are not allowed in the region since the land is legally categorised as *communal land*. As an exception, a few old heads of large families with numerous wives and chil-

dren unable to herd animals to far distances, have been granted the permission to create enclosures in the inlands. These areas can only now be accessed for grazing through negotiation with the owner. Group 1 said they do not favour privatisation, while several young pastoralists ignore the advancing land tenure transformations and their significance and implications. Eric, when asked about the topic, answered simply:

“I don’t know.”

Other *moràns* underestimate the importance of privatisation and deeds. Lewis said:

“The land belongs to the community and I just cultivate that because I needed [a] place, it is not that it is known for everyone that it is mine.”

He is aware of people owning land by the tarmac road and claiming the property of their plot. However, if the same trend should reach his area:

“Then it is clearly known that this person was living here for a long time, so [they] should automatically have their own plots.”

Brian and Robert agree that witnesses and historical evidence will prove land ownership:

“Those people who are living there in the years back, they know that that land was for them and there are some elders to confirm that this was really their land, and [...] even somebody may have died, there is a grave there, that’s one of the evidence that this was somebody’s property [...]. So if somebody wants to buy it, there must be some evidence more, this is actually their land, not like deeds.”

They expect development to reach their region with roads and shops and they foresee opportunities in the subsequent increase of land value. They added:

“We have seen that the land is becoming expensive as you go towards that side (west) and for some reasons, the years to come, the value of land will be extended to this area, so even me, when I sitting here I think of preparing having my own land, a wide one, a big one.”

In relation to land ownership and the extraction industry, Judith commented:

“There is a risk that those who own the land, they might decide to sell it.”

Due to the respect and compliance of *moràns* to elders’ decisions, I consulted a group of elders and their perspective on privatisation was:

“It will disturb. It will bring destruction, if I told we do some privatisation then our animals will have nowhere to graze. Even the visitors will have no space. Because we depend on those animals, it is our source of food in all Pokot land, people will eventually become poor.”

Another added:

“For example, those goats which are passing there, if [...] they enter somebody’s shamba it will bring chaos, people will shout one another and it will bring quarrels. For us we wish to live harmoniously with people. If there is no privatisation people will move freely.”

8.3. Intersections

This paragraph illustrates two overlapping domains between modernity and tradition. On the one hand, patriarchal values compound Pokot tradition, modern Kenyan society and the local churches. On the other hand, alternative livelihoods integrate pastoral entrepreneurship in modern techno-economic structures.

8.3.1. Patriarchy and Progeny

Pokot tradition and the local churches underpin obedience and woman’s submission to man, and this view is shared by the overwhelming majority of the interviewees. Daisy stated that the Church:

“Advises that you respect your husband and respect everyone who is above you”,

And Judith also referred to the bible:

“The father has to decide [...] he is the head and he should be followed.”

Similarly, Marion said that PAG church teaches that disobeying the husband is a sin and conveyed that in a family:

“For anything to run well we have to come together, but the father usually decides.”

Also, John recalled that in the school:

“The priest was saying that our woman should be obedient to her husband, to her family and also love [...]. She will talk to people in a very humble way, in a lovely way and she should not quarrel with her husband in the family.”

However, women find their ways. In an informal conversation, a middle age man lamented how two of his wives, in his absence, ignored his order to water the animals at a specific water point and kept on doing what they wanted. Angela explained that the Church also teaches equal distribution of errands and responsibilities:

“If there is something to be done, everybody should participate, women plus the men”

and

“A woman has her right to say something that you want to be done.”

Yet, questioned if she would accept everything her future husband will decide, she admitted:

“I will accept.”

A unique case is Linda, who declared:

“Traditional African society it denies a woman to make decisions, it denies a woman to plan for herself, rather they want to plan for her. That’s in tradition. [...] I like the Christian Religious Education because it can support me at some point that I have that ability to make decision and also to stand like a man.”

She also extended this praise to the churches in the area. Meeting her outside school, once, and accompanying her to the shop of her educated brother, I could witness her strong position as a woman as she reproached him harshly for not having carried out an errand she had previously asked him to do.

Most interviewees across gender and educational level expressed a desire to have many children, although exceptions did appear. Daisy affirmed that she wants at least six or seven children, and in absence of economic problems, she will continue:

“As much as God can give [me]”,

because to have children is a blessing and

“A person who has no kids has a problem.”

In the absence of a pension system, children can also provide an insurance for parents in old age. Having many children increases the probability to be taken care of, because as Steve put it:

“We have many characters, we have [...] those who can help and those who cannot help.”

Ken claimed he wants six wives and sixty-six children and Steve explained he will have children:

“As long as his wife is still giving birth, he can’t stop.”

He is not aware of family planning methods, but said his wife would refuse them because she is competing with other wives on the number of children. In contrast, Eric who also had not heard of family planning methods, when asked if he could think of using them, exclaimed:

“Yes, I like that!”

As *moràns* regard procreation as an essential prerogative for a woman, girls from every background yearn for children, and a secondary school girl claimed she would never marry a sterile boy. Marianne, a secondary school girl student who wants to become a doctor, aims to have ten children, and her fellow student aims at eight children. On the other side of the spectrum, a few students claim not to want children and affirm the intention to dedicate their life, instead, to social assistance.

8.3.2. Alternative Livelihoods

Alternative livelihoods are regarded by young pastoralists as complementary to animal rearing and often involve women. Ken represented an exception in his strong-mindedness to want to solely provide for his family’s needs and hinder his future wives from having a business because:

“A wife who is independent, doing own things, having now maybe money, once there is a quarrel in a home [...], she can become angry and say “No, I can’t go with you. Let me just go, after all I have my own activities, I do my own things” and you get depart very easily.”

Brian, however, will give money to his wife to buy what she wants and does not support men who restrain their wives’ freedom. He would advise them:

“That’s not the right way to do.”

If a girl should ask him for support, he continued:

“Ya, I support the woman [...] if she comes to my help and say ‘Please help me, my husband is not in agreement with me’ I can support her.”

Angela said that:

"Nowadays [...] husbands are no longer breadwinners of the family, sometimes they leave the responsibility to the mother to struggle and look for food”,

as Marion’s mother, who provides food for the family by selling *changà*¹⁵. John explained that he sells some of the maize produced in his *shamba* during the rainy season and even some chicken, although the income is minimal, but he plans to open a shop with his wife. In general, the vast majority of the interviewed pastoralist girls wished to start a small activity such as selling honey, opening a *hotel*¹⁶ or a small kiosk to sell sugar and vegetables, while Daisy and Marianne dreamed of buying a car to start a *matatu*¹⁷ business.

