IDENTITY RECONFIGURED: KARIMOJONG MALE YOUTH, VIOLENCE AND LIVELIHOODS

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation examines internal violence among the once-unified Karimojong population of northeastern Uganda and argues that the intensification and increase of this violence over the past three decades is best understood through an analysis of both its gendered nature (i.e., male) and livelihood components. The dissertation uses primary data to review and discuss four hypotheses on the causes of violence associated with cattle raiding in pastoral areas: violence as linked to the acquisition of cattle for bridewealth, violence due to the collapse of traditional authority structures, violence as part of the competition over scarce natural resources, and violence as fueled by the commercialization of cattle raiding. This study finds that while elements of each of these hypotheses have some relevance for understanding violence among the Karimojong in the 1980s and 1990s, violence as experienced since 2000 is primarily a manifestation of the quest for respect, status and identity on the part of young men. Social, political and economic changes in Karamoja have gradually eroded the means through which males were able to establish and maintain a socially recognized masculinity; many of these changes were brought on by the very violence under examination. Faced with the erosion of traditional rites of passage marked by initiation and marriage, young men increasingly turned inward to their peer group in search of solidarity and worth. However, many of the means to establish and maintain status and reputation within the group themselves entail violence. Ultimately, this study finds that violence has become embedded within a cycle of maladaptive livelihoods and serves to perpetuate conflict, undermine the livelihoods base for the broader society, and upend the official and unofficial processes through which young men can achieve a normative masculine identity.

This work is dedicated to Darlington Akabwai, a great man.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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CHAPTER ONE: CONTEXT, HISTORY, LITERATURE REVIEW AND

METHODS

<u>Whither Karamoja?</u>

 I was quite determined not to work in Karamoja. In 2005 and 2006, at the time that I

began to contemplate a PhD, I had been conducting research as part of a Feinstein

International Center (FIC) team in the Acholi and Lango regions of northern Uganda.

Numerous research avenues in those districts piqued my interest, including land rights

and conflict, patterns of displacement and resettlement, and the ways in which livelihood

strategies by gender had changed during the twenty years of war between the Uganda

People's Defence Force (UPDF) and the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA). The dynamics

of civil war, displacement, political marginalization and national resentment were

relatively straight-forward, and yet the region seemed poised for positive change—LRA

attacks had greatly decreased, the rebels were reportedly moving west, and the population

was tentatively expanding beyond the confines of the internal displacement camps. In

contrast, reports from the neighboring Karamoja region were of ambiguous and violent

upheaval caused by marauding bands of heavily armed young male "warriors." Road

ambushes on private vehicles were rife, the weapons trade was robust, and there were few

national or international organizations working in the area. Local male elders in northern

Uganda shook their heads at what they saw as the collapse of authority among their

counterparts in Karamoja, and the situation seemed, at least to an outsider, to be one of

young men run amok. In contrast to northern Uganda, in which the "bad guys" were the

rebel leaders (and, in the eyes of many, the UPDF soldiers and national politicians), the

bad guys in Karamoja were members of the population—ordinary male youth carrying

AK-47s. My research prior to Uganda had been in Afghanistan, and I wanted to commit to an area on the brink of positive change and where there was an undercurrent of hope—Karamoja clearly did not fit the bill.

Then we started work in eastern Orom sub-county in the Acholi region's Kitgum district, which neighbors northern Karamoja. It was mid-2006, and over 90% of the population in Orom was displaced and living in squalid camps or crowded trading centers. Many people had endured horrific violence and suffering at the hands of the LRA, and were subject to continued abuse and intimidation by the UPDF within the internal displacement camps. And yet, much to my surprise, when asked to rank the factors that posed the greatest risk to physical and livelihoods security, nearly all respondents said "the Karamojong." In fact, the Ugandan military had uncharacteristically turned a blind eye to civilian ownership of weapons in the small settled communities in the Orom hills. This population refused to live in the camps and had set up an intricate system of defenses, including private militias, to protect against attacks from raiders from Karamoja and LRA rebels, with the former being the more common and dangerous threat (Stites, Mazurana, and Carlson 2006). Respondents at times dismissed talk of the LRA with the wave of a hand, turning instead to discussion of the "real threat" from across the nearby district border. At the same time, however, the little lodge in Orom trading center where we stayed was run by a woman from Karamoja, and the local people were excited about the upcoming market day, which would reportedly be attended by many people from Karamoja. I struggled to understand these apparent discrepancies. How could outsider perceptions be so skewed as to think that the main threat was from marauding LRA rebels, when in fact people primarily feared their neighbors? And how could these same threatening neighbors intermarry with the local population, establish businesses, and

partake in the monthly market? Clearly the raids from Karamoja brought extreme violence and livelihood loss to the people of Orom, and yet many of the older local people spoke Ngakaramojong and had crossed the border numerous times. What was the history behind these seemingly complicated social and economic relationships, and how had they come to be marked by such hostility and fear?

I sought to better understand some of these dynamics by meeting with the UNICEF team in Kampala that covered the northeastern Karamoja region. I left the meeting with more questions than answers, with the frustration of the team itself making a particularly strong impression: they explained that UNICEF had not had a permanent presence in Karamoja in years due to pervasive insecurity and that they, as UN staff members, were prohibited from moving around the region except under military escort and with strict limitations on time and place of travel. As a result the UNICEF team had very little information about the situation within communities. We exchanged contact details and, within an hour of the meeting, the expatriate team leader began calling my mobile phone. "I can't get in there to any real extent," he began, "but you, as an academic researcher, would not face any such UN restrictions and you could visit both the settled and mobile populations…"[1] I was hesitant about the security situation but he was relentless, and his argument on the need for evidence-based research to guide programming and policy making was compelling. Our team of researchers agreed to combine forces with a Ugandan colleague who had long experience in the region to conduct a short research study at the end of the year.

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[1] Jeremy England, multiple informal conversations, June 2006.

My security concerns proved to be well-founded on various levels (we had to change our study sites at the last minute due to UPDF helicopter gunship attacks in the area; we were caught in a small cattle raid; one of the trading centers where we were staying came under attack; our translator's bus was ambushed on her way to meet our team, and so on), but these concerns were secondary in comparison to the compelling issues that were immediately apparent on my first trip to the region. The very aspects that had caused my hesitancy were the areas of greatest interest, and I realized that the Karamoja-Acholiland/Lango/Teso relations were a side story compared to the internal dynamics. Who were these so-called warriors who were engaged in brutal and regular raids, and yet who gently caught and cradled newborn lambs each morning and placed them in the perfect tiny enclosures they had crafted? How had the situation devolved to a point whereby a group that had only recently shared a common ethnic identity—the Karimojong of southern Karamoja—was now mired in destructive and deadly cycles of internal raiding? If violence associated with livestock raiding was as endemic as it appeared, what were the impacts on the social, economic and political structures and functioning of the community? How did these young men's families and communities conceive of this violence?

I quickly realized that the short and focused research trip for UNICEF was not going to be my last, and immediately began planning follow-up field work and an expansion of the research beyond a basic investigation of the current situation on the ground. With a few exceptions, however, the secondary literature on Karamoja left me unsatisfied as to either the explanations or effects of the violence and upheaval. This was not particularly surprising, considering that there had been a dearth of academic research or even humanitarian assessments in the region from the 1970s until the late 1990s due to

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insecurity (Gray, Leslie, and Akol 2002). The studies from neighboring or similar

pastoral areas also failed to fully explain the dynamics that were apparent to me from my

short time in the region and from talking to my much more knowledgeable local

colleagues. Much of this literature examined structural factors, the trade in weapons,

political marginalization, and the evolution of the pastoral landscape. Furthermore, while

scholars of Karamoja widely agreed that the violence had intensified over the previous

thirty years (Quam 1997; Gray 2000), few went beyond this observation to explain the

reasons behind this development. Few sources went more deeply into the *who* and *why*

questions behind the violence, and none that I read emphasized the *male youth* nature of

the violence. While we often take for granted that violence is committed by young men

regardless of the context (Kimmel 2005), the male youth engaged in these acts of

violence often come from the ranks of the social outcasts, the downtrodden and the

marginalized of their respective societies. This generalization did not seem to hold true

in Karamoja, where young men were clearly the economic drivers and important (if not

sole) decision makers within the pastoral production system. There must be something I

am missing, I thought, and I decided to try to understand the causes behind the

propensity, prevalence and intensification of violence in the region as committed

specifically by male youth. Specifically then, this dissertation seeks to understand the

reasons for the violence as perpetrated by young men of the once-unified Karimojong

ethnic group, known as the Three Stones[2] and consisting of the Bokora, Matheniko, and

Pian territorial sections, that has rendered this union asunder since at least the early

1980s.

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[2] This term refers to the three stones used to hold a traditional cooking put over a fire. Older respondents in all areas used this term with frequency, and its meaning is confirmed in Ocan 1994.

The research for this dissertation overlaps with the work conducted as part of my position as a senior researcher at the Feinstein International Center at Tufts University, where I have been employed as full-time faculty since February 2006. The flexibility of the FIC model means that I was able to design studies and fundraise for specific projects; each study that has taken place in Karamoja has included specific aspects related to the research questions for this dissertation, while also often including other areas of research inquiry. These aspects and potential biases are discussed more fully in the methodology section. At this point it is sufficient to say that this work would not have been possible without the generous funding, flexibility and interest of various foundations, organizations and agencies[3] and without the collaboration, commitment and dedication of a larger team,[4] many members of which have infinitely more experience and understanding of Karamoja than I ever will and yet all of whom took the time and accepted the risks to participate in this work, to explain and re-explain social and political structures and vocabulary, and to provide critical context and camaraderie.

Avenues of Inquiry: Hypotheses on Violence

A Query on Violence

This study began by establishing the nature and type of violence for consideration. Violence is an inescapable reality in Karamoja, and violence or the threat of violence

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[3] Donors for the 2006-2009 research in Karamoja, which consists of the primary data for this study, include International Development Research Centre (IDRC), UNICEF Kampala, Save the Children in Uganda (SCiUG) and the European Union. Research from 2010-2012, which is referenced occasionally in this thesis, was funded by SCiUG, UNICEF Kampala, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), Irish Aid (IA) Kampala, and the World Bank. Funding for projects which continue at the time of writing is provided by Mercy Corps and the World Bank.
[4] Team members involved in the projects that contributed to the 2006-2009 data set include Darlington Akabwai, Elizabeth Bontrager, Irene Emanikor, Lorin Fries, Joyce Ilukori, Michael Kapolon, Joshua Kidon, Samson Lorika, Elizabeth Mandeville, and Dyan Mazurana. Khristopher Carlson, Luke Lonyiko and Simon Richards were involved in research in 2010-2012 that is referenced occasionally.

pervades and influences any number of relationships and interactions. A complete

typology of the forms of insecurity in the region would have to include domestic

violence, gender-based violence, violence used within customary justice proceedings,

political violence, violence as committed by security forces, criminal violence, raiding

violence, and structural violence. In addition, while numerous authors state that violence

in Karamoja increased in the final decades of the 20th century, out of the relatively few

studies conducted in the region since the late 1960s, none was representative or took a

quantitative approach to analyzing rates of violence. The work of Gray et al. (2003)

comes the closest, and includes an analysis of probability and causes of mortality based

on interviews with over 300 Matheniko and Bokora women. Their research shows that

direct violence related to cattle raiding was the leading cause of death for adult men in the

1970s, 1980s and 1990s. Raiding violence also undermined health services and delivery,

thereby contributing to many deaths from preventable or treatable illnesses. Their

analysis provides context as to the extent of the impacts of violence, but does not fully

answer the question as to the extent to which violence itself increased.

In speaking to more and more people, however, the need to be able to quantify with

certainty the extent to which violence had increased in recent years—or even if it had

actually increased at all, as disputed by some authors (Knighton 2005; Eaton 2008)—

became less relevant. While some respondents mentioned acts of extreme violence in the

large-scale raids of an earlier era, and one or two pointed out (as also reported by Eaton

2008) that spears were more dangerous than guns due to their silence, by and large the

data from the respondents pointed to agreement on the following: a) violence as

experienced by Matheniko, Pian and Bokora communities was categorically worse in

recent decades than in any other time in remembered history or oral tradition; b) violence

and the threat of violence had led to widespread livelihood transformations, including

loss (to sale, disease or raiding) of large portions of herds,[5] out-migration and increased

sedentarization, and the demise of a sustainable and productive form of transhumant

pastoralism; and c) the depth and breadth of impoverishment had increased, and many

households were engaged in coping strategies (such as resource exploitation) that had

once been the purview of the poor, and that this widespread poverty had undermined

social networks and communal systems that had previously helped to mitigate

vulnerability. The views of the communities, combined with the widespread if not

unanimous views of outside researchers and experts, that violence, the experience of

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[5] To note, various analyses by external agencies and observers are in marked contrast to the perceptions of
the local population regarding overall loss of livestock. A 2009 report by Anderson and Robinson
commissioned as part of the European Commission's livelihoods intervention program argues that the
Ugandan Bureau of Standards' (UBOS) figures, which show a 35% increase in cattle and a 76% increase in
sheep and goats from 2002 to 2008 in Karamoja, are highly dubious. However, vaccination records from
2008 and 2009 do indicate a drastic increase in ruminants and, interesting, a major redistribution in cattle,
with the herd sizes in Kaabong, Kotido and Nakapiripirit district doubling while the total numbers of cattle in
Moroto district *decreased* by 47%. The authors posit that this may be due to raiding by stronger groups,
which may at least partially explain the marked decrease in reported herd sizes within the study population
for this dissertation. (This requires making an assumption regarding Anderson and Robinson's findings on
Nakapiripirit: that the increase in animals in that district represents a skewed holding by the Pokot at the
expense of the Pian. The Pokot are known to be one of the strongest groups in the region and are cited
throughout the data for this study as perpetrators of raids against the Pian and at times the Matheniko. In
addition, the Pokot have been not been fully disarmed due to their remote location and the ease at which they
cross the Kenyan border and leave weapons and cattle with the Kenyan Pokot as needed for safekeeping.) In
another example of external sources contradicting the reports of the study population, a 2010 report by Simon
Levine for FAO/ECHO, for example, finds that households across the board in Karamoja had not suffered
extreme loss of animals. His team's research showed that middle and better-off households (making up one-
third of total households) had wealth levels comparable to those of similar wealth groups across Uganda,
even after four years of crop failure. He found that herd sizes of the poor and very poor went down by 5-15%
depending on primary livelihood activity, placing this group again only slightly below that of the poor and
very poor elsewhere in the country. (However, the validity of comparing wealth in animal assets among
pastoralist/agro-pastoralists to agrarian groups in different regions is potentially problematic.) The research
for this dissertation did not aim to quantify asset losses, and did not seek to gather quantitative data on
livestock ownership. By returning to the same communities multiple times over the course of the research,
however, we were able to observe clear signs of loss of herds, or at least loss of access to herds, as apparent
in the demise of the traditional kraals (some of which we had visited in early rounds of fieldwork), the
presence of large numbers of idle male youth at the manyattas (who previously had been busy at the kraals or
with the animals), and a marked and noticeable increase in the trade of firewood as a survival strategy for a
large number of households who had previously lived off their animal-based assets. Some households in the
study population definitely still had livestock (some probably had large herds), but, as discussed in more
depth in the section on biases in this chapter, may have been very reluctant to disclose this information for a
number of reasons. Regardless, the firm belief in animal loss is ubiquitous and unshakeable among the study
population, and hence is accepted as the reality of the Karimojong experience for the purposes of this study
and discussion.

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violence, and the impacts of violence had indeed intensified since the 1980s were sufficient to convince this researcher that understanding the trends and patterns in this timeframe was indeed an area worthy of exploration. Put another way, in the absence of hard science, I prioritized and accepted the experiences and perceptions of the local population and chose to focus the research on their reality.

Choosing the exact type of violence for consideration posed less of a quandary. While many societies experience modes of violence along a broad continuum, the type of insecurity that sets much of the East African pastoral belt apart is the violence of cattle raiding. The extent of violence associated with cattle raiding (sometimes called cattle rustling) may vary across time and location, but raiding always entails the removal of property by force or, at the very minimum, by the threat of force. Thus while the violence may be implicit, the possibility of physical violence is always present. Early research for this study illustrated the pervasiveness of this violence in shaping the lives, livelihoods, and outlook of the study population. Other forms of violence—domestic, structural, political—were certainly relevant, but none had anywhere near the same depth or breadth of reach or influence on all aspects of the social, political and economic order. In addition and as shown through this study, many of these alternate forms of violence are ultimately related to or emerged from the violence of cattle raiding. This study recognizes that not every act of cattle raiding entails violence and that raiding is not synonymous with violence. As such, the phrases "violence associated with cattle raiding" or "raiding violence" are used whenever possible in recognition of this distinction.