9. Thematic Discussion

This section addresses the research questions which focus on the attitude of Pokot pastoralists towards modernity, tradition and land tenure transformation. The discussion of the findings will articulate around the four interrelated areas of *private and social life, education, economy and land tenure*, which I regard as Bourdieusian macro-*fields*. I will shed light on how individuals’ reproduction, negotiation or resistance to *tradition and modernity* develop transversally into each one of these fields. I will also highlight the interconnection among *fields* in light of the omnipresent underlying discourse on pastoralism. The discussion will first explain each field and then position Pokot agents in it, in order to understand young Pokots' *habitus*, in accordance with Grenfell’s suggestion for a correct approach to Bourdieu’s theory (Grenfell 2010, 20-23).

9.1. Discourse on Pastoralism

One interesting finding is that the discourse on pastoralism infiltrates the social space in disparate forms and from unexpected sources. The portrayal of pastoralists as "bandits", "archaic", "barbaric", backward or incapable to cope with the new challenges popped up during

¹⁵ There are two sorts of alcohol: a light drink, *busà*, and a strong alcohol, *changà*.

¹⁶ *Hotel* refers to the activity of selling prepared food, like a restaurant.

¹⁷ *Matatu* is a collective transport vehicle along an established path, which drops and collects people along the way without rigid time schedule and fixed charge.

the fieldwork in the form of comments, teachings, preachings, hearsay and allusions. This pervasive attitude permeates, consciously and unconsciously, both bottom-up, from educated and uneducated Pokot, and top-down, from schools, churches, governmental officials, organisations, academia and the media. The discourse on Pokot pastoralists is exemplified by the belittling references to "animals" emerging from different contexts, in the warnings not to participate to traditional dances or in the paternalistic attitudes praising the "modern" trends from West Pokot or Churo compared to the backwardness of the Mondri division or Silali. The water pipe failures in Paka are ascribed to *the lazy pastoralists*. Similarly, the prejudices surrounding the *belligerent* Pokot pastoralists are widespread and scattered, such as the automatic explanation of the organisation official regarding the fire in Paka, the warnings I received from various individuals before heading to East Pokot, or the manifold comments of researchers and organisations heard in different contexts. Pokot are also represented as *cruel* and *barbaric* individuals, disrespectful of human rights and subjugating children and women.

Another observation is that, alongside these fragmented, unstable and uncoordinated pieces of statements which constitute a discourse, categories that juxtapose and hierarchise *modernity* and *Pokot pastoralists* appear. The dichotomous stance between modernity and Pokot pastoralism establishes a classificatory label whose logic "is very exactly that of racism, which stigmatises its victims by imprisoning them in a negative essence" (Bourdieu 1990, 28), therefore turning the discourse on Pokot pastoralists into an instrument of power. The lack of contextualisation of Pokot historical and environmental conditions and conditions, hampers an understanding of the significance of animals and family management as an enterprise with optimised efficiency for the attainment of economic security in the absence of health-care, free education or a pension system. Similarly, the Western approach overlooks the faster reproductive capacity of goats and their easier economic stewardship as one of the reasons behind the Pokot shift from cattle to goats, and ridicules it as a senseless and ecologically disastrous practice. These misrecognitions of Pokot rationale, based on discourses of truth and techno-scientific discourses, lead to trivialisations which legitimise the label *tribal* and undermine and devalue the Pokot identity, highlighting how "it is in discourse that power and knowledge are joined together" (Foucault 1998, 100).

At a deeper level of analysis, what is perceived and portrayed as cultural difference and inferiority disguises, in fact, material, economic and social inequalities (Ferguson 2006, 20) and intersecting power relations. In line with gender theory, individual behaviours and actions constitute "strategies of survival under compulsory systems" (Ferguson 1999, 99) prompted, specifically, by increasingly harsh environmental conditions in conjunction with new social, political and economic pressures. Nevertheless, it would be partisan and misleading to ascribe the subjugation of pastoralists on the account of mere conditions of poverty without factoring in the cultural marginalisation of the Pokot culture and a persisting rooted institutional and societal attitude, which eradicates instead of supporting diversity.

9.2. Private and Social Life Field

The macro-*field* of "Private and Social Life" includes the areas of ceremonies, patriarchy and progeny. Its *doxa* are permeated by patriarchal values which, more than a prerogative of Pokot tradition, aggregate the precepts of the churches and the Kenyan society, despite their self-representation as epitomes of modernity. Wangari Mathai's¹⁸ autobiography describes, accordingly, how both genders cooperate to maintain "the paternal order" (Ebila 2015, 150). It is expected from the woman to be silent in the presence of man, respectable, centred, fulfilled and limited to family and procreation, and moved by the spirit of abnegation (Bourdieu 2001, 35-38; Ebila 2015, 146-147). Similarly, most of the interviewees underpinned the archetypal view of female obedience, respectability, docility, hard-work and fertility, in addition to respect for parents, husband and "everyone who is above you". Despite the underlying power relations, multifarious dispositions appear in relation to tradition and modernity.

Transformative attitudes are ongoing regarding FGM. While all female students reject FGM, different perspectives emerge among male students and illiterate pastoralists of both genders. The influence of Western tenets through schools, churches and Kenyan legislation prompts male students, not only from non-pastoralist background but also some from pastoralist families, to reject FGM. However, some male pastoralist students, like some *moràns*,

¹⁸ Wangari Maathai (1 April 1940 - 25 September 2011) is the first Kenyan and African Nobel Prize winner and "internationally recognised for her persistent struggle for democracy, human rights and environmental conservation" (<https://www.nobelprize.org/prizes/peace/2004/maathai/biographical/>).

reproduce tradition and require bride circumcision. Numerous *moràns*, as confirmed by a pastoralist girl, claim instead to adapt to FGM obligations not for personal conviction, but due to community pressure. They suggest it is preferable for girls to comply to the practice for fear of being socially isolated. Accordingly, several pastoralist girls confirm that undergoing circumcision constitutes the easiest solution to thrive in the social environment, as girls who do not conform are excluded, isolated, mobbed or ignored, while those who adhere to the practice are recognised, respected, celebrated and included. The social order, therefore, is maintained not through the action of some individuals over others, but by a collective reaction which originates from all points of the social network against the rebellious individual (Foucault 1991, 130) and favours compliance to community life. These social dynamics seem to support studies that suggest that interference in the community rituals could be more harmful to the girls than the practice of FGM, and propose that states could train local people to utilise specific sterilised tools and support in the use anaesthesia to defend girls' psychological and physical health (Cohen-Almagor 2018, 12-13). The described case of forced FGM with a tragic epilogue, is confronted with the claims from all the uneducated pastoralist girls that FGM is an active decision, not enforced by coercion. However, this *spontaneous* submission builds on a *doxic* acceptance at the cognitive level that originates from a "work of inculcation" and a familiarisation with the dominant structures absorbed and reproduced at an unconscious level (Bourdieu 2001, 40-42). Community pressure exerted on young girls suggests, at the same time, a gender complicity and power sharing in the perpetuation of FGM and patriarchy, where women unconsciously reproduce the structures of domination, while taking personal advantage of the same system within the permitted limits. To put it differently, disciplinary power is exercised on women who turn "both as objects and as instruments of its exercise" (Foucault 1991, 170). In parallel, resistance to tradition and embracement of modernity emerge from uneducated pastoralists, such as the two *moràns* who oppose FGM for their wives and daughters or the pastoralist girls who escaped to the rescue homes. It also emerged how FGM is expected to gradually disappear in the near future.

The corresponding initiation ceremony to manhood, while orienting "towards the reinforcement of male solidarity" (Bourdieu 2001, 52), concurrently exposes the emergence of hierarchies between modern educated Pokot elite, undergoing circumcision in churches, and

pastoralists' traditional practice in nature. These categories, counterposing *barbaric* pastoralists to modern Pokot in relation to the Church, foment a discourse which creates and establishes new relations of power and exercise of power (Foucault 1980, 93).

Marriage intertwines strictly with patriarchal values. The interviewees exhibit regularities of behaviour, although some of them, especially girls, manifest different dispositions through personal synthesis of tradition and modernity. In families ruled with an authoritarian fist, a form of "power-sovereignty" (Foucault 1998, 90) is exerted, similarly to the ancient *patria potestas* which grants the family head the right to rule over the life of wives and children (Foucault 1998, 135). In these cases, forced marriages can occur, sometimes followed by acts of rebellion such as escape which can conclude in the hideout at a rescue home or, in the capture of the girl, compelled to return home where other acts of resistance may continue. The *moràn's* attitude favourable to women subjugation even through economic confinement represent a case of *hysteresis*. The vast majority of the *moràns*, while reserving their right to the last word, display attitudes of non-coercion, and a few of them express the intention to defend women against authoritarian husbands. This endorsement of both genders of the male's right to final decision within the household confirms that "the mental structures through which they [agents] apprehend the social world, are essentially the product of [...] the social world" (Bourdieu a 1990, 130-131). In non-authoritarian families, pastoralist girls juggle within the boundaries of *the allowed* and *the prohibited*, such as the pastoralist girl who decided not to marry and remain with her parents and siblings, or the girl who intends to even summon the help of the governmental MCA if her future husband should deny education to all her children. These dispositions indicate how the most vulnerable individuals, far from being anachronistic victims, can act like agents who find their leeway and personal negotiation between tradition and modernity. A few more privileged female students from elite families also demonstrate resistance to male domination, advocating gender equality and rejecting marriage and children. This set of strategies validates not only that "where there is power there is resistance", but also that "there is a plurality of resistances, each of them a special case" (Foucault 1998, 95-96), some of them planned and other spontaneous, soft or violent, depending on the agent and the specific context.

The youngsters' dispositions, although embedded in the historical conditions of the original social structures, reveal not only an obvious reproduction of the social conditioning, but also an infinite capacity of unpredictable novelty and expression of thoughts, decisions or actions (Bourdieu b 1990, 55) that reshuffle modernity and tradition. This emerges in reference to obedience and progeny. First, pastoralists tend to reproduce tradition without assuming, however, passive conformity of personal practices with tradition or peer habits. The *moràns* who stand up for their decisions in relation to FGM or for the sale of livestock in favour of bank deposits, testimony such dispositions. Analogously, this is revealed in the pastoralist girl defending her resolution not to marry and stay with her parents, because her parents "cannot oppose [her] decision", or the girl resisting her parents' prohibition of attending school. Concurrently, a whole set of independent patterns of behaviours are fostered by education, as it will be analysed later. Second, the vast majority of young Pokot, independent of gender and education level, show a propensity for large progeny which symbolises at times wealth, happiness, God's bliss, success and mental health. Yet, new behavioural exceptions appear, which adhere to more modern values and might challenge paradigms, generating new *habitus* with structured and structuring effects on the existing social system. So, although to be childless is held as a disgrace, a few female students plan to pursue this road devising a personal pattern of resistance to male domination, trusting the support of their education and future career, to back and shield their decision against parents and society. Meanwhile, despite the lack of interest in family planning methods, unexpected dispositions appear, such as the uneducated *moràn* who answered enthusiastically when confronted with the idea.

9.3. Education Field

The macro-*field* of "Education" establishes a bridge between Pokot culture and modernity, and centres around Western epistemology which delimits, classifies and legitimises the dominant system of values and social positions. Pokot culture rests on strong family bonds, whereby education for some children provides an asset for the entire family and is regarded as an investment diversification and a risk management strategy. Furthermore, costly school fees mean that most families can only afford to educate a few children, generally at the disadvantage of the first-born, designated to take care of the younger children or the animals.

The investigation of this *field* places young pastoralists' attitude to school within the broader context of knowledge production.

Young pastoralists welcome education and express the intention to educate their children. While most *moràns* pragmatically negotiate modernity and tradition, planning to alphabetise some of their children without gender distinction, a few *moràns* and pastoralist girls are adamant in schooling all their children. Nevertheless, the school institution, by imposing and promoting a "legitimate national culture" (Bourdieu 1998, 46) and a "scientific hierarchisation" which relegates Pokot traditional knowledge to the category of "local, discontinuous, disqualified, illegitimate knowledges" (Foucault 1980, 83-85), contributes to erode Pokot culture. Some *moràns* perceive that educated pastoralists demonstrate a loss of interest in ceremonies, hinted by their separation during rituals and a communication barrier even among siblings. Therefore, *moràns* regard themselves as protectors of tradition. The formation of these new social categories between literate and illiterate individuals produces forms of domination, because "the sociology of knowledge or cognition [...] is inseparably a sociology of recognition [...] and miscognition [sic] [...], that is, of symbolic domination" (Bourdieu a 1990, 24).

Education holds particular significance, especially for girls. Although some have agreed with their family not to attend school, several others grieve not to be educated. Some girls seize the opportunity of Saturday morning classes, mediating their life contingencies with modernity. For some pastoralist girl and several female students, education yields empowerment, social respect and the opportunity to attain Western life-style through a salaried job. In this respect, the determination of the pastoralist girl who has enrolled to Primary School despite her parents' prohibition signals a will to redesign a different role in society. The accumulation of cultural capital through education confers a symbolic value which uplifts the social position, because a school certificate or diploma constitutes "a piece of universally recognised and guaranteed symbolic capital" which imposes a "universally approved perspective" (Bourdieu a 1990, 136). Accordingly, education enables female students to defend and maintain personal divergent positions, while supporting the *doxa* of obedience. It follows that Western epistemology furthers a regime of truth which simultaneously enables power

and originates from power, and sustains the social, economic and political system (Foucault 1980, 93, 101).