A last point on the nature of violence under examination in this work: the violence associated with cattle raiding is of particular interest in the case of the Karimojong of southern Karamoja, as large-scale raids within the ethnic group were rare prior to the 1970s and 1980s. This allows for the exploration of a relatively recent phenomenon and a social and political transformation that has occurred over the course of one to two generations. As a result, many of the older respondents interviewed for this study had clear recollections of events related to the erosion of the Karimojong alliance, and younger respondents could discuss what they knew of the differences between their own lives and their parents' experiences.

Hypotheses Examined

The literature that seeks to explain increases in violence associated with raiding in African pastoral societies offers a variety of causal factors and drivers as to the reasons behind the intensification and expansion of violence that has occurred in many locations over the past half century. This dissertation examines the hypotheses offered in the literature that have the greatest resonance and relevance to violence as committed by male youth in southern Karamoja. The choice of hypotheses for consideration was based on several criteria: those that are regularly cited by academics and external observers with specific knowledge of Karamoja, those that are cited most widely in the overall literature on pastoral raiding, and those that were referenced most often by key informants and respondents themselves in the early phases of this research. This dissertation considers each of four main hypotheses that attempt to explain the increase in and intensification of raiding violence in recent years. Each chapter sets up a dialogue between a specific hypothesis and the field data from this study, and illustrates the ways

in which these arguments do or do not assist in understanding the violence that has occurred in the region.

The first hypothesis under consideration is widely cited in the literature as a causal factor of raids in pastoral and agro-pastoral societies: the quest of young men to acquire bridewealth fuels raids. This argument is so convincing and appeared to resonate so well in Karamoja that I initially believed this to be a tidy explanation for raiding violence in Karamoja. However, the field data on bridewealth and the marriage process for this study quickly disproved this hypothesis as one of *continuing* relevance for Karamoja, though this dissertation argues that the drive for bridewealth does effectively explain much of the violence throughout the 1980s and 1990s. Disproving this initial hypothesis led to an examination of three alternative hypotheses for male violence linked to raiding in Karamoja: i) the erosion of customary authority systems has contributed to violence on the part of disaffected young men, ii) the increased struggle over scarce natural resources results in violence which happens to be carried out by young men, and iii) the commercialization of raiding (committed by young men) fuels raiding violence. The presentation and analysis of the primary data in each chapter illustrates how a more nuanced and context-specific understanding of each of these four theories explains the increase in violence to varying degrees.

This dissertation finds that the four hypotheses presented here do not fully explain the increase in violence in southern Karamoja over the past three decades. Ultimately, the data and analysis for this study show that much of the unexplained aspects of violence in southern Karamoja (including the ways this violence has changed over time) can be found in the struggle for identity, acknowledgement, and respect on the part of male

youth. The discussion of the data in chapters two through five illustrates the ways in which broader socially recognized avenues for achieving manhood gradually closed down over time, and the ways in which young men sought to maintain individual and group identity in the face of these changes. Chapter six outlines this process in light of the literature on masculinity, and demonstrates the cyclical linkages between violence and the erosion of livelihood systems in the region. This final chapter shows how peer group identity became the most important factor in the lives of young Karimojong men, as well as a key causal factor in the violence. Even while this thesis demonstrates the process through which male peer group identity becomes paramount, it is critical to acknowledge that the process of seeking and forming identity is not static or consistent over time or place, and that many variations exist that are not captured in either the data or the analysis for this study.

The remainder of chapter one provides a historical overview of the region before turning to the literature review. The final portions of the chapter discuss the conceptual framework and the methods used for this study.

Karamoja in Context

Geography, Ecology and Livelihoods

'Karamojong' is the collective term often given to the approximately 1.2 million inhabitants of the seven-district region of Karamoja, an area of landmass of 10,550

square miles, slightly smaller than the country of Belgium.[6] In reality, the inhabitants of

Karamoja consist of multiple and distinct peoples and identities, with the majority falling

into three main ethnic groups, the Dodoth, Jie and Karimojong, with several smaller

minority groups who were likely the original inhabitants of the region (Knighton 2005).[7]

The region is part of the larger Karamoja Cluster, which covers parts of western Kenya,

southern Sudan, southern Ethiopia and northeastern Uganda. Most of these regions are

very arid, but Karamoja is better categorized as semi-arid, with an average annual

precipitation of 500-1000 millimeters. The wide fluctuations and variability in the

rainfall, however, make agriculture unsuitable as a subsistence livelihood (Ellis and Swift

1988; Markakis 2004; Otim 2002). Droughts are a regular event, with crop yields poor or

failing completely in approximately one out of every three years (Dyson-Hudson 1966).

A system of semi-nomadic animal husbandry emerged as the best suited livelihood

system in the region characterized by high rainfall variability and ecological uncertainty

(Gray, Leslie, and Akol 2002). Cattle are the preferred animal for most of the population

groups, with small ruminants supplementing cattle herds. Among the Karimojong, the

Matheniko are the only group to raise camels; this is a development in the past thirty or

so years and arose out of the close association and exchange between the Matheniko and

the camel-raising Turkana in Kenya. Much of the population of the Karamoja region

traditionally engaged in seasonal migration with their animals to mobile cattle camps

called *ngawiyoi* (singular, *awi)* or kraals, and wet season small-scale cultivation in their

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[6] As of December 2012 the districts consist of Kaabong, Kotido, Abim, Moroto, Napak, Nakapiripirit and Amudat. Napak and Amudat became districts following the completion of the data collection for this thesis. Interview references contain the name of the district at the time that the interview took place.
[7] This thesis follows Knighton's distinction between the people of Karamoja, popularly called the Karamojong, and the formally unified ethnic group the Karimojong (Pian, Matheniko, Bokora). Other scholars, including Mkutu, also adhere to these distinctions.

home *ngirerya* (singular, *ere*) or manyattas.[8] Today, few people in Karamoja practice a

strictly pastoral way of life; most engage in cultivation when and where possible and are

better described as agro-pastoral (Gray, Leslie, and Akol 2002). A high degree of

variation exists from one area to the next however, and a growing number of people have

turned almost entirely to agriculture, particularly in the more fertile western and southern

sections of the region. However, as with the neighboring Turkana and other pastoral

groups, livestock ownership—especially of cattle—remains a prime determinant of both

social and economic status (Broch-Due 1999; Markakis 2004). As such, livestock remain

central to the collective consciousness and identity, even for those who have diversified

their livelihood activities away from strict animal husbandry.

Gendered divisions of labor have always been important in Karamoja but, in contrast to

some of the earlier anthropological texts on pastoral areas, not absolute (Hodgson 1999).

As shown in Rada Dyson-Hudson's (1972) field research with the Karimojong in the late

1950s, the expected set of livelihood tasks along gender lines (i.e., women primarily

responsible for cultivation and men primarily responsible for animal husbandry) differs

by household demographic and season, with many men assisting the women in

agricultural activities. Dorothy Hodgson's (2000) more recent analysis of gendered roles

in pastoral societies shows much greater levels of differentiation by age and gender, but

with these aspects again not necessarily conforming to strict gender norms and

expectations. Research for this study showed a high degree of movement of both genders

between the manyattas and kraals, with women engaged in various tasks related to animal

husbandry (e.g., milking, watering, caring for the young animals) in both locations, and

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[8] This thesis uses the terms *manyatta* and *kraal* for the purpose of consistency and to minimize confusion. These are not Ngakaramojong terms but are in wide usage throughout the region and in the literature.

men often assisting in traditional female roles of agricultural production and, to a limited

degree, natural resource collection (mostly helping with charcoal production and carrying

building poles). Generational distinctions of roles and responsibilities are particularly

important for men, with younger able-bodied men taking primary responsibility for herd

care, maintenance, and security. The official leader of a given kraal is likely to be a more

senior man, but he may have delegated much of the day-to-day decision making and

management to younger men who stay for longer periods of time in the mobile camps

(Dyson-Hudson 1972).

Violence in the Pre-colonial & Colonial Eras

Violence is not new to Karamoja. The practice of cattle raiding has long been a part of

pastoral livelihoods systems in eastern Africa. Raids fulfilled important social, political

and economic functions within the pastoral system, as a Karimojong elder interviewed by

Mkutu explains:

> Raiding was not just a means of restocking, but it was also an ancient form of
> wealth redistribution among the Karimojong. It is a traditional and central form
> of restocking. Young warriors were compelled to accumulate cows in order to
> gain status. Their respect depended on the number of successful raids. (2008,
> 17)

Prior to the widespread availability of firearms, men fought with spears and bows and

arrows in carefully planned and orchestrated raids, the extent and intensity of which were

regulated by the elders (Dyson-Hudson 1966; Gulliver 1953). Casualties occurred but

were kept to a minimum through a ritualized fighting process that included advance

warning of the attack and prohibitions on harming women, children or the elderly (Mkutu

2008; Akabwai and Ateyo 2007; Lamphear 1998).

Traders from Khartoum, Ethiopia and Zanzibar first introduced firearms into the region in the second half of the 19th century in exchange for ivory, and guns gradually came to replace spears as a more lethal and effective weapon for hunting and raiding (Mirzeler and Young 2000). The British declared Uganda a Protectorate in 1894, encompassing the Kingdom of Buganda in the south-central portion of the country, but did not reach today's Karamoja region until 1898 (Barber 1968). The British soon encountered problems replicating their system of colonial administration in Karamoja, largely because it was difficult to compel a mobile and dispersed population to engage in organized labor, pay taxes, or grow cash crops. According to Mirzeler and Young, the British thus decided that "full occupation and control was not necessary; insulation of the area from the outside, restricting the gun trade, preventing raiding into the actively administered neighboring zones, and limiting conflict within the region to a manageable level sufficed" (2000, 412).

The main objective of the colonial state towards Karamoja was to halt the flow of weapons and the unregulated trade in ivory, which by 1907-08 accounted for 20% of the total value of national exports (Barber 1968, 60).[9] The relationship between guns and ivory was circuitous: the Karimojong had established 56 ivory markets by 1903, and received cash payments in exchange for ivory, which they then used to buy weapons and cattle (Mkutu 2008). Cattle could also be exchanged for arms.

By 1910 the Karimojong were exporting arms and ammunition to other parts of Uganda. The colonial authorities were worried by reports of unrest and the gathering strength of

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[9] As explained by Barber the unregulated killing of elephants with modern firearms decimated the once large herd completely between 1900 and 1910 (1968, 100). Those elephants that did survive fled into the remote northern mountain ranges.

tribal groups in the area, as evident in the words of the Provincial Commissioner of the

Northern Province:

> The matter is of the utmost importance as there is little doubt that in the near
> future a considerable force will be necessary to deal with the natives when they
> gain confidence in the use of their weapons, as the number of breech loaders in
> their possession, I am informed, already far exceeds, by some hundreds, those of
> our police and there is no doubt that more will come in, and the position becomes
> more dangerous every day, unless prompt measures are taken to deal with the
> situation at once. (Barber 1968, 109)

The British authorities placed Karamoja under skeletal military rule from 1911-1921, but

soon found that the system of appointed chiefs which was successful in Buganda did not

work in the seniority-based system of power within Karamoja. Eventually the colonial

powers largely washed their hands of the region: in 1921 a civil administration replaced

the military one, and the area "was declared a closed district, requiring a parsimoniously

issued permit to enter" (Mirzeler and Young 2000, 413).

The state did have success in curtailing the gun trade, and by the 1920s raiding was

reportedly taking place primarily with spears and was largely small-scale in nature

(Quam 1997; Mirzeler and Young 2000; Lamphear 1976). The colonial government

managed raids through a series of police-posts near to kraals and a system of communal

punishment for communities when individual perpetrators of raids could not be identified

(Mkutu 2008). This period of relative calm lasted for several decades, but the once

gradual flow of small arms began to pick up pace in the middle of the 20th century

(Barber 1968). By most accounts, years of relative peace in southern Karamoja ended in

the 1940s with intense fighting between the Karimojong and the Suk (known today as the

Pokot) and then with the Jie in the 1950s (Dyson-Hudson 1972). Clashes also increased

with the neighboring Turkana in the 1950s and 1960s (Quam 1997; Barber 1968). Raids

by the Karimojong against their traditional enemies—who were always outsiders—may

have been on the rise, but intratribal raiding on a large scale was both unknown and

prohibited, and small disputes were settled through the elder-controlled punitive and

compensatory systems (Gray 2000; Dyson-Hudson 1966).

Demise of Intratribal Relations

According to oral history, the early 1970s marked the first signs of the collapse of

relations among the previously unified Karimojong ethnic group into separate territorial

sections of the Bokora, Matheniko and Pian (Gray 2000).[10] In contrast to the oral

legends, Mkutu (2008) locates these problems in the early 1980s, positing that the

Karimojong were the first East African pastoralists to raid internally. Discrepancies

regarding the exact timing, location and reasons behind the disintegration of this alliance

illustrate its gradual process— the Matheniko, Pian and Bokora did not begin to attack

each other all at once; rather the tensions between sub-groups increased and violence

flared up in some areas while peace continued in others. Small-scale thefts that might

once have been forgiven became more common and revenge raids intensified, and the

killings of several prominent leaders dealt a serious blow to internal relations. Drought

and disease further increased social and economic tensions, including an outbreak of foot

and mouth disease in 1975 that left many communities with few cattle (Bevan 2008).

Adding even more upheaval, the 1971 coup d'etat by Idi Amin resulted in an influx of

soldiers into the district with the mandate to stop cattle raiding; they reportedly did so by

confiscating large numbers of animals which they then sold for their own benefit (Quam

1997).

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[10] The early 1970s as marking the start of this demise was repeated in this study's interviews with elders
across the Karimojong region, as well as with multiple key informants.

The 1970s witnessed a gradual increase in flare-ups challenging the uneasy stasis in the region, but a series of shocks beginning in 1979 brought the situation to a head. The fall of Idi Amin led to the disintegration of his army and abandonment of the well-stocked armory in Moroto town, which was quickly looted by the Matheniko.[11] Today "1979" is used in local parlance as shorthand for what was a watershed event and harbinger of chaos and collapse. Insecurity worsened and spread quickly in the aftermath of the armory raid, making cultivation, trade, and collection of wild fruits—a standard coping mechanism during lean periods—extremely difficult (Quam 1997). Herders moved their animals to remote areas to escape attack, thereby limiting access of the settled communities to milk and blood. Erratic rains dashed any hope of harvests in areas where cultivation had occurred. The stage was set for the devastating famine of 1980, in which infant mortality rose to an estimated 600:1000 live births (up from 169:1000 in 1969) and 50% of children under five years of age were estimated to have died (Alnwick 1985). Decimation of the livestock herds further undermined the base of the economy and exacerbated vulnerability (Biellik and Henderson 1981).

The combined repercussions of the armory attack in 1979 and the 1980-81 famine, coming on the heels of a decade of intratribal infighting, undermined the Karimojong alliance to a point from which it apparently could not recover. The now heavily-armed Matheniko turned on the Bokora, decimating the Bokora herds and forcing many to flee their homes and even the district (Gray 2000). According to Bokora and Pian elders, once the Bokora "were finished" the Matheniko moved on to the neighboring Pian and

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[11] Estimates of the number of weapons removed from the armory vary greatly from close to 10,000 to as high as 60,000 (Bevan 2008). More telling, perhaps, is the account of elders who remember the pillaging of the barracks as days of loaded donkeys, filing out until the place was empty (Akabwai and Ateyo 2007), and reports that the bundles of guns on donkeys looked like stacks of firewood (Quam 1996).

exacted a similar toll.[12] Although relations had been deteriorating throughout the 1970s,

some sources report that the early 1980s marked the first period of sustained and serious

battles within the ethnic group which broke the taboo on internal warfare (Mkutu 2008,

citing an interview with the late Father Bruno Novelli). It was around the same time that

raids began to result in more casualties and to target a wider range of victims; casualties

were no longer limited to the young men of fighting age but included the elderly, women

and children. Weapons of choice also became more sophisticated and raiders increased

in number (Mkutu 2007b). Political developments and general instability across the

country in the first half of the 1980s, however, meant that little focus was given to

internal violence or cross-border insecurity affecting the Karamoja region.

Relations with Neighboring Groups

The people of Karamoja had long relied on a system of mutual exchange with their

Langi, Acholi and Teso neighbors in north central Uganda for access to dry season

pasture and watering points. Karimojong herders usually returned to the same location in

the neighboring districts each year, building a social network of "stock associates" that

was often passed down from one generation to the next (Gulliver 1955).[13] These

relationships were built on "formal bonds of mutual friendship and assistance with non-

relatives to whom [a man] feels personally attracted and whom, for a variety of reasons,

he respects" (Dyson-Hudson 1966, 85). Parties on both sides of the district boundaries

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[12] Interviews with Pian, Bokora and Matheniko elders in multiple sites, May 2009.
[13] As explained by Gulliver, a man's stock associates "are all people who will help him and whom he helps in return. They provide, moreover, a cluster of relations peculiar to each man not wholly coincident with the field of close social relations of any other person, not even a full-brother….[W]ith each of these people a man maintains well-recognized, reciprocal rights to claim gifts of domestic animals in certain socially defined circumstances. Thus a particular kind of inter-personal relationship is consciously translated into the right to seek stock in times of need and the roughly corresponding obligation to give stock in times of others' need" (1955, 196). Stock associate relationships also exist within groups, e.g., a Pian man is likely to have Pian stock associates, as well as Bokora, Matheniko, Teso, etc.

benefitted from these relationships: the settled agrarians had access to fertilizer for their

fields, milk, and opportunities for trade, and the Karimojong herders enjoyed access to

pasture and water. The social interactions built over time were also important, allowing

for reciprocal borrowing of animal assets in times of hardship or need (such as for

marriage), a reliable source for the exchange of food items, a secure location for herds in

periods of raiding, and a temporary home for children (and labor for the host family)

during times of hardship in Karamoja (Ocan 1994).

The national political transition in the mid-1980s brought a period of extended upheaval

to north central Uganda and set the stage for the collapse of the important social and

economic relationships between the populations of Karamoja and the greater north. The

National Resistance Movement/Army (NRM/A) took power in Kampala in 1986 after a

five-year bush war and Yoweri Museveni was installed as president. A large portion of

the officer corps of the army of deposed president Milton Obote was made up of

northerners, and these troops fled north in large numbers, fearing retribution for their own

abuses[14] by the victorious NRA forces. Many of Obote's soldiers had crossed the border

into Sudan by the time the NRA forces arrived, and abuse and retribution was largely

enacted upon the civilian population, ultimately sowing the seeds for a series of

rebellions (Gersony 1997).

Prior to the mid-1980s, the rural economies of Teso, Lango and Acholiland were

relatively strong. Following the flight of Obote's troops for Sudan, however, the northern

region was left largely unprotected while the NRA worked to consolidate power in the

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[14] The best known example of abuses by troops dominated by northerners was in the Luwero triangle, in
which an estimated 100,000 to 300,000 civilians were killed between 1983 and 1986. (Ofcansky 1996)

south and central regions of the country (Mirzeler and Young 2000). Raiders from across

Karamoja were quick to take advantage of the power vacuum, and repeatedly plundered

the neighboring districts throughout the latter half of the 1980s. The combined cattle

holdings in Lango and Acholi fell from an estimate of 685,000 heads in the early 1980s

to 72,000 heads by 1989, and similar losses were experienced in Teso (Ocan 1992).[15]

The violence and looting of assets by raiders from Karamoja over this period did

irreparable damage to the relations between the populations of the two regions, and set in

motion a process that would ultimately cut much of Karamoja off both from important

dry season grazing lands and from social networks that allowed for consumption

smoothing and vulnerability management.

The influx of raided cattle from the neighboring territories brought other more immediate

problems for the population of Karamoja. Many of the animals brought in from outside

the region had no immunity to the tick-borne diseases in Karamoja and brought with

them diseases to which the local herds were highly susceptible. Although livestock

figures for this period in Karamoja are unreliable due to insecurity and associated

problems with census-taking, the shifts in estimated populations indicate a clear trend

regardless of exact accuracy. The 1980s saw an increase in cattle in Karamoja by an

estimated 692,000 heads, while in the same time period the *overall* numbers in the

combined regions of northern, eastern and northeastern Uganda fell by approximately

356,000 heads (Ocan 1992). In other words, while animals moved into Karamoja in

large numbers, they also died off at a rapid rate. This was due to both the spread of the

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[15] Ocan's figures for the cattle population in the mid-1980s are from the Ministry of Animal Industry, whereas the 1989 figures are from district veterinary officers. Gersony (1997) puts the number of cattle in Acholi by the mid 1990s, although this by this point the ravages of the war with the Lord's Resistance Army and forced displacement by the Ugandan government were also negatively affecting herd size.

diseases and the collapse of the system of veterinary dips and crushes that had been

established in the colonial era, due to prolonged insecurity and upheaval.[16]

By 1990 the people of Karamoja had alienated their neighbors, undermining their own

transhumance patterns and introducing new animal diseases into their herds in the

process. Violence within Karamoja reportedly abated slightly during the period of

external pillage, but the effective closure of the borders due to the prolonged raiding

shifted tensions and raids back within the region, leading to a decade of previously

unsurpassed internal violence (Gray 2000). Decreased mobility, both across district and

national borders and within Karamoja, had profound impacts on pastoral livelihood

strategies that depending on seasonal transhumance to access pasture and water and

ensure the health of herds. Policies enacted under the colonial order had limited

mobility—including the creation of a series of parks and reserves in which grazing was

prohibited, the transfer of 2000 square miles of prime grazing territory to Kenya, the

relocation of Pokot from western Kenyan onto traditional Karimojong grazing lands, and

the creation of county borders based purely on the settled manyattas of each group,

without taking into account grazing lands (Alnwick 1985; Ocan 1994)—and the areas

that remained open for dry season access began to shrink as a factor of growing

insecurity throughout the 1980s. Karimojong herds were soon no longer welcome in

neighboring districts, and police units were stationed along the borders to limit migration.

Insecurity among all groups within Karamoja increased and turned many areas of once-

shared water and pasture into dangerous no-go areas. While these broader patterns of

livelihood pressures, raiding, disease, and collapse of external relations affected most of

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[16] Key informants No. 1, 3 and 4, Moroto town, July 11, 2008.

the population groups in the region, it was only among the Karimojong that sustained in-fighting persisted.

State Policies: The Preponderance of Disarmament

In short, national policies towards Karamoja in the colonial and post-colonial periods are best characterized as aiming to minimize negative spill-over effects on surrounding areas considered to be more stable or politically relevant. Along with efforts to prevent cross-border migration, the most consistent of these policies has been disarmament. Efforts to limit armed violence in the colonial period began in 1911 when the Northern Patrol of the King's African Rifles (KAR) reached the western edge of Karamoja with a mandate of "pacifying the tribes which were found to have rifles or offered resistance" (Barber 1968, 112). Colonial responses to violence normally took the form of collective punitive campaigns and the seizure of cattle (Eaton 2010a; Barber 1968), but these waned after 1921 when the area was declared a closed district. The flow of small arms and incidents of violence had again increased to a level that the colonial government could not control by the 1940s, and disarmament campaigns were implemented in 1945, 1953, 1954 and 1960 by the colonial state, and by the post-colonial authorities in 1964, 1984, 1987, 2001 and 2006 (Bevan 2008).

The disarmament exercises of the 1980s came after a 20 year hiatus and still resonate widely with the local population; these campaigns saw the use of helicopter gunships and the destruction of trading centers and cattle markets in 1984-85 (Gray et al. 2003). The razing of the town of Kangole in present-day Napak District is particularly memorable

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for the Karimojong.[17] The 1987 disarmament, the first under President Museveni, was

remembered for its brutality and the "three-piece" technique is still discussed (and widely

reported as being in use) today, in which people who refused to disarm were hung from

poles by their knees and elbows in the manner of killed wild game (Gray et al. 2003).

The repeated disarmament campaigns throughout the twentieth century were effective in

terrorizing the local populations and instilling mistrust towards the military and

institutions of the state (Gray 2000), but did little to decrease the overall levels of

violence in the region, as people sought to rearm quickly following each disarmament

(Bevan 2008). The work of Mkutu (2007b, 2008) and the research by Akabwai and

Ateyo (2007) illustrates that the ready availability of weapons in the extended region

provides easy access to small arms through multiple sources. As evident in the need for

repeated disarmaments, these initiatives were clearly unable to curtail (or even address)

the vibrancy of the weapons market. Bevan (2008), however, points out that the central

problem with the repeated efforts was the focus on the symptom of insecurity—i.e., the

prevalence of guns—as opposed to the causes, including lack of state protection, absence

of rule of law, few sources of cash-based livelihoods in an increasingly monetized

market, and a history and culture of self-reliance for the protection of people and

property.

Recent and Continuing Disarmament Campaigns

The disarmament campaigns since 2000 merit more in-depth discussion due to the ways

in which these exercises have influenced the social and political landscape of the past

decade as well as impacts upon the research for this study.

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[17] Key informant no. 7, Moroto town, April 3, 2009.

The 2001-2002 disarmament was a short and uneven campaign that left many

communities which had voluntarily or otherwise been disarmed vulnerable to attack by

those who still had weapons in their possession. In March 2002 the UPDF abruptly

scaled back the campaign after only three months when two brigades of regular troops

were transferred to north central Uganda as part of Operation Iron Fist against the Lord's

Resistance Army (LRA), leaving only local defense units (LDUs) behind (Bevan 2008).

Revenge raiding and attacks resumed rapidly and those groups and communities which

had already been disarmed bore the brunt of these assaults (Office of the Prime Minister

2007).

The next (and continuing) disarmament campaign began in earnest in 2006 and involved

greater stakeholder consultation and planning—a reaction in large part to the outcry on

the part of international stakeholders in Uganda and some national actors regarding the

repercussions from 2001. The consultation and planning process resulted in the

Karamoja Integrated Disarmament and Development Programme (KIDDP), a policy

document that was several years in the making due to extensive inputs and adjustments

requested by its national and international contributors,[18] the latter of which included

DANIDA, UNDP, UNICEF, WFP and WHO (Office of the Prime Minister 2007).

The KIDDP was meant to be the blueprint for development in Karamoja region and to

illustrate the combined benefits of an integrated development and disarmament program.

International donors and organizations were expected to demonstrate the adherence of

their programs to the KIDDP. One problem with this supposed combined approach,

however, was that the disarmament portion of the program started in early 2006, nearly

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[18] Personal conversations with officials from UNICEF, WFP, and OCHA, December 2006, March 2007 and
July 2008.

18 months before the last version of the KIDDP was released and the development program agreed upon. In addition, while the government was funding the disarmament component from its military coffers, the development needs were expected to be met largely through the largesse of international donors.

The 2006 disarmament campaign was quickly beset with condemnation for widespread human rights abuses (Human Rights Watch 2007). This disarmament campaign has continued to the time of writing, with mixed results but wide impacts, as illustrated throughout this dissertation. Security has certainly improved in many areas, but these improvements have not benefitted all sectors of the population evenly and have not occurred in a consistent or predictable pattern; security for some communities has clearly worsened since the onset of disarmament. Reports of abuses committed by the security forces by and large decreased over the course of the research and up until the present day, although the research team was told of numerous abuses and came upon military exercises (and witnessed abuses) with regularity. As illustrated throughout this dissertation, a number of externalities associated with the disarmament campaign have had widespread impacts on livelihood systems and experiences of security.

The discussion of disarmament is relevant to this dissertation for several key reasons. First, the field research for this work started shortly after the 2006 disarmament and corresponded with the ramping up of military activities in many of the study areas. Disarmament continued throughout the course of the research and often had a direct impact on field work, at times restricting travel in locations where operations were underway and at other times causing distrust and increased problems with access due to communities' wariness of outsiders.

Second, the experience and threat of disarmament were never far from the minds of respondents, and these topics were raised repeatedly and without being solicited in location after location. The research team returned to the same locations on multiple trips and thus observed and were informed of changes that had taken place in the intervening period due to disarmament (such as the loss of herds and the traditional kraal system and the decrease in visibility of weapons on display).

Third, this study set out to understand the experience and perceptions of violence on the part of young men. The external shock of disarmament was, as perceived by the communities, one of violence committed by the state and aimed primarily at young men and, as such, overlaps directly with the themes under examination. In addition, this state-sanctioned use of force has clearly—whether temporarily or permanently, which remains to be seen—influenced the violence in the region which is committed by young men. Thus even though this study in no way set out to investigate disarmament per se, the overlap between the focus of this dissertation and the impacts and reality of disarmament made this topic impossible to avoid. Disarmament has therefore become a cross-cutting theme evident throughout the analysis and discussion for this work.

Lastly, as illustrated in the chapters that follow, the impact of disarmament resonates in the consideration of the applicability of each of the theories in this thesis to the present day. It is, of course, impossible to predict what will happen in two or five or fifteen years: will the ultimate result of this disarmament campaign, like those that have come before, be a period of increased weapons flow into the region, rapid re-arming, and a sharp increase in violence as communities seek to replenish herds and assets lost in the

disarmament years? Or will the purported commitment of the government to build

stability in Karamoja mean that the military remains a permanent presence in the region?

This dissertation does not make predications as to the ultimate impacts of disarmament,

and such impacts were impossible to examine in the field with any reliability due to the

covert nature of disarmament activities and the dynamic and highly variable impacts of

disarmament across both time and location.[19] Each chapter in this thesis includes a

discussion of the related and specific impacts of disarmament as related to the topic and

theories under review, and the final chapter revisits the role of disarmament in the

theoretical contributions of this work.

Literature Review

Various theories exist as to the drivers and underlying factors of violence in pastoral

areas in eastern Africa. Much less has been written specifically about Karamoja, due in

large part to the lack of access caused by this very insecurity and a resulting dearth of

both academic studies and gray literature over the past thirty years (Knighton 2003).

This dissertation therefore examines the broader theories that are most relevant in the

context of southern Karamoja, and uses the study data to expand upon, reject, confirm,

clarify or add nuance to those theories that go the furthest in explaining the trajectory of

violence in Karamoja since the early 1980s. The literature review briefly describes the

main arguments and provides the necessary context to understand these theories as

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[19] The difficulty in study disarmament at the time of the fieldwork was compounded by the sequential overlap
of the research visits and disarmament activities. This meant that there was little consistency from month to
month, let alone one field visit to another. At the time of writing, the frequency of disarmament activities has
waned and there is greater stability in the region, and hence a study undertaken at this time might be able to
more effectively examine the longer term impacts of disarmament.

discussed in the remainder of this work. Additional discussion of key pieces of literature

that apply specifically to the Karimojong can be found in each chapter.

Marriage, Bridewealth and Violence

There is extensive literature on marriage and the role of bridewealth in subsistence and

pastoral systems in Africa, most of it anthropological in nature. The debate covers

considerations of bridewealth as a primarily social or economic transfer (Gray 1960;

Singer 1973; Goldschmidt 1974; Laughlin 1974; Turton 1980), as one embedded in

cultural systems of meaning (Comaroff 1980), as a system that transfers rights in women

between men versus one that ensures certain rights for women (Boserup 1970), as a

means of securing productive and reproductive capacity or economic subordination

(Huntington 1975; Goody 1973; Radcliffe-Brown 1950), and as a means of maintaining

class systems (Håkansson 1990a; Dyson-Hudson, Meekers, and Dyson-Hudson 1998).

The literature also discusses factors causing shifts in the average levels of bridewealth

payments over time, including economic hardship, drought and animal disease, and

colonial and post-colonial limits on cattle ownership (Kuper 1982; Fleisher 2000b).

Borgerhoff Mulder (1995) states that while bridewealth as a transfer has shown resilience

in East Africa, the average size of payment increased throughout the colonial period and

into early independence but has declined in recent decades. Using the case of the

Kipsigis in Kenya as an example, she posits that this decline is due to several factors,

including the increase in problem marriages, such as when the bride is already pregnant

or has produced a child, a rise in the ratio of eligible women to men, and a decline in the

ability of men to pay.