9.4. Economic Field

The Bourdieusian macro-*field* of “Economy” encompasses Pokot livestock management, employment, new livelihoods and technological development.

Animals symbolise Pokot cultural identity. They embody an easily accessed and assessed bank-deposit and serve as currency, inasmuch their sale equates a cash withdrawal. Small animals, like goats, provide small cash to cover weekly expenses, while cows and camels make available large sums to pay school fees or hospitalisation. Furthermore, the fast and prolific breeding capacity of goats, compared to camels or cows, underpins pastoralists' shift towards goat rearing in recent years. Animals guarantee also a safe retirement, are used as dowry, confer respect in ceremonies, like *sapanà*, and can be sacrificed to solve conflicts. Furthermore, the possession of numerous animals bestows success, prestige and honour. Animals' socio-economic and symbolic value suggests how, beyond Western “economic/non-economic dichotomy”, all practices serve, in fact, “as economic practices aimed at maximising material and symbolic profit” (Bourdieu b 1990, 122). The suppression of diverging economic paradigms enacted by Western ontology enmeshes with Western “ ‘political economy’ of truth” which, transmitted by institutional apparatuses, is entrenched in the scientific discourse and subjected to economic and political incitement (Foucault 1980, 131-132). The production of categories through discourses on pastoralism and discourses of truth exclude, devalue, disavow and, therefore, hierarchise the material and symbolic capital of livestock and its contextualised *raison d'être*.

Pokot youngsters reveal heterogeneous attitudes towards economic development. At one extreme of the spectrum some individuals advocate employment, despite the unattained promises of modernisation discourse elsewhere in Kenya. Several female students and an illiterate pastoralist girl, for example, ascribe economic and symbolic capital to education and employment which, through wealth accumulation, enable access to modern lifestyle concretised by a luxury vehicle or a stone house. The disdain for the Pokot culture, expressed by the illiterate pastoralist girl married with a college student or by the female student who repudi-

ates tradition, evidences how the embracement of Western ontology engenders, in parallel, hierarchised categories. A similar predisposition is revealed by the scathing judgement of the *moràn* who plans to abandon pastoralism for a salaried job, and excludes and marginalises those pastoralists unable or unwilling to follow his path. The self-positioning of vulnerable individuals on the side of the strong powers which drive modernisation, confirms how “a power relation is not just a one-way, top-down projection; it is also projected from the bottom up” (Dore 2010, 740). While some students uphold modernisation, they are also concerned for the fate of the uneducated pastoralists who might not be able to abandon pastoralism. These dispositions expose the shift of some young people from the Pokot *doxa* to Western economic models based on employment, urbanisation and industrialisation, and promoted by schools, churches and organisations, as a coping strategy against the forecasted increased frequency of droughts.

On the opposite side of the spectrum, cases of reproduction of Pokot orthodox *doxa* appear, such as the *moràn* who refuses new practices even at the risk of losing animals in case of adverse events. He can be regarded as a case of *hysteresis* intended as a disposition which does not align with the *field* and with the “ ‘collective expectations which are constitutive of its normality’ ” (Grenfell 2006, 235). More often, in fact, the adhesion to traditional pastoralism finds a rationale either in the fear to switch to a completely unfamiliar system, or in the lack of knowledge on how to access the new system. Other individuals express the distrust in the possibility of being absorbed by the new economic system and a greater sense of security in the traditional lifestyle, hence evidencing a realistic appraisal between “subjective hopes and objective opportunities” (Bourdieu a 1990, 23).

Between these two extreme positions, the vast majority of the participants synthesise modernity and tradition by developing personal strategies. Several *moràns*, once reaching a critical number of animals, intend to reduce the risk of animal loss in case of drought by selling the exceeding part of the animals and depositing the proceedings in a bank. Many are also interested in pursuing alternative livelihoods or purchasing motorcycles to fetch water and carry food. In parallel, several pastoralist girls express the intention of opening a *hotel*, a small kiosk or selling sugar or honey. Therefore, far from a stubborn, proud or backward re-

fusal of modernity, the majority of the uneducated pastoralists reveal pragmatic understandings and legitimate doubts about modernisation promises. They also evidence a capacity to mediate, re-elaborate and adapt in personal ways the options available on the new economic chessboard, such as alternative livelihoods, the local financial system and technology. This mosaic demonstrates how “*habitus* tends to generate all the ‘reasonable’, ‘common-sense’, behaviours (and only these) which are possible within the limits of these regularities, and [...] are objectively adjusted to the logic characteristic of a particular *field*” (Bourdieu b 1990, 55-56). Nevertheless, some female students, while endorsing education and career, do not disclaim the possession of animals.

Young pastoralists integrate technology in their lives, as exemplified by Nginyang livestock market where, on one side of the tarmac road they sell animals to salesmen from Kenya largest cities and, on the other side, drink cold sodas and walk among objects, clothes and music stemming from *outside*. Their curiosity, ability to creative solutions and *familiarity* with technology appeared in several contexts. Technology also impacts the social dynamics. These changes can be positive, like the *moràn* fetching water with his bicycle, or negative, due to the creation of hierarchies, such as the elites who can access internet and other modern gadgets, in contrast to the rural pastoralists.

9.5. Land Tenure Field

The macro-*field* of “Land tenure” emphasises the different exigencies of pastoralism and modern development on land use. The current *traditional* Pokot land tenure system originates from incremental adaptations throughout history imposed, at times, by environmental changes or the authorities and, at times, deliberately embraced by the Pokot, such as the introduction of the *shamba* in the 1980s. As Foucault puts it, “the notion of tradition ... makes it possible to rethink the dispersion of history in the form of the same” (Foucault 2002, 23). This seasonal land tenure system can be regarded as a *bricolage* of *communal land* and flexible informal ownership without permanent enclosures. During the dry season, land use is maximised by animals’ free circulation and free-grazing in both the lowlands and the highlands. In contrast, during the rainy-season, the lowlands turn into *privately owned shambas* dedicated to rain-fed agriculture, and the highlands are protected by grazing prohibition.

The majority of young pastoralists endorse the current land tenure system and enact this hybrid model founded on flexible local governance. The *moràns*' entrepreneurial capacity is generally exercised within the Pokot ontology and reconciles economic, symbolic and cultural capital, because "traditional people [...] value these animals" and wish to graze "peacefully" in their land. They willingly accept the rare cases of enclosures in the lowlands as supportive measures to older heads of families with several wives and children, although they observe that, in those areas, it is currently necessary to negotiate with the owner the permission to graze. Therefore, by comfortably dwelling and thriving in the existing land tenure regime, these pastoralists act as agents who feel at ease in the current *doxa* like the "fish in the water" and, hence, reflect in their *habitus* the logic of the *field* (Grenfell 2014, 56).