In line with the scholarship of Meekers and others on marriage in Africa, this study is interested in both the process and institution of marriage within Karimojong society and how these aspects have changed over time as a function of violence. As Meekers (1992) explains based on data from Cote d'Ivoire, the process of marriage advances through multiple stages and it can be difficult to identify the exact start of a union; the onset of sexual relations is thus often used as a proxy for the start of the marriage process. These stages have their own sets of meaning and expectations which vary depending on context, involved parties and economic and social conditions. The institution of marriage is often more static than the set of processes that determine matrimony, but, as shown in this study, profound social changes, even over a relatively short time span, can impact marriage as an institution. The payment (or lack of payment) of bridewealth itself may be a part of the marriage process, but systemic changes in bridewealth payments ultimately affect the institution of marriage. This study references several specific markers in the Karimojong marriage process, such as the payment of *ekicul* by the man to the woman's family at the time of each pregnancy prior to cohabitation, and the *akirop* or surety price, traditionally given to the woman's family as a sort of down payment on the bridewealth.

Turning to how marriage changes, Bledsoe examines change within social systems, and points out that social institutions, including marriage, have two components, ideal formal rules and behavioral reality, and that there are almost always differences between social rules and the way people behave. People may manipulate or adjust the presentation of their own marital status for political, social and economic purposes; these acts ultimately "create and change institutions such as marriage" (1980, 47). She argues that in order to understand the meaning of marriage and other social institutions we must pay adequate

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attention not only to the idealized concept and associated formal rules, but also to the lived reality of these institutions within their particular context. As demonstrated in this dissertation, the lived reality of marriage as an institution sometimes changes more rapidly than the social views regarding this institution, particularly from the perspectives of older or more conservative members of society.

Bridewealth in much of eastern and southern African entails the transfer of cattle from the groom (often with contributions from his friends and family) to the parents, extended family and clansmen of the bride (Kuper 1982; Anderson 2007). As such, men need cattle (or the equivalent for those unable to access cattle, those living in urban areas, etc) in order to officially marry and thereby secure rights to a woman, her children, and her reproductive and productive capacities. Bridewealth can be accrued through any number of means; this study is primarily interested in violence as one such avenue for acquisition. Bridewealth levels in patrilineal pastoral societies are often higher than in matrilineal cultures and those that place less social and economic emphasis upon cattle (Goody 1973; Bossen 1988). The literature on marriage in pastoral societies emphasizes the extended nature of the process of marriage and includes discussion of fluctuations in bridewealth levels over time due to a variety of external and local factors. In her study of changing levels of bridewealth among the Kipsigis people of Kenya (who were agro-pastoralist prior to forced sedentarization under colonial rule), Borgerhoff Mulder (1995) shows how external variables influence bridewealth levels: women's labor was increasingly important following the introduction of maize as a cash crop and thus the levels of bridewealth needed to acquire a wife increased in the mid and late colonial periods. Bridewealth levels had declined somewhat prior to her field research in the late 1980s and early 1990s, largely due to a decline in the availability of agricultural land and a drop

in maize prices. Fleisher (2000b) shows that the bovine epidemics in the late 1890s

brought Kuria bridewealth levels down from 10-15 heads of cattle to a mere one or two,

sometimes with grains offered in lieu of animals. Kuria bridewealth levels rebounded

quickly in the early 1900s, a trend which is ascribed variously in the historical record to

both internal and external factors, including basic supply and demand as herd sizes

rapidly recovered, the availability of women of marriageable age, and efforts by older

males to control younger men by demanding high levels of bridewealth. Gulliver (1955)

and Turton (1980) also found that bridewealth levels were affected by internal factors in

the Jie and Mursi pastoral societies respectively, where the amount of bridewealth

charged was in line with a man's relative wealth—viz., a wealthy man was expected to

pay more than a poor one. Eaton (2010b) similarly shows that bridewealth levels could

differ greatly within the same region based on localized and seasonal conditions and

income levels. The data for this study similarly demonstrate how relative and absolute

poverty combined with social expectations and norms affect bridewealth and hence the

larger marriage process.

Historically within Karamoja, the extended timeframe of the marriage process allowed

for gradual acquisition of animals required for bridewealth. As Gulliver (1953) explains

in his study of Jie marriage from the 1950s, the process of marriage for a man began

when courtship progressed to the establishment of a liaison, but the man had to then turn

to his relatives and associates to ascertain whether he would be able to obtain the

requisite amount of cattle to cement the union. The marriage process was only fully

completed over five or more years, after at least two children had been born and survived

to the age of walking and the woman and children had been living in the man's

homestead for a year. A last ritual ox would be slain and the woman and children

became official members of the man's clan. At the time of Gulliver's research, the extended process of marriage was an important social process that involved the gradual building and strengthening of ties between the two families. In addition, the prolonged timeframe allowed the man to acquire the animals needed for bridewealth from a variety of sources.

In comparison to the extensive academic literature on marriage and marital relations in various societies, there is less scholarship dedicated specifically to the role of bridewealth as a factor of violence in pastoral areas. The studies and media reports that touch upon this topic often state this correlation as an obvious fact, as Eaton points out: "The main explanation put forth for young men's participation in cattle raids is their desire to accumulate bride-price" (2010b, 51). However, various sources based on in-depth field research also confirm this relationship: Mkutu states that raiding has been "a mode of demonstrating the courage of new warriors and acquiring bride wealth" among pastoral groups in the Horn of Africa (2008, 13). Bollig (1990), in his study of Pokot-Turkana raiding, finds that the desire to marry is a major driver of raids, especially for younger sons. Cheserek et al. (2012) conducted a largely quantitative analysis on the causes of raiding among the Pokot and Marakwet communities in Kenya and found that although a number of factors contributed to raids (including the availability of weapons, commercialization, political incitement, poverty and illiteracy), rising bridewealth levels did correlate with an increase in violent raids. Furthermore, they found an important difference between the two groups: the Pokot must pay bridewealth all at once, while the Marakwet can make gradual payments over an extended period. "This factor alone is responsible for the high turnout of raids conducted by Pokot men" (2012, 176). Consensus exists among the evidence-based sources that a) stolen cattle can and often are

used for bridewealth, b) cattle are sometimes stolen explicitly for the purposes of paying

bridewealth, and c) cattle have been raided for bridewealth purposes for centuries.

Specifics of these aspects as they relate to the Karimojong are discussed in chapter two.

In his extensive work on cattle raiding among the Kuria in the Tanzania-Kenya border

area, Fleisher discusses the link between raiding and marriage, "the former the means by

which a young man acquires the bridewealth cattle he needs to marry, the latter the means

by which he acquires the daughters who will one day bring bridewealth cattle into their

father's homestead when they marry" (2000b, 39). Fleisher and Holloway (2004)

provide careful analysis of the factors that lead young men to engage in raiding in this

region, and find that the need to acquire bridewealth is often the primary motivating

factor, particularly for men who lack sisters to bring cattle into the family through their

own marriages. Colonial authorities in both Kenya and Tanganyika saw a direct

correlation between bridewealth and raiding and hence sought to limit bridewealth

starting in the 1920s; punishments for those who failed to adhere to these limits included

fines, jail sentences, and confiscation of cattle in excess of the legal amount. By and

large, however these efforts failed due to various means among the pastoral groups of

circumventing these regulations, and bridewealth levels—and presumably the raids to

acquire the cattle—continued unabated (Fleisher 2000b).

The secondary literature that deals specifically with raiding for bridewealth among the

Karimojong is sparse. Neville Dyson-Hudson's (1966) account of Karimojong politics

(based on fieldwork from the 1950s) does not mention bridewealth as a motivating factor

in raids. This is most likely because raids in this period were directed by the elders for

the benefit of the community as opposed to individual gain; this dissertation details the

transformation of this process from the communal to individual level. Father Bruno

Novelli (1999) extensively documented Karimojong rites and traditions during his years

as a Catholic missionary in Moroto in the 1970s and 1980s. He states that cattle for

bridewealth were assembled from a number of sources, which could include raids against

neighboring groups. Raiding for bridewealth was reportedly most common when a man

feared losing a prospective wife to another suitor. Thus those who raided for bridewealth

were most often poorer men who found themselves unable to continue making payments

after the exchange of the first portion of bridewealth. Based on more recent fieldwork,

Gray (2000) explains that due to the increased and widespread availability of guns after

1979 and their use in Karimojong cattle raids, bridewealth that once took years to

accumulate can now be obtained in a single successful raid. Mkutu agrees: "In the past

when pastoral societies were more prosperous, parents would provide the cattle for their

sons to marry, but now young men need to arm themselves and raid" (2007b, 62).

Not all authors, however, support the existence of a direct link between bridewealth and

cattle raiding. Eaton finds it "difficult to accept that high bride-price is a direct cause of

cattle raiding" in the Uganda-Kenya border area due to the range of sources from which a

man accrues cattle to use as bridewealth payments and the extremely flexible nature of

bridewealth amounts and payment plans (2010b, 53). He points out that the prominence

of the bridewealth-raiding argument may have political origins, as the Kenyan

government under President Moi used the guise of traditional cattle raiding (allegedly

driven by men's desire for bridewealth) to fuel criminal violence that was encouraged by

the government. Unlikely many sources that view this relationship at more of a structural

or system-wide level, Eaton reminds us to focus on individual motivations and causal

aspects, stating, "The fact that bride-price is higher than a young man can afford alone

does not necessarily make him increasingly prone to violence" (ibid., 54). This

dissertation does find merit in the argument that the quest for bridewealth has contributed

to violent raiding, but posits that this correlation does not exist in a vacuum but is rather a

factor of other social, political and temporal processes, including the stagnation of

traditional rites of passage for young men. Furthermore, while efforts to acquire

bridewealth may have contributed to violence in previous decades, this thesis argues that

the changing nature of marriage has greatly diminished the significance of this

relationship in recent years.

Authority, Age-Set Systems and Violence

The literature on generation and age-set systems in Africa is largely ethnographic in

nature. Among pastoral groups in East Africa there are two categories of seniority-based

male hierarchical systems, those based on a genealogical principle and those based on

relative age (Almagor 1983). Those organized according to relative age, such as the

Gada system of the Oromo, usually have multiple age-sets in pairs of rotating power

(Legesse 1973). In contrast, systems following a genealogical principle have a limited

number of sets—the senior set of the fathers and the junior set of their sons—which bind

generations of men in a long alternating chain. Unlike systems based on relative age,

those of the genealogical principle do not allow space for new generations until the senior

set has resigned from power (Almagor 1983). The seniority-based authority system

among the Karimojong is of the genealogical variety, meaning that only two recognized

age-sets exist at any one time. Since the late 1950s these two sets have consisted of the

elder *Ngimoru* (Mountains) and the junior *Ngigete* (Gazelles).

Almagor (1983) posits that a critical difference between the two organizing principles of age-sets is the way in which men can realize their rights. He uses the relative age example of the Dassanetch of southwestern Ethiopia, who are organized into six named sets in three senior/junior pairs, with power rotating through the senior sets. Males fall into sets based on their relative age, but because there are a larger number of sets, the social development of men is able to proceed without strict adherence to a dual senior-junior hierarchy. A Dassanetch male can advance through the major milestones of his life separate from the generation set system; this is not true for those groups bound into the two-set genealogical systems such as the Karimojong. Because only two sets of recognized adult men can exist simultaneously, any young men who are not within a generation-set—i.e., their fathers are in the junior set—cannot advance through many of the rites of passage that signify adulthood. (Chapter three discusses the intricacies and obstacles of the Karimojong generation-set system in depth.)

Not surprisingly, this age-based dichotomy sets the stage for generational tensions, which seem likely to be particularly pronounced within the more limited systems whereby only two generation sets are permitted. Various authors write about the tensions between males as an inherent component of gerontocratic authority systems. In reference to southeastern Sudan, Simonse (1992) argues that intergenerational rivalries – and, in particular, the failure of one generation to hand off power to another – help to drive violent conflict. Lamphear (1998) points out that while the generation-set system allows older men to exercise their authority over youth through control of livestock (and hence women and wealth), these same youth are given a highly militarized role and are tasked with providing security for their communities. In this role they are expected to build brotherly solidarity while also maintaining deference to the will of their elders, a dilemma

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that Lamphear calls akin to "setting the fox to guard the henhouse" (1998, 81). As

Lamphear describes, this

> period of warriorhood in many pastoral and semi-pastoral societies was imbued
> with an extreme sense of assertive masculinity which was derived partly from the
> rugged, mobile existence of the herder. The constant protection of livestock
> produced hardy individuals well-skilled in the use of weapons. From the
> frequent slaughter of large, powerful animals was derived the art of efficient
> killing, the ability to deal a single decisive blow. Other elements of this assertive
> masculinity certainly stemmed from the tensions and frustrations of young men
> being dominated and controlled by their seniors. (ibid., 85-86)

Spencer posits that the control over cattle and marriage exerted by the elders instills

discipline into the ranks of young men and keeps them "queued" in a "state of social

suspension" (1976, 156). Based on his research with the Samburu of Kenya, Spencer

finds that the young male warriors (*moran*) engage in "deviant activities" that are best

described as

> a form of gang warfare, in which the *moran* of each clan develop their own songs
> and reputation for stock theft, and guard their own unmarried girls against the
> advances of *moran* from other clans. Once the *moran* of each successive age-set
> have become identified as delinquents, each new episode is regarded as further
> proof that they are essentially juvenile with no sense of respect, and that they are
> still remote from elderhood and should remain excluded from the company of
> elders. (ibid.)

This study builds on the ideas of Lamphear and Spencer regarding the internal

connections and group reputation of young men, but goes on to illustrate that, in the case

of Karimojong youth, this solidarity and the associated assertive masculinity become

more a more important social force for young men than queuing within the ranks of

authority.

The anthropological examples above are equally relevant to the gerontocratic system

among the Karimojong, as illustrated by Neville Dyson-Hudson:

> [T]here exists in society a number of men whose maturity and physical adulthood
> cannot socially be recognized by initiation, because their fathers occupy the

junior generation-set. As the number of such socially disabled men increases, it becomes impossible for a significant proportion of the population to lead a full social life without contravening the values that the social life itself expresses. (1966, 188)

In this case, youth cannot become adults because the larger authority system has not yet yielded to another cycle of power through a succession ceremony. Dyson-Hudson's fieldwork in the late 1950s coincided with the handover of power to the *Ngimoru* and the opening of the *Ngigete* generation-set for new initiates (the sons of the *Ngimoru*). As discussed at length in chapter three, his research shows clearly that a generation was expected to be in power for 25-30 years before the next succession. Although succession had been occurring at regular intervals in living and recorded memory, Dyson-Hudson stresses that the succession process represents "radical change" and that such changes "do not come unrequested and unopposed" (ibid., 187). Members of the junior generation-set are fully expected to engage in acts to pressure the seniors to hand over power when the expected time drew near. These acts could include violent conflict, and Ben Knighton (2005) characterizes the increase in violent activity on the part of the youth when succession is deemed due as a regular and perhaps even necessary process. Dyson-Hudson's analysis of this power struggle is more illustrative of the situation today than he could have possibly imagined:

Age rests on authority rather than on simple power; its success depends on a predisposition to obedience at least among the majority of those commanded. Without this predisposition, there is no sanction of physical force at all, for the aged cannot compel the youth in terms of force, except by the force of the youth themselves. (1966, 188)

This study posits that there no longer exists a majority of young men willing to be commanded by the very few *Ngimoru* elders left alive and that, furthermore, many of the youth are questioning the continued relevance of the gerontocratic authority system. The ranks of the uninitiated and those unlikely ever to be initiated have swelled to the point

that there is little collective or individual reason to adhere to a principle of obedience or, to reference Spencer, to wait in a queue that no longer extends to its promised destination. As this study will illustrate, these shifts in the political and social order have up-ended the political and social system upon which authority is based, and has left young men in search of a new identity and form of status with greater social resonance. The collapse of customary authority is often cited as a factor in violence in Karamoja today, with the basic premise being that the elders have lost the ability to control their youth. Eaton (2010b) is critical of the argument that conflict between generations of men in the Kenya-Uganda pastoral region is a new development or a viable explanation for today's conflict. In line with the older anthropological sources cited above, he posits that age relations among men within gerontocratic authority systems have always been tense, and gives the pre-colonial example (as replicated in oral history) in which the Jie split off from their Karimojong elders as a band of disaffected youth. He argues that problems in relationships among the generations should not, therefore, be seen as indicative of dramatic changes or isolated social transformations illustrating the collapse of traditional authority, but rather as a constant across history. The secondary literature on Karamoja and age-set systems more generally certainly support Eaton's claim that generational tensions have existed for centuries. The data for this study show, however, that the tensions existing among Karimojong males today are unique due to the presence of *multiple* generations of men who are disaffected and cut off from authority and the likelihood of ever realizing a position of power within the customary systems. The processes of building assertive masculinity and internal social bonds have become paramount for these groups, and these processes have contributed to the violent upheaval in the region.

Natural Resources and Conflict

The scarcity argument is one of the most widely accepted arguments as to the causes of violence in a range of contexts, with some authors positing that "resource-wars" are a major new form of conflict (Homer-Dixon 1999; Cilliers 2000; Le Billon 2000). Although normally associated with the greed theory of violence (as groups seek to grab resources they perceive to be in short supply) (Collier 2001), Porto (2002) points out that the struggle over resources also fuels grievances, and Young (2009b) shows that limitations on access to natural resources as part of livelihood strategies can lead to grievances. When applied to populations with livelihood strategies that entail heavy reliance on natural resources, the scarcity argument points to a high likelihood of violent conflict in periods, locations or situations when these resources are in short supply. This offers a convincing explanation as to much of the conflict in pastoral and agro-pastoral regions, including Karamoja, with a presumed likelihood that conflict and violence will increase as a factor of climatic shocks, population growth, and limitations on mobility, all of which have occurred in Karamoja over the past three decades. Sandra Gray describes this pattern in Karamoja:

> Competition for resources, raiding, and the disappearance, absorption, or emergence of distinct pastoralist geopolitical entities tended to be clustered into periods of extreme environmental stress, when both intratribal and intertribal tensions escalated. (2000, 404)

In recent years, however, a growing number of authors have begun to reconsider the strengths of the linkages between resource scarcity and conflict in pastoral areas. This section of the literature review examines some of the themes in this debate.

Most of the literature on resource scarcity and conflict has progressed from a pure Malthusian model whereby population growth is automatically assumed to lead to

conflict and chaos. Today, the literature that endorses the scarcity-conflict link generally

supports the notion that resource scarcity is normally one of many factors that may act as

a catalyst precipitating or exacerbating conflict. In addition, resource scarcity alone is

not assumed to be a driver of conflict; rather, there must be competition over these

natural resources, normally among or between groups already entangled in relations

marked by tension or hostility, as well as state weakness and the inability of the labor

market to absorb young people. In addition, the type of natural resources in question has

important implications for both the likelihood and type of conflict. For example, while in

pastoral production systems the most important natural resources are likely to be those

required for successful animal husbandry (i.e., water, rangeland, migratory routes), the

presence of other resources such as oil, natural gas, gold and other minerals may

substantially alter the competition-conflict dynamic. Capturing or securing access to the

resources may be the main objective of the conflict that emerges in both instances, but in

the first instance these strategies are more likely to be linked to survival as opposed to –

as with the latter example—efforts motivated by greed or economic gain (Leroy 2009).

Many authors point out that conflict over resources is by no means guaranteed even when

competition and other contributing factors exist. Such conflict is most often associated

with structural factors such as inadequate systems for development and land

management, restrictions on mobility, habitation or use and poor governance (Pavanello

2009). Sociopolitical pressures such as poverty, ethnic or inter-group tensions, and

marginalization of a given group or geographic region also contribute to resource-related

conflict. Resource scarcity can also be used as a political tool to ignite or contribute to

civil strife (Uvin 1996). Struggles over land access, particularly in countries with high

population growth rates and limited agricultural land (such as Rwanda) and between

pastoral and agrarian populations are seen as particularly likely to lead to conflicts driven

by resource scarcity.

Homer-Dixon (1991) has made a substantial contribution to the literature on the linkages

between resource scarcity and violent conflict in developing countries. In short, he

argues that environmental and ecological pressures contribute to a range of factors with

social implications, including decreased agricultural production, economic decline,

population displacement and the rupture of regular social relationships. These factors, in

turn, are likely to contribute to both internal and international conflict. However,

although often cited as a supporter of the resource-scarcity argument, Homer-Dixon is

careful to illustrate that conflicts that appear to be driven primarily by competition over

resources normally have more complex causal factors, including national policies that

marginalize certain groups (in reference to the 1969 skirmish between Honduras and El

Salvador) and social and economic trends that lead to landlessness, displacement and loss

of livelihoods (in the Philippines). That said, he argues that

> environmental scarcities are already contributing to violent conflicts in many
> parts of the developing world. These conflicts are probably the early signs of an
> upsurge of violence in the coming decades that will be induced or aggravated by
> scarcity. The violence will usually be sub-national, persistent, and diffuse. Poor
> societies will be particularly affected since they are less able to buffer themselves
> from environmental scarcities and the social crises they cause. These societies
> are, in fact, already suffering acute hardship from shortages of water, forests, and
> especially fertile land. (1994, 6)

The arid and semi-arid pastoral and agro-pastoral regions of eastern Africa have many of

the characteristics listed by Homer-Dixon as likely to contribute to conflict which is

induced or aggravated by resource scarcity. The conventional wisdom is that the growth

of both human and animal populations in these regions over the past fifty years led to

increased competition over pasture, water, and migratory routes and that, when coupled

with a rising incidence of drought, poor land management policies, and growing

restrictions on mobility and land use, led to an inevitable rise in violent conflict among

and within pastoral populations, as well as between pastoral and settled groups (Markakis

2004; Meier, Bond, and Bond 2007; Kahl 1998; Baxter 2001; Hendrickson, Armon, and

Mearns 1998; Otim 2002; Ocan 1994). Few if any authors, however, ascribe pastoral

conflict solely to competition over natural resources, including in the case of Karamoja.

Oloka-Onyango et al (1993), for instance, see the breakdown of traditional authority and

the militarization of the culture in the region as the main factors, with tensions over

resource scarcity serving as a catalyst for violence. Rugadya's (2006) study on Uganda

focuses on poor systems of land management caused by both inadequate and

inappropriate national policies and the disruption of local social institutions for resource

management as fueling conflict related to natural resource use.   In her work on Darfur,

Young (2009b) points out that while scholars have for years focused on resource

competition as a driving factor in violence, this is but one element in a conflict

characterized by local and regional power struggles and shifting patterns of livelihood

systems and control over these systems. Livelihood adaptations in the face of conflict

place increased pressures on resources which are then poorly managed by local

governance systems, which in turn further exacerbate tensions and contribute to conflict

between livelihood groups. Each of these examples from the literature illustrates the

centrality of the struggle over natural resources within conflict systems, but also makes

clear the importance of additional factors.

A growing body of work more forcefully challenges the scarcity-conflict theory in

relation to violence in pastoral areas in eastern Africa. Many of the authors in this camp

rely on empirical data to track and compare periods of resource scarcity (caused, for

instance, by drought) and incidents of increased violence, and a surprising number find

that either there is no correlation between these two aspects or that the relationship is in

fact an inverse one. In other words, rates and incidences of violent conflict are actually

lower in periods of resource scarcity, either because groups turn to dialogue to ensure

access or because poorer environmental conditions hinder raiding logistics. The findings

for this dissertation align more closely to this argument than with the position that natural

resource scarcity is linked to conflict, and show little perceived linkage between conflict

and resource scarcity in the views of local respondents. Chapter four revisits the

contributions of the literature in light of this study's data.

Commercialization of Cattle Raiding

Successful livestock raiding accrues capital in multiple forms—physical, financial, and

social—and has long been a part of pastoral societies of eastern Africa and the Greater

Horn. Raiding as a process has undergone adaptations and transformations over time in

its ritualized and practical enactments, levels and targets of violence, and nature of

retribution. One of the main themes in the literature on raiding in East Africa and

pastoral societies more broadly relates to the "commercialization" of cattle raiding.

Commercialization is defined and understood in a variety of ways as will be illustrated in

chapter five but, at its most simple, entails the exchange of stolen cattle for cash or

commercial gain.

According to the literature, commercialized raiding began in different time periods

depending on the region and the combined internal and external forces at play. For

instance, in examining the Kuria of Tanzania, Fleischer (2000b; 1998) argues that a

major shift in cattle raiding began during the colonial period, when cattle raiding evolved

from a form of cultural expression to a capitalist strategy based on individual

accumulation, wealth and status. Anderson (1986) has similar findings about the colonial

roots of raiding in Kenya. This early timeframe contrasts with that of some of the

scholars working on Turkana and Karamoja, who are more likely to locate the emergence

of commercial raiding in the decades following national independence (Ocan 1992;

Markakis 2004; Mirzeler and Young 2000). Mkutu (2003) states that commercial gain

became the main motivation for raiding in Karamoja as of the mid-1990s. Regardless of

the time period and region, the commercialization of raiding is a gradual and irregular

process: some raided cattle in some areas are sold for commercial gain at certain times,

while on other occasions the same raiders may retain or exchange stolen animals for

traditional purposes. References to "the commercialization of raiding" in blanket terms

should thus be viewed with suspicion, as this is only one element in the on-going

evolution of raiding practice.

This portion of the literature review touches briefly on some of the common themes in

the secondary and academic sources on the commercialization of raiding, many of which

pertain to this process in Karamoja. The Karamoja-specific elements of the

transformation of raiding are presented in detail in chapter five, including a more detailed

discussion of the relevant literature.

The shift from communal and group control of raids is often cited as an important

element in the commercialization of raiding. In his 1986 article on the Kalenjin of

western Kenya, Anderson traces the transition of stock theft from a communal activity

mediated by custom and collective justice to a form of "sport" for young men. Over

time, this shift from the group to the individual (or small group) level both undermined

the authority and control of local elders and led to the increased militarization of pastoral

societies (Mirzeler and Young 2000). Markakis explains that cattle raiding in East Africa

was a communal venture undertaken with sanction by the elders, but also an activity

through which "young men acquire their own herds and assert their manhood" (2004,

26). The communal nature of raiding was in decline by the second half of the twentieth

century and was replaced by more individual and criminally-oriented activities. The rise

of the criminal element, and in particular linkages to external criminal networks, is

another major theme in the literature. Contrary to the views of most government actors in

the east African region, traditional raiding was not seen as criminal in nature by local

elders and communities, but as a way to enlarge the community herd and redistribute

assets following drought, epidemics and other disasters (Hendrickson, Armon, and

Mearns 1998).

Many sources on commercial raiding in pastoral areas explore the alleged broader

linkages to criminal networks and enterprises. There is evidence (with varying degrees of

reliability[20]) and charges that commercial raiding within many pastoral areas takes place

with the explicit financial, logistical and/or organizational support of external actors,

allegedly including businessmen, politicians, and members of the security forces. This

"external collaboration and assistance" (Oloka-Onyango, Zie, and Muhereza 1993, 12)

can reportedly take a variety of forms, such as an extended entrepreneurial chain

originating with a specific order for cattle (Schilling et al. 2011), training in military

tactics and use of modern weapons (Ocan 1994), the involvement of external "armed

military or bandit groups" seeking to "procure cattle in vast quantities either to feed

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[20] Eaton (2008) is one of the few authors who directly challenges the reliability of the widespread allegations
regarding the linkages between raiding for profit and external criminal linkages, saying that some scholars
tend to rely on unverifiable assumptions to advance the more sensational aspects of commercial raiding.

warring armies or to sell on the market" (Hendrickson, Armon, and Mearns 1998, 191),

logistics and transport support (Akabwai and Ateyo 2007), and the financing of cattle

raids for commercial purposes (Mkutu 2003). The engagement of external actors creates

an extensive black market for weapons, ammunition, cattle and related inputs with

widespread linkages across the east African region. Although the extent and specific

channels of the commercial enterprises and external involvement obviously vary from

one location to the next, all of these aspects are reportedly at work in Karamoja, both at

the peak of violent raiding in the 1980s and 1990s and today.[21] While the extent of

accuracy behind these claims is difficult to verify, the presence of these nefarious and

shadowy linkages has long been widely cited not only by outside researchers, but also by

local respondents, key informants, and media sources (Mafabi 2008). As discussed in

more depth in chapter five, this external involvement is often explained as *the* primary

characteristic or defining factor of commercial raiding. This dissertation, however, takes

a broader view of the commercialization of raiding, in line with Krätli and Swift who

point out that

> [t]o a certain extent, all raids are 'commercial', not just those usually referred to
> by the term, in which the promoters and paymasters are businessmen, officers or
> administrators. The so called 'commercial raids', do not represent a separate
> category in which 'external' interests interfere with pastoral economy. They are
> probably better understood as an aspect of the wider integration of pastoralists
> within a market economy. (2003, 8)

In other words, the sale of stolen animals is a commercial exchange whenever such

animals are sold on the market for cash or items in kind, as opposed to being used to

build herds or for a ritualized or social event (sacrifice, marriage, etc) or a reciprocal

social transfer (repayment of debt to a stock associate, lending to a relative, etc). As

demonstrated in chapter five, this more nuanced interpretation of commercial raiding

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[21] Mustafa Mirzeler, personal communication, November 30, 2012.

allows for an analysis of individual motivations and smaller scale transactions, as opposed to a bird's-eye view that looks primarily at the larger economic and market systems.

Another theme within the literature on commercial raiding is the increased role of modern weapons and ammunition as both a cause and effect of commercialization. This is related to the above discussion on the increased involvement of external actors, with the premise that external players provide raiders with access to weaponry to facilitate their own agendas. These political and economic forces created an atmosphere conducive to the widespread use and exchange of guns in much of pastoral East Africa, leading to a decline in the market price of weapons and further expansion of their usage (Mkutu 2007b). The ready availability of guns led to a greater number of cattle being raided, which in turn led to more cattle sold, greater interest in and involvement of external actors, further import of guns, and so on. Not surprisingly, the increased use of semi-automatic weaponry combined with the demise of traditional regulations as part of the rise of commercial raiding led to an expansion and intensification of violence (Gray et al. 2003). Within the commercial raiding argument, therefore, the increase in violence in Karamoja and other pastoral regions over the past thirty years is directly related to the economic incentives that spurred increased raids and led to the transformation of the means through which these raids were carried out (Fleisher 1998).

The role of poverty as a driver of commercial raids receives less attention in the literature than the more dramatic elements of nefarious shadow markets and the cross-border trade in small arms, but is raised by some authors as an important consideration. Fleisher and Holloway (2004), for example, point to the greater likelihood of raiding by males from

poorer households, including those with few uterine sisters and hence no options for the

influx of animals from the sisters' bridewealth.   In the context of recent widespread asset

loss and the erosion of pastoral livelihoods in many areas, however, it can be argued that

the concept of poverty is relative, leaving many households and young men with

seemingly few options: "Kuria cattle raiding today is most productively viewed as one

item in a desperately brief menu of cash-generating economic options available to the

Kuria people of rural Tanzania" (Fleisher 1999, 240). Krätli and Swift (2003) distinguish

between those fighters who engage in cattle raids on a full-time basis as a way to make a

living and those who undertake raids to restock, feed their families or acquire money for

school fees. The causal link between poverty and raids leads to the theory of Gray et al

(2003) who argue that raiding is an adaptive cultural response (albeit negative and

destructive) to environmental, sociopolitical and economic pressures upon pastoralists'

subsistence base. This dissertation returns to the role of poverty in raiding in chapter

five, and posits that the commercialization of raiding is best understood through an

analysis of the different actors engaged in raiding violence and their separate and specific

motivations.

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework for this dissertation is based upon the livelihoods framework.

While not always explicit in the discussion of the data, a livelihoods perspective informed

the study design, data collection and analysis. The roots of the livelihoods approach can

be found in work from the early 1990s, most notably the paper by Chambers and Conway

(1992) which outlined the concepts for the widely referenced Sustainable Livelihoods

Framework (SLF). Recognized by both practitioners and academics as a useful tool for

understanding and mapping complex systems, the SLF approach was initially adopted
and promoted at the organization level by the UK government's Department for
International Development (DFID) and a range of non-governmental actors (including,
for instance, CARE and Oxfam-GB).