At the same time, the recent infrastructure and development projects are producing alternative perspectives on the use and value of land. For example, the construction of the GDC water-pipe is enthusiastically supported, for the creation of the water point in Paka and the secondary water-branch to *Chemoril Primary School*. Likewise, the youngsters welcome the job opportunities related to the GDC power plant and the extraction industry, where some of their friends are currently employed. They also welcome GDC's expected financial compensation (presently not yet materialised). Along with these advantages however, several pastoralists express concern that the new practices and land use changes might reduce pasture in the future, jeopardising their livelihoods and animal rearing. One major worry is the risk of pasture reduction, if land concessions should be granted to GDC's employees to reside in Paka and the surroundings, or if the quarries should expand to other areas. The development of urbanisation would equally mark the demise of their main life activity. Therefore, the pastoralists gauge pragmatically and without ideological preconceptions, the advantages and risks of land tenure changes to their livelihood as a result of current paradigms of modernity.

Concurrently, a few illiterate pastoralists, together with the majority of the students, buttress the Western technocratic and economic system, which fosters formal privatisation of land. They also envision urbanisation in the area, although some students are concerned about the fate of those pastoralists who will not be absorbed by the new system. Interest in the

ownership of the territories neighbouring the tarmac road, associated to easy mobility and access to services, has sparked particularly on behalf of the educated elites. In parallel, land prices have rocketed in these areas. While the vast majority of uneducated pastoralists do not desire land privatisation, a few of them uphold the introduction of formal ownership, envisaging future advantages with the advancement of modernity in the innermost areas. They also blame the pastoralists unwilling to shift from pastoralism to modern employment and, in the future, they intend to forbid corridors between adjacent *shambas* for the passage of animals. At the same time, some female students worry that land privatisation might lead to land sale to external actors, with detrimental consequences for the local people. Although “the vision that every agent has of space, depends on his or her position in that space” (Bourdieu a 1990, 130), it appears that individuals from different sub-groups present similar conceptions of land, confirming how “people who are very distant from each other in the social space can encounter one another” (Bourdieu a 1990, 127). Nevertheless, schools and churches tend to normalise individuals’ attitudes in favour of modern economic and techno-scientific discourses which promote land privatisation and other land uses than pasture. Therefore, the *fields* of education, economy and land tenure build on each other in a mechanism which fosters Western regimes of truth and systems of power. Beyond the intrinsic interconnection between truth and power however, the vulnerability of Pokot culture rests on the interconnection between the power of truth and “the forms of hegemony, social, economic and cultural” (Foucault 1980, 133).

If land ownership should be formalised, most *moràns* rely on Pokot evidence-based customary governance linked to elders, witnesses or the presence of graves for the recognition of their informal ownership of *shamba* or *boma*. Yet, some *moràns*’ unawareness of these dynamics enhances the importance of access to knowledge on this topic and urges the legislation to protect the most marginalised individuals.

10. Conclusions and Future Work

This thesis has provided a deeper insight on how Pokot young pastoralists in East Pokot relate to the ongoing transformations, which originate from the multifaceted forms of modernity advancing in the region.

The findings highlight how *tradition, modernity* and land tenure cannot be abstracted from the understanding of the wider discourse on pastoralism which pervades the social fabric of Pokot society. This discourse is entrenched in the dominant Western ontology and a partial understanding, or sometimes misrecognition, of Pokot culture. Therefore, an in-depth insight of Pokot's overall life conditions, history and culture would clarify the motivations underneath their rationale and perspectives, and would prevent the stigmatisation of Pokot pastoralists as closed and backward. Caution is recommended in the formulation of *pastoralists' resistance to modernity*, since it engenders categorisations which trivialise and dismiss pragmatic positions.

Another finding has identified the inaccuracy of the designation *Pokot young pastoralists* as a cohesive group and reveal, in spite of common orientations, a myriad of individualities. Despite the fact that the discourse on pastoralism conveys a derogatory image of Pokot pastoralists, the young Pokot's disposition towards modernity is polyhedral, neither linear nor easily categorisable, but rather marked by a variety of dispositions. These dynamics disclose the existence of "*certain regularities*" (Bourdieu a 1990, 64), more than a blind abidance to rules. Even when general traits seem to merge the group, like the largely shared patriarchal values, important divergences still exist. With respect to FGM, while some *moràns* still pose it as a mandatory requirement for marriage, many others demonstrate a looser attitude, adapting to community habits without personal conviction, and some rare cases even reject FGM. The permeable attitude towards modernity is also revealed through the support to education, the interest in the financial system, alternative livelihoods or the propensity for technology. However, *constant exceptions* emerge strikingly from unexpected social groups through the development of personal strategies and stances based on the available possibilities at hand and merging *modernity* and *tradition* to improve life conditions. The prejudicial antinomy and hierarchical categorisations of *forefront student* and *backward pastoralist* is consequently overturned. Therefore caution is recommended in drawing conclusions that individuals belonging to the same position in a social space characterised by specific conditions and structures "exist as a unified group, as a class" (Bourdieu a 1990, 129).

This study has also shown that the penetration of modernity produces new classifications and categories. These categories reshuffle the pre-existing age and gender-based hierarchies and generate new dominant groups. The *education-employment* binomial contributes to produce these new categories. This is particularly relevant for educated girls who can climb up the social ladder, also compared to the traditionally hegemonic male domination, and be empowered through social advancement materialised in the participation in modern life. This development risks however, disenfranchising the illiterate pastoralist girls, whose position could further slide down. This new hegemonic group tends to include not only literate people but also uneducated pastoralists who embrace the modern model.

Finally, the currently stable and peaceful land regime in the region is in danger of being destabilised by the new trends in land tenure. Most pastoralists support the current *hybrid* land tenure, which works smoothly and synthesises informal privatisation and *communal land* based on traditional governance. Meanwhile, students and a few pastoralists wish a formalisation of land towards privatisation. These different perspectives compose future scenarios of concern, disillusion and exclusion versus opportunities, promises and inclusion.