While various models of a livelihoods framework emerged as different operational
agencies included elements of a livelihoods approach in their work, the basic premise and
aspects remained widely consistent. As such, a livelihoods framework examines the
basic assets (or capital) available or accessible at the household level, normally
understood as human, natural, physical, financial and social/political assets. A household
engages in a variety of livelihoods strategies that seek to maximize the use of these assets
in achieving a range of desired livelihoods goals. The governing environment that
determines how households (and individuals within the households) are able to access
assets and put them to use is based on a set of formal and informal policies, institutions
and processes (often abbreviated as PIPs). These PIPs account for both external and
internal norms, regulations, customs, and cultural aspects that determine the range of
available livelihood strategies and outcomes for a given household in a specific social,
political and cultural context. Vulnerability within the SLF was largely understood as an
external variable that established the extent of and context for vulnerability at any one
time. As such, in visual representations of the SLF, vulnerability was normally illustrated
as a box above or alongside the framework.

The livelihoods approach gained increased traction among international organizations
and agencies in the 1990s, with livelihoods policies adopted by or at least influencing the
programming of multiple non-governmental organizations, including the International

Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), the United Nations High Commissioner for

Refugees (UNHCR) and the World Food Programme (WFP) (Lautze and Raven-Roberts

2006). By and large, however, the livelihoods approach was most widely applied in post-

conflict or development contexts; agencies struggled to apply the model in the midst of

conflict or crisis (Le Sage and Majid 2002). According to Lautze and Raven-Roberts

(2006), this was driven both by the assumption at the organizational level that livelihoods

support was not applicable in crisis situations and by aspects within the SLF that made it

insufficient for the analysis of livelihoods in situations of violence and crisis or conflict.

Work by the Feinstein International Famine Center,[22] Lautze and Raven-Roberts, and

Young, Osman et al. (2005) led to the adaptation of the SLF to improve its applicability

for situations of violence and conflict. It is this adapted model, illustrated below, that

informs the conceptual framework for this dissertation.

Young, Osman, et al. 2005

There are several key elements in the modified livelihoods framework with direct

application to the conceptual framework for this dissertation. Drawing from the

discussion in Lautze and Raven-Roberts (2006), these are as follows, in brief:

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[22] The current Feinstein International Center (FIC) at Tufts University was named the Feinstein International Famine Center (FIFC) until 2006.

- Livelihood assets can also be *liabilities* that can lead to increased vulnerability in situations of violence, crisis and conflict. In pastoral areas, for example, livestock are important assets but livestock ownership correlates directly to the likelihood of being raided.

- While the SLF outlines the path to livelihood goals, the modified framework includes the more realistic "goals and *outcomes*." In other words, although a given household likely has positive goals in mind (e.g., a better harvest, surviving a drought season, increasing herd size, sending children to school, repaying debt, etc.), the reality of conflict and crisis mean that these goals may not be realized and that the actual outcome may be much less ideal. For example, the set of available assets and strategies as influenced and informed by PIPs may, in a pastoral context, lead to herd loss, increased destitution or displacement in any given season.

- The ultimate outcomes, whether positive or negative, *feed back* into all other aspects of the livelihoods framework and influence the available assets, possible livelihood strategies, and PIPs that will influence a given household moving forward. This aspect illustrates the continuous, as opposed to linear, nature of the livelihoods framework and the interaction over time between the components. For example, a household that loses its male head and most of its animal herd (the outcome) in a season of raiding or drought will move forward with a set of livelihoods strategies, but with fewer assets and available strategies. In addition, such a household will now be influenced by the PIPs that determine the role and position for a female-headed household with minimal livestock holdings.

Unlike most versions of the SLF, vulnerability is not represented graphically in the above illustration of the modified livelihoods model. This is because vulnerability is in fact endogenous to livelihood systems (as opposed to its exogenous representation in the SLF), and is present in all components therein, including the assets, strategies, PIPs and the interaction of these elements to each other. This is evident in assets also being liabilities and the role of the feedback factor, as explained above, but is also deeply embedded within policies, institutions and processes, both formal and informal. As this dissertation will illustrate, national policies (such as disarmament and sedentarization)

and processes (underdevelopment, marginalization, and violence) can both increase vulnerability and undermine a community's ability to effectively mitigate vulnerability through traditional coping systems. At the same time, PIPs can themselves be vulnerable to violence and conflict; this is evident in the discussion of the erosion of customary authority and governance systems and in the gradual demise of processes linked closely to the pastoral livelihoods, including transhumance, inter-group negotiations, and social networks.

A livelihoods perspective informed all aspects of this study, but the data collection and analysis did not strictly adhere to either the livelihoods framework or the theoretical work on livelihoods in conflict. Rather, the mapping of complex systems as allowed for within a livelihoods approach provided the general background and context for the research questions, the selection of study sites, and the nature of data collection. The discussion of livelihoods does not predominate in all portions of this dissertation, but a livelihoods perspective lies behind all aspects of the work.

Methods

Case Selection

This study focuses on the Karimojong ethnic group inhabiting the southern and central part of Karamoja in the districts (at the time of the research) of Moroto and Nakapiripirit. As discussed above, the Karimojong were once a unified ethnic group, but today identify primarily with their territorial units of the Bokora, Matheniko and Pian. This dissertation focuses on the Karimojong for several reasons. First and most importantly, the Karimojong are reportedly the first known group of East African pastoralists to engage in

large-scale intra-ethnic violence, which in turn led to the division into the three territorial groups (Mkutu 2008). Violence among these groups continued over the course of the fieldwork and, in the case of the Pian, was occurring within the group itself. The relatively recent disintegration of this ethnic alliance and the continuing state of flux provides an excellent case study on pastoral livelihoods and violence in transition.

Second, the shared locale and history of the Karimojong means that the three groups in this study are more alike than they are different. This limits variability within independent variables and makes a focus on relevant differences more plausible. Practices of marriage, handover of power, rituals for initiation, names and numbers of age-classes within generation sets, and overall livelihood patterns are all similar. Clans and sub-groups overlap, and intermarriage is still relatively common. The important differences occur in diversification of livelihood strategies over the past three decades, relations with the central state, engagement in education, prevalence of out-migration in response to poverty and violence, access to weapons, and interactions and alliances with external groups. These factors of difference are all important for an analysis of the role of young men in livelihoods and violence.

Third, access to the Karimojong was possible for research purposes. This was due to better security in central Karamoja than elsewhere at the start of the work and improved security in southern Karamoja in the succeeding period. More importantly was the inclusion of Darlington Akabwai on the study team. Dr. Akabwai has worked among the Karimojong since he was first posted to the region as a veterinary officer in 1972. His years as a large-animal veterinarian and peace facilitator and his extensive contacts in the region allowed us unparalleled access to both settled and mobile communities who

remembered his tenure or simply had a deep respect for his former profession. Dr. Akabwai was part of the study team on all research trips and is also a key informant for this work.

Sample

This study used nonprobability purposive sampling and qualitative methods for data collection (Bernard 2002). Constraints of security, time, access, the mobile nature of the population, and lack of accurate population estimates made probability sampling impossible, and the broad nature of the research made it unnecessary. Study sites were purposely selected as being typical of broader trends and patterns and to fill a range of criteria theorized to affect livelihood strategies and exposure to and/or threat of violence. These included proximity to neighboring hostile groups, proximity to towns, and remoteness of location, all of which were found to be relevant. Sites were also selected to represent different sub-groups within each of the three larger territorial groups; this variable was not found to be relevant to experiences of conflict or livelihoods.

Data were collected in both settled manyattas and mobile kraals in the early research trips. Overall, the analysis shows that while the daily activities, asset portfolios and experiences of violence differed between the manyattas and traditional kraals, the high degree of movement between kraals and manyattas by almost all members of the study population meant that respondents were not exclusively associated with one settlement type or the other. Rather, movement between the two types of areas, and the opportunities and threats present at each, were part of the broader livelihood strategy. We accessed the remote kraals, which were often in very insecure areas, by first visiting the selected manyattas. After working in the manyatta for a period of several days we

would ask permission to visit a kraal, and would then travel to the kraal in the following day or days with a guide from the manyatta. The extent of population movement between the two types of locations was readily apparent: often we would find many of the same people (particularly young men and young women) in the kraal whom we had interviewed in the manyatta a few days previously.

By mid-2008 there were relatively few traditional kraals remaining due to the UPDF's disarmament campaign and the introduction of protected kraals; the research team continued to access traditional kraals in the later stages of the research when and where possible, but most of the data from 2009 was collected in manyattas. We were able, in some locations and on some occasions, to visit protected kraals, but actual interviews with respondents in these locations were not possible due to the constant presence of the military and the military's refusal to allow extended access.[23] When possible, we interviewed shepherds herding near to protected kraals.

Respondents were purposively selected by demographic group, with an intentional skewing towards young men. Women of all ages and male elders were also interviewed in all locations. Qualitative methods included semi-structured in-depth individual interviews, focus group discussions, participant observation, key informant interviews,

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[23] We did successfully access a large protected kraal in a dry season grazing area in western Lokopo sub-county on two occasions. This kraal was an anomaly in that the UPDF commander of the region had recognized the need for the animals to have improved access to water and pasture, and had agreed to set up a large kraal for all animals of the sub-county near a large dam in an area that had been used for dry season grazing until raiding incursions by the Jie made such access impossible for the Bokora population. The access allowed to our team by the military was also unusual, and was possible only after extensive personal dialogue with the commander and his superiors at the district headquarters. (The flexibility and responsive approach of this particular UPDF officer illustrates the extensive influence of the military on pastoral livelihoods and variations in outcomes based on specific personalities and relationships.) While visiting this location was extremely informative for our team and while we were allowed to conduct interviews out of earshot of the soldiers, we can assume a high degree of bias (discussed more in the following section) in these interviews as we had arrived with the military (i.e., in an all-terrain armored military transport vehicle) and it was clear to all that our being given access was highly unusual.

and, where appropriate, participatory approaches such as creation of conflict timelines, community maps and proportional piling. Semi-structured in-depth interviews and focus group discussions followed checklists of topics developed in advance. Focus groups participants were gender and age specific and were kept to a maximum of approximately six to eight respondents whenever possible. Follow-up questions were used to pursue particular areas of interest. We visited most communities multiple times across the study period; this allowed us to build rapport and trust with the community members, to discuss changes due to seasonal fluctuations, security or disarmament, and to gather increasingly nuanced data. Expatriate members of the study team used local translators to assist in the data collection. We used the same two translators for the vast majority of the research; one was an uninitiated man in his late 40s of Pian origin (married unofficially to a Bokora woman); the other was a Bokora woman in her early 50s. The male translator's uninitiated status allowed for excellent rapport with the male youth who were in a similar position, while his maturity in years commanded a certain respect and he was able to keep focus groups on track and engaged. The female translator had extensive experience with local communities, including on issues of public health and gender-based violence, and was able to raise potentially sensitive topics with female respondents. Both translators had worked previously with various community-based peace groups and were adept at broaching topics such as experience of violence.

Interviews with key informants were conducted, almost always in English, in rural areas and also in towns and trading centers. Key informants were identified in advance based on their reputation in the area; often they were known as "the father of" a specific sub-group or clan, and were seen as the repository of knowledge. Most key informants were men in their 60s, 70s or 80s, and these interviews proved extremely valuable to

understanding the split between the three territorial groups and the ways in which violence has changed over time. Interviews with key informants helped to identify particular areas for follow-up with the general study population. Most key informants were interviewed multiple times over the course of the study.

Local and district officials were interviewed in each period of fieldwork. These respondents included local councilors representing the village level (LCIs), elected sub-county administrators (LCIIIs), and both elected district officials (LCVs) and political appointees (Resident District Coordinators, or RDCs, and Chief Administrative Officers, or CAOs). District security officials, technical officials (i.e., veterinary, agricultural and forestry officers), security personnel (police commissioners and UPDF officials, where possible) were also interviewed. The study did not focus extensively on the humanitarian and development sector, but staff members of these organizations were interviewed at specific times or when they were able to provide specific context in a given subject area.

The data for this dissertation originate from fieldwork conducted in Karamoja between December 2006 and November 2009, spread over the course of seven field trips ranging from between two and six weeks in duration. In total, the data and analysis come from 229 interviews (individual and focus group) with the general study population, 32 interviews with local and district officials and development or humanitarian professionals, and 23 interviews with key informants. The vast majority of the interviews with the general study population were conducted with Bokora, Matheniko or Pian informants. Additional interviews were conducted with the Jie (11 interviews) of Kotido district, and with the Pokot and Tepeth (23 interviews) of Moroto and Nakapiripirit districts. These interviews with neighboring groups allowed for the establishment of

context and triangulation regarding the information coming from the primary group of respondents.

The data collected from 2006 and 2009 form the central component of this work, but the study team continued to work on additional projects in Karamoja after 2009 and through the course of writing this dissertation. This thesis thus occasionally references the findings or analyses from these later works, always with reference to this data as being separate from the main body of material. In addition, this study relies on background data collected in the neighboring districts of the Teso, Lango and Acholi regions in 2005 and 2006. While not directly referenced in this study, the information from this earlier work helped to establish context for the research in Karamoja.

Team members recorded data in field notebooks and transcribed the material in Microsoft Word as soon as possible. All transcripts were then passed on to the author of this dissertation who read through them and discussed questions of clarification and interpretation with each team member as needed. The author coded and analyzed all interviews using the NVivo8 qualitative software program.

Sources for the interviews are in footnote format in this dissertation. The interviews were numbered by location and interviewer; this means that they are not always exactly chronological but are clustered by location and field period. Interview locations are by sub-county and district. The names of manyattas and parishes are intentionally omitted for the purpose of maintaining the confidentiality and security of respondents.

Challenges and Potential Biases

As with any research study, there are many potential biases likely to exist in this work; a few of the most relevant are discussed here.[24] First and foremost, data collection was biased by security constraints: the research team sought to limit our personal exposure to physical violence by monitoring the security situation based on UN and district security reports and the word on the street. This meant limiting travel to areas which were experiencing neither active physical conflict between groups nor active disarmament activities by the UPDF. While we did inadvertently experience both types of insecurity, we sought to avoid such locations whenever possible. This means that field locations sometimes changed at the last minute, and that the data may not fully illustrate the extent of insecurity and violence experienced by the most affected communities. In addition, data collection was limited to daylight hours, and field visits were sometimes cut short by rumors of an impending raid or UPDF activity. At times the team was compelled to travel with security escorts. We used police as opposed to military personnel for escorts in light of the better relationship between the police and the local population in comparison to the military (with an exception noted earlier). The police escort always travelled in a separate vehicle and we sought to leave the police at the nearest trading center whenever possible. This was not always practical or feasible, however, when travelling to a remote area. At no time were police or military personnel within earshot during interviews.

Second, biases are likely to exist in the data and findings due to the make-up of the study team. The team consisted of both local (Karimojong and Ugandan) and foreign

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[24] Additional biases not discussed including working through translation, insider/outsider biases, cultural differences in interpretations, and gender-based biases.

(American and Kenyan) members; each of these individuals brought his or her own perspective to the research and these perspectives influenced all aspects of the work. In addition, respondents naturally tailor the information they provide based on the individual to whom they are speaking. As such, the male Ugandan elder on the study team would likely receive different information from the same respondent than the American woman, and so on. The coding and analysis of each interview sought to take such biases into account.

Third, collecting data in an area that has experienced many years of humanitarian assistance brings its own set of problems and biases. The team used an unmarked vehicle for almost all of the fieldwork, although we travelled in a marked Save the Children in Uganda (SCiUG) vehicle for three weeks in 2009. Regardless of our mode of transport, the presence of outsiders, at least one of whom was not African, with our notebooks and ubiquitous bottles of mineral water has a profound impact on the responses in any such study. We sought to limit this bias by explaining the research and our presence in depth and by returning to sites multiple times to build rapport while also establishing a pattern of information gathering (as opposed to relief distribution). The excitement of the communities upon our arrival, however, and in particular the willingness to give up daily livelihood activities to talk to the team indicate that it was impossible to fully reduce the expectations and the associated biases.