A limitation of this study consists in the broad and multifaceted area of investigation in relation to the time available for the research. The time constraint has made particularly tricky the resort to inductive research method and unstructured interviews. Yet, this work offers an insight on the spectrum of unpredictable kaleidoscopic attitudes and actions of Pokot pastoralists towards different aspects of modernity. The findings also expose prejudicial attitudes towards pastoralism, which go beyond the local context and emblematises certain Western approaches towards indigenous communities. Recommendations to policy makers based on the material collected during the fieldwork are presented in Appendix 3. Upcoming developments and challenges in the region suggest a natural progression of this work to delve into each and every one of the investigated topics and social categories, also including other regions within East Pokot. Mixed methods, a combination of unstructured and semi-structured interviews and longer participant observation should also be utilised. Particular attention should be assigned to the understanding of the prospects and management of the current land tenure system to ensure land security at all levels of Pokot society.

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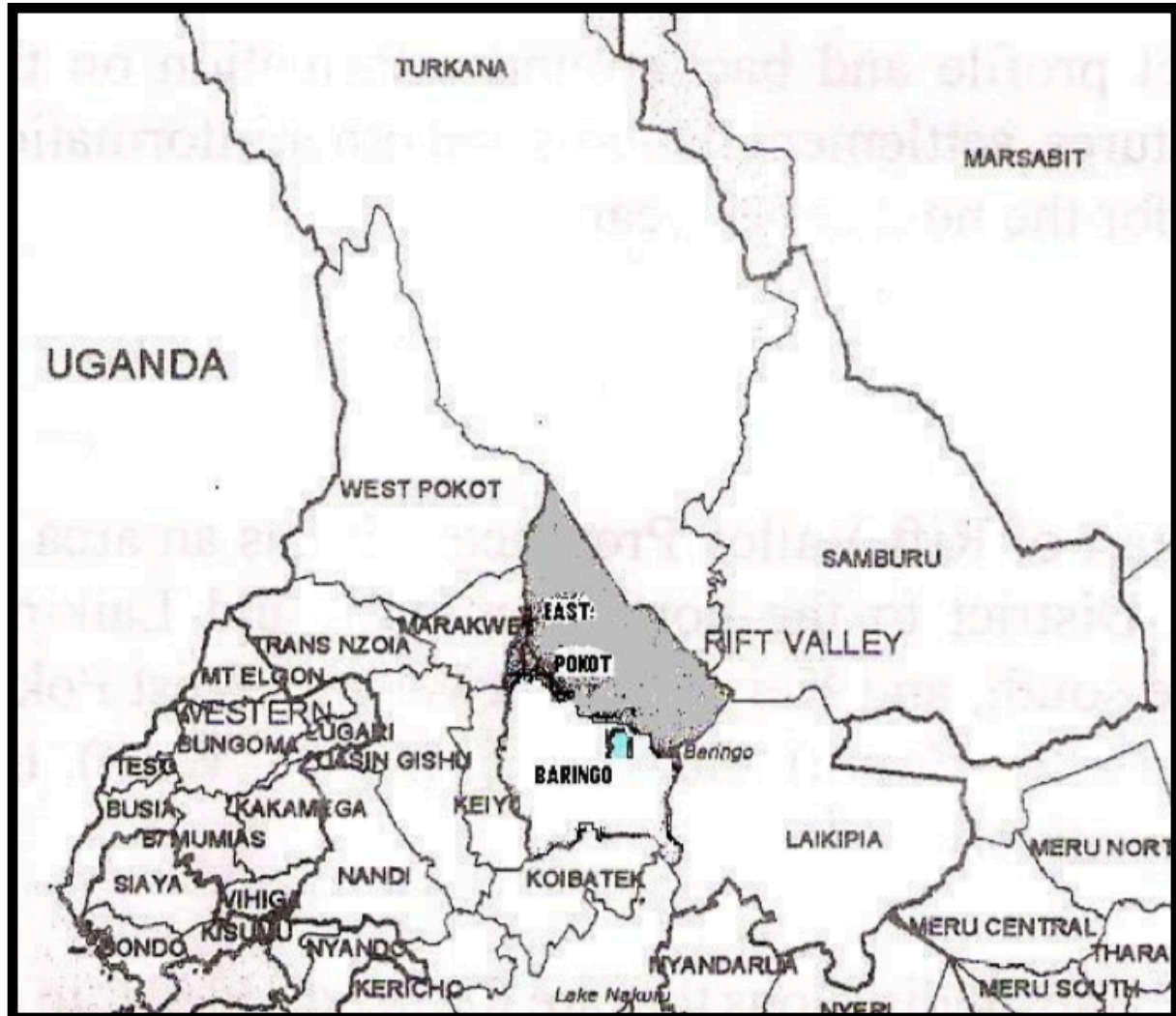
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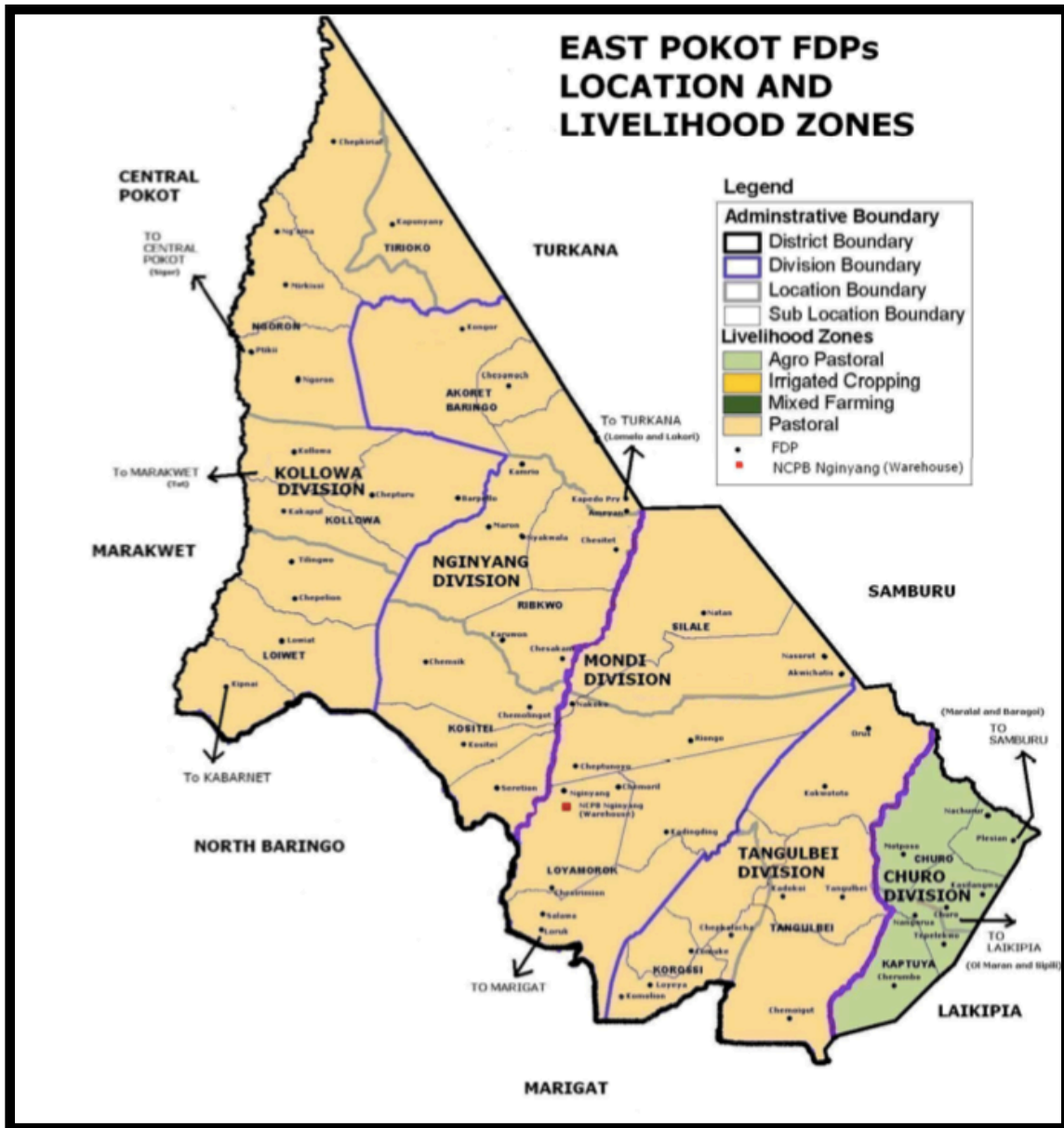
Appendix 1a

Map of district boundaries (“Save the Children. 2010, Appendix 4a).



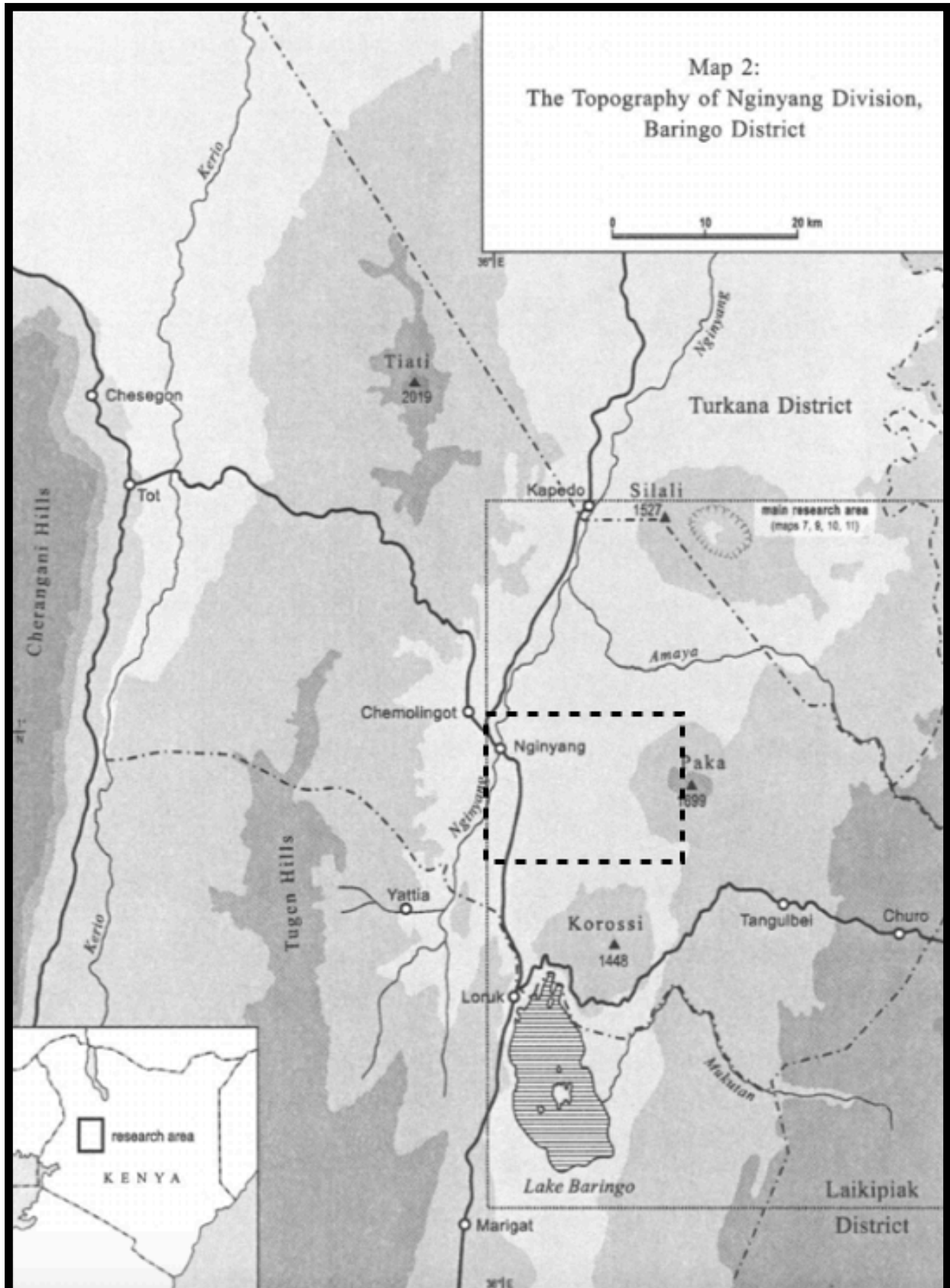
Appendix 1b

Map of East Pokot sub-county (Save the Children. 2010, Appendix 4b).



Appendix 1c

Topography of East Pokot sub-county, Baringo District. Highlighted with the dash line the research area.



Appendix 2

Focus Groups and Interviews

In order to prioritise the most marginalised group, the interviews mostly addressed uneducated and educated girls, and uneducated pastoralist boys. At first, I organised focus groups with several participants. Thereafter I progressively reduced the number of informants and eventually concentrated on one-to-one interviews. Sometimes I decided to interview two individuals if they were friends or family members walking together when I encountered them. The age of the informants was often unavailable, however, when available the age varied between 14 and 19 years. The interviewees quoted in the thesis are presented in table 1 in chronological order.

Table 1: Focus Groups and Interviews conducted during the fieldwork.