Fourth, and related to the above, respondents in some areas may have been inclined to exaggerate their negative experiences, poverty, or asset loss in the hopes of being included in an assistance program. While we repeatedly explained that we were independent and that our presence was not linked to any humanitarian programming, the

predominant experience of rural residents with outsiders was as beneficiaries of assistance, primarily food aid. Thus people inevitably hoped that we would convey their needs and situations to those who might be bringing material assistance of one form or another. This bias may account, for instance, for the reports of widespread and near total loss of herds and other productive assets among the study population. We attempted to counter this bias through repeat visits, triangulation of data from different demographic groups in the communities, and visits to the traditional kraals when and where possible. In a first visit to a location in a given research trip, respondents would often tell us they would all either be dead from hunger or have migrated by the time we next returned. Returning to the same location several months later allowed us to revisit these conversations and ask how, contrary to their own predictions, they had survived the intervening period. Layering this data from multiple visits allowed us to build up a more realistic picture of livelihood strategies and adaptations.

A field-based study such as this inevitably has its challenges, both predicted and unexpected. One of the main challenges had to do with gathering information on violent and criminal behavior from those who were likely to have perpetrated such acts. Dealing with this issue required flexibility and creativity in both the subject matter discussed and the way in which information was gathered. One of the most effective techniques for talking to young men about violence was to discuss these issues in the third person, e.g., "what are some of the motivations for why people might raid?" Depending on comfort levels, respondents would sometimes lapse into the first person over the course of discussing such topics. The research team knew that this transition was of particular interest and translators and other team members would subtly make a note or otherwise signify this shift. To our surprise, in some locations some respondents talked quite

readily about direct participation in violence; this was likely due to our repeated visits to the same location and some respondents' familiarity with Dr. Akabwai: these aspects helped to confirm that we were not working on behalf of the security services. Due however, to the different levels of comfort and openness, it was impossible to compare, for instance, personal motivations for engaging in violent raiding across all male youth respondents. Some of these answers would be in the first person singular, others in the third person plural, and still others would refer to different groups entirely (i.e., implying that no raids or thefts originated from their community). The data analysis attempted to address this aspect by comparing responses by all demographic groups in a given location as well as data from repeated site visits.

From a methodological perspective, another challenge was managing and interpreting the information collected by a diverse and varied team of researchers. Although we sought consistency to the extent possible, individual personalities, professional backgrounds, and previous experiences meant that each team member had his or her own way of conducting interviews, asking follow-up questions, taking notes, and interacting with respondents and (when relevant) translators. The principle investigator (and author) convened regular meetings of all team members to review field notes, findings and observations. This allowed the team to learn from each other's specific styles and expertise and also to identify gaps or problems that were arising in the data collection. The review of all transcripts prior to analysis allowed an additional opportunity for clarification of data and recording. Ultimately, the extended period of fieldwork allowed the core members of the team to develop complementary styles and an understanding of each other's strengths and weakness, and to design and assign data collection accordingly.

Representativeness and Generalizability

The data presented in this dissertation are not and do not strive to be representative of the entire population of the Karimojong. Specific questions were investigated to the point of saturation within the specific study population, but, due to the nature of semi-structured interviewing, some topics were raised in some areas or by some respondents that were not probed or investigated in other areas. The discussion throughout this dissertation seeks to illustrate themes and trends apparent in the data, while also highlighting interesting and potentially relevant outliers. Furthermore, the discussion of themes and trends apparent in the analysis does not preclude the existence of differences ranging from wide variations to outright contradictions. This study prioritizes the voices and experiences of individuals and thus recognizes the inconsistencies, dynamism, and unpredictability of data collected over time and through such an approach.

By and large, this dissertation assigns a degree of relative similarity across the Bokora, Matheniko and Pian territorial groups. While this was backed by the analysis, in reality there exist important differences both among and within these groups. This study should not, therefore, be taken to imply uniformity or homogeneity where it does not exist. A larger and longer study with representative data on each of the three groups may have picked up on such differences and variations; such work was not possible in this instance given the constraints imposed by time, finances, security, and family obligations.

In regard to generalizability, the results of this work are clearly the most meaningful for the Karimojong, but are also instrumental in understanding the broader changes and processes at work across much of Karamoja. Interviews with the neighboring groups of

the Jie, Tepeth and Pokot and on-going work in northern Karamoja indicate the many similarities in experiences and perspectives to be found across a broader geographical area. Furthermore, Karamoja shares many characteristics with pastoral areas across eastern Africa, and thus some of the findings from this work may have applicability in other areas in the region.

Layout of dissertation

Chapters two through five use the data and findings to examine the applicability of the hypotheses outlined above on causes of violence in the region, i.e., violence caused by raiding to acquire bridewealth, violence as a both a leverage tool and an outlet for frustration in the inter-generational struggle for authority within a gerontocratic system, violence among groups due to the struggle over natural resources, and violence as part of the commercialization of cattle raiding. Each chapter illustrates how the primary data nuances, rejects or confirms specific elements of the existing hypotheses and, through this process, the author's own theory is developed and explained. The final chapter returns to the central figure of the male youth and demonstrates how the theories developed throughout the previous chapters explain male youth engagement in violence and the evolution of this violence since the 1980s. This chapter also examines shifts in violence today, including how the external process and policy of disarmament has radically altered the current landscape of both violence and livelihoods in Karamoja.

CHAPTER TWO: INVESTIGATING MARRIAGE AND RAIDING

A man is very useful only when he has cows. A man without cows is like a woman without a husband.[1]

Overview

As discussed in the first chapter, a central hypothesis on violence in pastoral societies is that men raid in order to acquire bridewealth for marriage. In the context of the Karimojong, a key question is how – and whether – this hypothesis explains changing levels of violence over time, and in particular the increase in violence in the region since the 1980s. Through the use of primary data, this chapter investigates the relevance of this hypothesis to Karamoja and finds that while this theory may well have been the most appropriate and correct analysis for the increase in violence in the 1980s and 1990s, this hypothesis fails to adequately explain the violence that has occurred over the past decade. The shift in relevance of this hypothesis is due to changes in both the institution and process of marriage; changes that occurred in large part due to the violence inherent in raiding for bridewealth as marriage became a proxy for establishing status male adulthood in the absence of initiation. Cattle raiding and associated forced removal of livestock out of the region gradually undermined the ability of men to accrue bridewealth to any substantial level. Violence used in raids *increased* in conjunction with reduced availability of livestock, resulting in both the collapse of internal systems for herd management and the mitigation of vulnerability. This also resulted in increased external

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[1] Interview No. 107, Matheniko woman, Rupa, Moroto District, July 8, 2008.

restrictions on pastoral mobility, which in turn damaged animal health and decreased

resilience following shocks such as raids.

This chapter examines the ways in which marriage has changed and the implications of

this change for men, women and their communities. With the transformation of marriage

came shifts in gender relations and residential arrangements which have heralded

increased agency and autonomy for both male and female youth in some areas. Overall,

however, changes in gender and family dynamics emerging from this process have

decreased the status and role of male youth within their relationships and communities,

serving to increase the frustration experienced by young men. Ultimately, the chapter

demonstrates that by the time of the fieldwork for this dissertation, the acquisition of

bridewealth was *no longer* a motivating or causal factor for violence which itself brought

changes to the marriage system and associated social relations.

Bridewealth among the Karimojong

Bridewealth in the form of cattle has always been an important form of social currency

among Karimojong. The expected bridewealth levels in any given period are influenced

by a variety of internal and external processes, including overall herd health, recent

shocks (such as animal epidemics, droughts or heavy raids), and poverty levels. To take

an example of the factors in one group's changing bridewealth levels, the Matheniko

began paying "exorbitant" amounts of cattle for bridewealth as early as the 1970s, often

exceeding 100 cattle (Gray 2000, 412). This compares to the 30-50 animals found to be

common among the Karimojong by Neville Dyson-Hudson (1966) in his fieldwork in the

1950s. Levels of bridewealth rose in accordance with growing herd sizes (Fleisher

2000b), and demand prices for marriage payments would likely have increased steadily

across the Matheniko as a factor of the bridewealth market. Following their raid on the

Moroto armory in 1979, the additional firepower of the Matheniko made it that much

easier to accrue large numbers of cattle, further pushing up the bridewealth prices that

could be demanded by brides' families. Higher levels of bridewealth could require

increased raiding—in the form either of a larger number of separate raids or more cattle

netted in individual raids—which, when coupled with the increase availability of

weapons, translates to an increase in the level of violence. Referencing her fieldwork in

Moroto in the late 1990s, Gray observes:

> The association between guns and cattle is seen in the recent transformation of
> the Karimojong marriage ceremony. An official marriage requires the transfer of
> substantial numbers of livestock from the family of the groom to the family of
> the bride, payment which, in the past, may have taken several years. Today, full
> brideprice may be acquired as a result of a single successful raid (conversely, the
> formal transfer of bridewealth heightens the risk of being raided). (2000, 408)

Although not referenced specifically in the literature, we can assume that the levels of

bridewealth for the Pian and Bokora did increase but probably not to the same degree as

among the more powerful Matheniko, both because these groups were the targets of the

bridewealth-producing Matheniko raids and because they lacked the extent of firepower

available to the Matheniko.

Other factors likely contributed to the increase in violent raiding for the acquisition of

bridewealth in Karamoja over the 1980s and 1990s, including the influence of the elders,

increasing poverty in some areas, and, for some young men, particular pressures brought

on by household demographics. The role of the elders in bridewealth acquisition and

levels merits particular consideration, especially in light of the eroding relationship

among the Three Stones that was underway during this time (Fleisher 2000b). As the

heads of the receiving clans and families, the elders stood to benefit materially and in social status from high levels of bridewealth, and sanctioning raids in the name of bridewealth acquisition would have also couched retaliatory attacks as the relationship between the three groups disintegrated. In other words, the motives for youth to engage in raids (bridewealth, monetary gain, status, etc.) do not necessarily align with the purposes of the attacks as directed by the elders (Eaton 2010a).[2]

The influence of elders is also important in unsanctioned raids aimed at bridewealth acquisition. Raids for bridewealth outside the realm of the elders' control may occur when there are disputes between generations over control of livestock. A father may refuse to contribute bridewealth for his son's marriage for various reasons, including poverty, disapproval of the choice of bride, desire to retain cattle for his own bridewealth payments, efforts to retain access to marriageable women for elders or older sons (Spencer 1976), or any number of disagreements with his son (Eaton 2010a). At the same time, fathers may demand more bridewealth for their daughters as part of the recognition that "their traditional control of society—hinging on their control over cattle and women, and, through this control, control over the rising male generation—was slipping away from them owing to the opportunities of their juniors to acquire cattle and, through cattle, women…" (Fleisher 2000b, 57, citing Rwezaura 1985). The combination of a bridegroom's refusal to contribute cattle from his herd and a bride's father demanding high bridewealth payments sets the stage for bridewealth-producing cattle raiding.

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[2] In the example cited by Eaton, the Pokot elders directing the raid were interested in demonstrating their military might to other groups, whereas one of the youths leading the raid was motivated by a desire to solve his personal financial problems.

Fleisher has examined linkages between male raiding and households that lack girls of marriageable age, arguing that men who do not receive an inflow of cattle from the marriages of their sisters (which can then be used to fund their own bridewealth payments) face more pressure to raid to acquire the requisite number of cattle for bridewealth (Fleisher 1999; Fleisher and Holloway 2004). There is a possible argument here that the out-migration of young women for seasonal or permanent work in the 1960s and 1970s (Gray 2000) and the associated likelihood of marrying outside the region decreased cattle inflows to families, thereby creating 'sister-poor' households and pushing young men towards raiding for bridewealth. Details from respondents vary, however, in accounts of the proportions of men who also left during this period, and some families did receive bridewealth payments from non-Karimojong husbands, especially if their daughters were marrying into the families of stock associates among the neighboring Teso.

Poverty is a compelling reason for young men to raid to acquire bridewealth. A Pokot respondent in Eaton's 2005-2006 research explains:

> '[I]f you don't have the money, you will never marry, and for a long time, you will go, the woman will look at others. But you have an alternative if your father is poor, actually you do, you must raid to get the cows, in order to get the woman, the dowry is the problem.' (Eaton 2010a, 109)

Although cattle herds were increasing in size among the Matheniko following the raid on the Moroto armory and pillaging of the neighboring districts brought increased numbers of cattle into the region, inequity in cattle ownership was increasing in the same period (Ocan 1992). As found by Fleisher among the Kuria, those who were better off had less incentive to raid (Fleisher and Holloway 2004), and were probably more likely to benefit from the largesse of their father's cattle herds. At the same time, securing a wife through

official marriage was a step toward alleviating poverty. Wives traditionally brought a number of their own animals with them into the household, and these animals would in turn multiply. Wives would produce children, allowing the growth of human capital and social status and, eventually, the arrival of bridewealth through marriage of daughters.

Factors contributing to the increase in raids for bridewealth among the Karimojong in the 1980s and 1990s include rising levels of armament among the Matheniko, the demise of the Three Stones allegiance, increased support by the elders for retaliatory raids, growing inequity of cattle ownership, increasing struggles between fathers and sons, and growth in herd size and associated increases in the market demand for bridewealth. These factors all support the hypothesis that the quest for bridewealth (and hence marriage, women and children, and the associated wealth and status) underpins cattle raiding in Karamoja during this period. In fleshing out the contextual details of one of the central parts of this argument—the politics of the relations between fathers and sons—we see that there is greater nuance to this hypothesis when applied to the situation with the Matheniko, Bokora and Pian.

Fathers, Sons, and Brides

As explained in the literature review and discussed in depth in the next chapter, authority in Karamoja rests on a system of male seniority whereby two generation-sets exist simultaneously, and males must be initiated into an age-set (a division of the generation-set) before they are recognized as adults. Pressure upon the senior generation (the *Ngimoru*) was increasing by the early 1980s, as the junior generation (*Ngigete*) began to push for the succession ceremony that would allow them to take the reins of control and

to start initiations for their own sons. Based on previous patterns, these pressures would

have been met with opposition by the elders (Dyson-Hudson 1966). The literature on

several other East African age-set systems emphasizes the links between elders' efforts to

maintain power and their attempts to control the marriages of the generations (Almagor

1983; Baxtor and Almagor 1978; Burton 1980). In comparing marriage in the more

flexible age systems such as the Dassanetch with those of the dualistic generation-set

systems of the Karimojong and the Jie, Almagor states:

> Control over the marriage of young men is therefore an element in the
> gerontocratic power wielded by elders in a generation-set system….Delaying the
> entry of young men into the senior section of the system prolongs their
> dependence on elders and at the same time reduces the number of competitors
> whom such elders have to contend with. (1983, 93)

The timing of such marriages, Almagor contends, is a "major means of control" (ibid.).

Dyson-Hudson (1966) states that a man was expected to initiate before marriage, but

points out that this was already breaking down at the time of his fieldwork in the 1950s

due to the delays in succession at the time.[3] Efforts of fathers to exert control over the

marriages of their sons – and over their sons in general—are played out in control of

livestock, and Eaton (2010b) found that the arguments over bridewealth were most

commonly cited as the source of tensions. A son hopes his father and older male

relatives will contribute livestock for the bridewealth for his first marriage (later

marriages are normally funded by the husband himself through vertical exchange or other

means) (Olowo Onyango 2010; Gulliver 1955; Borgerhoff Mulder 1995),[4] but the

absence of such transfers only prevents marriages up to a point. This point was supported

by the primary data collected for this dissertation, as illustrated by the following

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[3] Dyson-Hudson (1966) found that marriages were taking place prior to initiations because of the extended
period in which the final age-set of the Ngimoru generation-set was open prior to the succession ceremony in
the late 1950s. In other words, young men were coming of age and not being initiated, and the need for
marriage overtook the ritual aspects of initiation before marriage.
[4] Key informant No. 1, Dartmouth, Massachusetts, May 16, 2008.

quotation by a group of male elders discussing animals needed for bridewealth, who

explained that the full bridewealth herd contains animals from multiple sources:

> [In the past,] it was the responsibility of an extend family to help the father of the boy to pay these animals. The boy himself could have contributed his dowry from cattle he raided …or from animals he bartered with his sorghum if he was very active in cultivation.[5]

The data show that the portion of animals from the elders versus those from the young

man (through raiding or other means) is malleable. The desire of young people to start

their own families, and the importance of children to the larger community, mean that

unions of one form or another will not be delayed indefinitely. Furthermore, as the

tensions between male generations over women, cattle and authority increase, young men

are less likely to adhere to regulations put in place by the older men, and are more likely

to risk confrontation with and condemnation by their elders, as there is less for these

young men to lose. Fleisher and Holloway's (2004) examination of raiding among the

Kuria finds that young men from wealthier families are less likely to risk the dangers of

raiding, but this is only applicable if these sons expect to receive cattle wealth from their

fathers in a timely fashion to allow marriage.