	Identification	Gender	Occupation	Participants	Civil status	Family background	Place of the interview	Date
Focus group 1	Group 1	M	Moràns	8	Unmarried	Pastoralist	Loiwalán	Feb 05
Focus group 2	Group 2	F	Pastoralist girls	3	Unmarried	Pastoralist	Takól	Feb 06
Focus group 3	Group 3	M	Moràns	4	Unmarried	Pastoralist	Riongón	Feb 08
Focus group 4	Group 4	F	Pastoralist girls	3	Unmarried	Pastoralist	Nginyang market	Feb 11
Focus group 5	Group 5	M	Elders	4	-	Pastoralist	Nginyang market	Feb 11
Focus group 6	Group 6	M	Moràns	4	Unmarried	Pastoralist	Kapurkel	Feb 12
Focus group 7	Group 7	M	Students	5	Unmarried	Pastoralist	Chemonligot Boys Secondary School	Feb 15
Focus group 8	Group 8	M	Students	5	Unmarried	Non-pastoralist	Chemonligot Boys Secondary School	Feb 15
Interview 1	James	M	Moràns	2	Unmarried	Pastoralist	Takól	Feb 16
	David							
Interview 2	Winnie, Faith	F	Pastoralist girls	2	Unmarried	Pastoralist	Nginyang market Half-sisters	Feb 18
Interview 3	Mercy	F	Student	1	Unmarried	Pastoralist	Cana Girls Rescue Home	Feb 20
Interview 4	Anne	F	Student	1	Unmarried	Pastoralist	Cana Girls Rescue Home	Feb 21
Interview 5	Lucy	F	Student	1	Unmarried	Pastoralist	Cana Girls Rescue Home	Feb 23
Interview 6	John	M	Moràn, previously student	1	Unmarried	Pastoralist	Nginyang market and	Feb 25
Focus group 9	Group 9	M	Elders	2	-	Pastoralist	Nginyang market	Mar 04

	Identification	Gender	Occupation	Participants	Civil status	Family background	Place of the interview	Date
Interview 7	Collins	M	Moràn	1	Unmarried	Pastoralist	Nginyang market	Mar 04
Focus group 10	Linda, Eva, Linda	F	Students	3	Unmarried	Non-pastoralist	Nginyang Girls Secondary School	Mar 05
Interview 8	Brian	M	Moràns	2	Married, one child	Pastoralist	Nginyang	Mar 06
	Robert				Unmarried	Pastoralist		
Interview 9	Kelly	F	Student	2	Unmarried	Pastoralist	Nginyang Girls Secondary School	Mar 06
	Isabel	F						
	John	M	Moràn	1	Married	Pastoralist	Nginyang river water point	Mar 10
Interview 10	Ken	M	Moràns	1	Married	Moràn	Nginyang market	Mar 11
Interview 11	Angela	F	Pastoralist girl	1	Unmarried	Pastoralist	Nginyang market	Mar 11
Interview 12	Jewel	F	Pastoralist girl	1	Unmarried	Pastoralist	Chemoríl	Mar 12
Interview 13	Brian	M	Moràn	1	Married, one child	Pastoralist	Nginyang	Mar 13
Interview 14	Joy	F	Student	1	Unmarried	Pastoralist	Chemoríl	Mar 13
Interview 15	Brian	M	Moràns	2	Married, one child	Pastoralist	Mercali	Mar 14
	Robert				Unmarried	Pastoralist		
Interview 16	Eric	M	Moràns	1	Unmarried	Pastoralist	Nginyang	Mar 15
Interview 17	Lynn	F	Pastoralist girl	1	Unmarried	Pastoralist	Kapurkèl	Mar 16
Interview 18	Ruth	F	Pastoralist girl	1	Unmarried	Pastoralist	Kapurkèl	Mar 17
Interview 19	Steve	M	Moràns	1	Married	Pastoralist	Nginyang market	Mar 18
Interview 20	Angela	F	Pastoralist girl	1	Unmarried	Pastoralist	Nginyang market	Mar 18
Interview 21	Daisy	F	“Modern” Pastoralist girl	1	Married, one child	Pastoralist, Non-pastoralist husband	Nginyang	Mar 19
Interview 22	Marion	F	Pastoralist girl	1	Unmarried	Pastoralist	Nginyang	Mar 19
Interview 23	Judith	F	Student	1	Unmarried	Student	Chemoríl Primary School	Mar 20
Interview 24	Lewis	M	Moràns	1	Married	Pastoralist	Paka	Mar 21

Appendix 3

Recommendations

The findings of this work suggest some interventions and courses of action to support and alleviate the situation for the local population.

1. Water Accessibility

Provision of a larger distribution of water pumps in the territory is the first-mentioned life-improvement request due to droughts and extinction of several natural water points, particularly at the end of the dry season. Water points driven by solar panel technology are at times out of function, such as in the area of Loiwalàn where people were forced to move. Therefore, installation of water pumps should be accompanied by planned regular maintenance, particularly by the end of the dry season. Furthermore, in the area between Mondì and Paka and towards Silali, the extracted water is salty and, therefore, not suitable for consumption. A reasonable approach to tackle this issue could be the extension to several areas of the ramification of the water-pipe system from Baringo lake to Paka mountain, similarly to the already operating secondary branch towards the *Chemoril Primary School*. The associated water refrigeration system would also be beneficial. This will provide a major support for the population living in Mondì Division and enhance the life quality of pastoralist girls, otherwise forced to strenuous and long daily walks during the dry season as water points begin to dry out.

2. Land Governance

The local land tenure model developed within the categorisation of *communal land* enables agriculture in the rainy season and safeguards pastoralism during the dry season, while preserving peaceful coexistence within the community. Therefore, a key policy priority should be to delve into the understanding of local customary system and governance of land assignment, distribution and management. The process should focus on the grassroots and resort to mixed methods, particularly qualitative methods in order to allow room for unexpected voices and perspectives. The outcome should serve to consolidate and legitimise those

practices in the statutory legislation, to contrast land dispossession from the most marginalised people in favour of external actors and elites.

3. Fodder and Crop Preservation

Agriculture, generally used for household consumption, improves food security, but interest in cultivating fodder for animals during the rainy season has emerged. There is, however, a need for new methods to improve and support crop preservation, especially against rats. Another practical suggestion is the need of different seeds suitable for fodder, which could be made available in Nginyang. Those measures will, however, be ineffective, unless water for animals becomes accessible during the dry season, as explained previously in point 1.

4. FGM and Family Planning Methods

The practice of FGM is expected to gradually disappear in the coming years. Until then, it is important to bear in mind that the grave social impairment that uncircumcised girls face might be more harmful than FGM, since FGM represents femininity, cleanness and inclusion. Therefore, measures could be taken to limit the physical sufferance and psychological damage on the girls, as suggested by Cohen-Almagor (Cohen-Almagor 2018). Possible measures include medical courses for the indigenous practitioners, the provision of sterilised instruments and even doctors to administer anaesthesia.

Despite the widespread desire for children, information about family planning methods could be provided by qualified personnel at the Nginyang market.