Initiation and Marriage: Associated Rituals

As supported by the literature and also found by this study, initiation and marriage are the

two most important rites of passage in the lives of Karimojong men, and the relationship

between initiation and marriage is central to understanding the increase in violence

among the Karimojong in the 1980s and 1990s. The social and political climate created

by the delays in succession during Dyson-Hudson's fieldwork existed again by the 1980s,

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[5] Interview No. 102, Matheniko elders, Rupa, July 10, 2008.

as the *Ngigete* began to push the *Ngimoru* (the juniors themselves 25 years earlier) to hand over power. In response, efforts by the elders to establish and maintain control—manifested in part via control over women and cattle—would have intensified. At the heart of this conflict (and as discussed in depth in the next chapter) lies the lack of succession and the halt of initiation ceremonies—males are unable to achieve adult status through the established system; they are not recognized as men. As achieving manhood through the traditionally sanctioned system became more difficult, alternative means thus became more important.

Initiation is the pathway to recognized adulthood within the hierarchy of men, but marriage brings acknowledgement of status among a man's peer group, with his family, and with women. Dyson-Hudson found that the normal sequencing of initiation before marriage was being reversed as early as the 1950s. By the time of the fieldwork for this dissertation, respondents did not believe that one event needed to happen prior to the other.[6] While the timing and resources for initiations are controlled almost entirely by the elders, individual men are able to exert greater influence over the process of courtship and marriage. This study found that in the absence of initiation, the emphasis shifted toward marriage as a means of establishing one's identity as an adult. Marriage was once secondary to initiation for men, but rose in prominence as initiations dwindled. This study posits that men are not only marrying prior to initiation due to their advancing physical and social maturity, but also because marriage has become a means of re-establishing, in the analysis of Burton, a "domain of norms and values" previously only associated with entry into a group of initiates (1980, 146). Although still lacking the

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[6] Interview No. 109, Matheniko male youth, Rupa, Moroto District, July 8, 2008.

ritual significance of initiation, marriage became increasingly important as a social process for men as a function of the *decreasing* prevalence of initiation.

The role of individual agency is central to understanding the increase in importance of marriage as a function of the decreasing rate of initiation. Men do not have the means to start the initiation process on their own, but they can certainly begin courtships and enter into liaisons with females. Premarital sexual relations are not prohibited among the Karimojong, and while the pregnancy payment or *ekicul* is occasionally referred to as a "fine," the first pregnancy is celebrated as important evidence of the couple's fertility.[7] In addition, the first pregnancy illustrates the man's virility, thereby boosting his status among his peer group and verifying his biological—if not his ritual—transition into adulthood.[8] Once the viability of the union is established through a successful pregnancy, the young man would be eager to continue the process through which the woman and her offspring joined his household and clan. This would require the additional transfer of livestock to the bride's family, either gradually or as a lump sum. In the absence of support and transfer of cattle from their fathers, young men would have to come up with the cattle for the *ekicul* and bridewealth on their own.

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[7] Key informant No. 1, Moroto town, April 2, 2009. Respondents stressed that this was not a fine, but rather a payment in support of the new child. Interview No. 168, Matheniko male youth, Nadunget, Moroto District, April 2, 2009.
[8] The first pregnancy is also an important milestone for the female, marking her transition from being a girl to being a woman, and would traditionally be marked by a ceremony. Interview No. 154, Bokora woman, Lokopo, Moroto District, February 24, 2009. Interview No. 147, Pian women, Lorengedwat, Nakapiripirit District, February 19, 2009. Interview No. 157, Pian elderly woman, Nabilatuk, Nakapiripirit District, February 28, 2009.

<u>Decreased Initiation Leads to Increased Raiding for Bridewealth</u>

Just as men could begin the courtship process on their own, they could also come up with

their own livestock for bridewealth. As discussed, raiding was an appealing means of

acquiring bridewealth for a number of reasons, and handing cattle over to the woman's

family had the added benefit of moving raided animals out of the hands of the raiders,

thereby decreasing the likelihood of tracking and revenge attacks.[9] The importance of

marriage has an inverse relationship to the prevalence of initiation, and raiding for

bridewealth has a direct relationship to the importance of marriage. Men in the study

population placed increased emphasis on marriage as a rite of passage in the absence of

initiation, and raids for bridewealth increased accordingly. The views of one young

Matheniko man emphasized the importance of marriage in establishing male status: "The

priority reason for taking [raiding] animals is to get married with cattle. What makes

someone sound is to have a woman. Without a woman, a man is not heard."[10]

Marriage took on growing importance as a means for men to achieve adulthood by

exercising individual agency, and men raided for bridewealth because they were able to

marry with stolen cattle and without the support (in cattle or otherwise) from their fathers

or other older male relatives. As explained by a key informant following his

conversation with a group of elders:

> Young men wanting to marry and tired of being abused as useless decided to pick
> up AK47s for raiding cattle so that they can also marry. From then on they used
> the power of the [gun] barrel and no longer respected their elders. They only
> bow to them during initiation.[11]

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[9] Key informant No. 7, Moroto town, April 3, 2009. Interview No. 178, Matheniko male youth, Nadunget,
Moroto District, April 2, 2009.
[10] Interview No. 111, Matheniko male youth (1), Rupa, Moroto District, July 10, 2008.
[11] Key informant No. 1, Moroto town, July 10, 2008.

Elders themselves agreed that young men were raiding cattle for the purposes for bridewealth, and that—unlike traditional cattle raids in which the elders received cows in tribute—in these raids the animals were quickly passed on.

> If by his good luck the boy goes for cattle raiding and is successful, he pays the raided animals straight to his remaining dowry so that the animals are not caught in his hands. This in turn has accounted for the increase of cattle rustling.[12]

The speed at which bridewealth could be paid through the use of raided cattle was appealing if there were multiple suitors. A group of young men who had listed "marriage" as the main use for raided cattle went on to clarify in a follow-up question:

> *Would getting the bridewealth for these marriages be a specific reason for the raids?*
>
> Yes, that is the intention! If you are struggling with another man to get bridewealth and you have only a few cattle, you might just go out and raid to secure the marriage![13]

The Collapse of Bridewealth: External and Internal Factors

At the same time that social and political factors were contributing to the increase in raids for bridewealth, a combination of events and shocks throughout the 1980s and 1990s was gradually whittling away at the availability of animals for bridewealth acquired through any means. Although variations by location existed, findings from this study show a decrease in the payment of bridewealth as well as in the *ekicul* and *akirop* by the mid to late 2000s. This decrease was due to both a decline in overall levels of livestock available and also to the (related) repercussions of the profound violence that characterized the region.

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[12] Interview No. 102, Matheniko elders, Rupa, Moroto District, July 10, 2008.
[13] Interview No. 127, Matheniko male youth, Nadunget, Moroto District, February 15, 2009.

Over the course of this study, respondents reported that overall numbers of livestock owned by households, as well as the number of households owning livestock, were steadily dropping (but see Anderson and Robinson 2009; Levine 2010). This decline was reportedly due to a number of factors. Firstly, back-to-back years of poor rainfall in Karamoja in the early 2000s led to a widely reported loss of animals and an increased incidence of animal disease. Secondly, as discussed in depth in chapter five, changes in the nature of raiding led to more rapid off-take and sale of raided cattle outside the immediate area, removing animals from the local economy entirely.[14] Recovery of raided animals is nearly impossible once they have been sold outside the region. Thirdly, the poor rainfall led to near complete crop failure in many areas. As this was combined with poor animal health, people were more dependent upon markets and wild foods to make up the shortfall in their diets. With the ability to forage limited by insecurity (and the availability of wild foods also negatively affected by poor rainfall), households had to sell more animals to acquire food and other essential food items, as opposed to sales in a good year, which would be only for a "specific purpose, such as buying shoes, buying a sheet, buying some clothes."[15] This is in contrast to the one or two animals that might normally have been sold as a means of coping with a difficult period,[16] and, as explained by a group of livestock traders interviewed in Iriri town, illustrates a major shift in views: "In the past, people feared to sell cattle. Our parents and their age-mates did not want to sell. But now because of the hunger, it is understood that you must sell."[17] Sale prices for animals were low given poor animal health and the increased flow of animals to the

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[14] Interview No. 100, Matheniko elders, Rupa, Moroto District, July 8, 2008. Interview No. 142, Matheniko woman, Nadunget, Moroto District, February 15, 2009. Key informants Nos. 1, 3 and 4, Moroto town, July 11, 2008.
[15] Interview No. 136, Pian male youth, Lorengedwat, Nakapiripirit District, February 20, 2009.
[16] Interview No. 101, Bokora elders, Lotome, Moroto District, July 14, 2008. Interview No. 159, Matheniko elders, Rupa, Moroto District, February 14, 2009.
[17] Interview No. 52, Bokora traders, Iriri, Moroto District, March 7, 2007.

markets,[18] and this corresponded with global increases in the price of staple foods. In

addition, sale prices were driven down by the presence—or suspicion—of stolen animals

on the markets, as buyers knew the sellers wished to unload quickly.[19] These

disadvantageous terms of trade meant that people had to sell more animals than

previously in order to generate the same food and income for their households.

The inherent mobility and herd management practices of pastoral and agro-pastoral

livelihood systems of Karamoja were traditionally well-suited to the non-equilibrium

environment characterized by highly variable rainfall (Ellis 1994; Ellis and Swift 1988;

Scoones 1994). Increased restrictions on mobility and worsening terms of trade

undermined these means of vulnerability management, but the greatest shock to the

livelihood system of the Karimojong was the profound violence that had come to

characterize the region throughout the 1980s and 1990s. While most of this violence was

caused by the increase in internal raiding (discussed in depth in chapter five), the

upheaval and civil war experienced by Uganda in the 1970s and 1980s both exacerbated

this violence and contributed to the security vacuum that enabled the worsening situation.

By the early 1990s, violence in the region was a pervasive process that informed all

livelihood strategies and adaptations, and ultimately limited communities' resilience to

external shocks such as drought and disease that had long been a reality for the pastoral

populations of the extended region. This point is made in the comparative analysis of the

Turkana (Kenya) and Karamoja regions by Gray et al (2003). This team of medical

anthropologists found that while the 1980-81 famine had similarly affected both regions

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[18] Interview No. 121, Pian male youth, Lorengedwat, Nakapiripirit District, February 18, 2009; Interview No. 160, Pian elders, Lorengedwat, Nakapiripirit District, February 18, 2009; Interview No. 164, Bokora elders, Lotome, Moroto District, February 24, 2009.
[19] Key informant No. 1, Moroto town, July 11, 2008.

in regard to morbidity and mortality of both human and livestock populations, the communities on the Kenyan side of the border recovered much faster and more thoroughly from the devastating loses throughout the 1980s and 1990s. In contrast, over the same time period the Karimojong population experienced repeated chronic food shortages, widespread malaria, recurring outbreaks of cholera, measles and meningitis, and malnutrition (wasting and stunting) among children in line with chronic moderate-to-acute levels. Gray et al. do not discount the role of state policies in limiting resilience and recovery in Karamoja (such as restricted mobility for herds, enforced sedentarization, and intensified agriculture in an ecologically inappropriate environment), but find that the most important variable in explaining the difference in the two regions in the two decades following the famine is the level and extent of violence caused by armed cattle raiding.

> …[I]t is clear that AK-47 raiding seriously constrained the bio-behavioral adaptability of the Karimojong in the last decades of the 20th century. Through its effects on seasonal migrations, subsistence activity, the structure of marriage, and the stability of social networks of the Karimojong, as well as on the operation of trade routes in and out of the district and on health care delivery, armed cattle raiding emerges as the critical factor in recurring famines and epidemics in Karamoja since the 1970s. (2003, S21)

This study finds that violence contributed to the vulnerability as described by Gray, and also became embedded within livelihood strategies in a way that ultimately begot more violence. With specific regard to marriage, the data for this study show that the violence associated with cattle raiding for bridewealth (in part) directly impacted market prices, strategies for herd maintenance (as protection of animals became paramount), and the total animal population in the region. This dissertation theorizes that as herd populations dwindled for many households and means of protection strengthened, it became more difficult for most men to acquire animals through raids, which in turn led to an increase in violence to secure animals. Respondents speak of women and young shepherds becoming targets of raiders; once captured they would be held and beaten until they

disclosed the locations of herds and then either released or killed. Violence also became increasingly internally focused, with previously condemned attacks on traditional allies becoming widespread. Systems of exchange and reciprocity, which had previously been critical non-raided sources of bridewealth, frayed with the collapse of long-standing social ties. The intensifying cycle of violence continued and led, ultimately, to two factors with profound implications for marriage: asset stripping depleted animals to the extent that the herds available for bridewealth (through either exchange or raiding) were minimal, and the state government could no longer ignore the extent of violence in the region or the spillover effects on neighboring constituents. Disarmament thus enters the analysis as a major external factor of change with widespread implications for life in the region. While many (this author included) argue that disarmament has had many negative impacts on the region (both intentional and unforeseen), it is important to keep in mind that it was, at least in part, the violence perpetuated by the young men of Karamoja (and the communal mechanisms that failed to stop this violence) that brought disarmament to the region.

Respondents in multiple interviews for this study cite the disarmament campaigns that began in the early 2000s as the ultimate turning point in the ability of young men to acquire bridewealth for marriage. The disarmament campaign which began in December 2001 started as a program for the voluntary handover of weapons, but shifted to a forced disarmament operation after only two months (Human Rights Watch 2007). An increase in hostilities by the Lord's Resistance Army in the north central region of the country saw a redeployment of troops shortly after the shift to forced disarmament, leaving communities that already given up weapons without adequate protection and open to attack. The Bokora are often mentioned as victims of Matheniko raids during this

period,[20] but the Karimojong as a whole also suffered hits by their better-armed Jie and

Pokot neighbors. This insecurity continued throughout the first half of the decade and

limited access to resources, which contributed to poor animal health, further herd

depletion through raids, sale or death, and created risks in accessing wild foods. People

turned to the markets to fill these food gaps, and were left with little choice but to sell

animals at depressed prices. The next phase of active disarmament started in mid-2006

and resulted in further limitations in access to rangeland as a result of the protected kraal

policy,[21] which exacerbated the impacts of repeated years of poor rainfall. In short, these

underlying and pervasive factors of drought and insecurity led to widespread loss of

herds and an overall erosion of livelihoods, as experienced by respondents in this study.

The explanation by a group of Pian elders illustrates these perceptions:

> Things have changed today. We no longer can afford to depend on animal food
> alone as the number of livestock has reduced due to raids and prolonged
> droughts. This has been made worse by disarmament which has pestered us for
> the last four years and thus preventing us to concentrate on cultivation. We no
> longer have a kraal system as the army has taken all animals to the detaches
> [barracks].[22]

The loss of day-to-day control over herds combined with the overall depletion of animals

due to violence and the subsequent impacts of disarmament further eroded the already

weakened bridewealth system. By the time of the early field visits for this research, the

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[20] Key Informant No. 1, Moroto town, December 10, 2006. Interview No. 101, Bokora elders, Lotome,
Moroto District, July 14, 2008.
[21] Protected kraals are animal encampments located within or immediately adjacent to military barracks. This
practice apparently arose in response to the complaints about inadequate protection of assets in the 2001-
2002 disarmament campaign, and protected kraals first appeared in approximately mid-2007. The policy
creating protected kraals has never been an official one and there appears to be neither documentation nor a
chain of command indicating the origins of this policy. These kraals have provided some protection for
livestock (more effective in some areas than others), but there have been numerous complaints from
community members as well as district veterinary officers regarding poor animal health, inadequate access to
dry-season grazing, low reproduction rates, and poor milk access. In addition, and as discussed in more
depth in chapter six, the involvement of the military in animal husbandry has had profound livelihood
impacts upon young men, who were previously primarily responsible for both grazing and protecting
animals. The military has, at various points over the past six years, announced that protected kraals would be
disbanded but reports from the field indicate that they continue to exist in one form or another across much of
the region. These data comes from multiple interviews. In addition, see (Stites and Akabwai 2010)
[22] Interview No. 160, Pian elders, Lorengedwat, Nakapiripirit District, February 18, 2009.

disarmament campaign (or fear thereof) had begun to limit the number of large-scale

raids through which bridewealth had previously been acquired. By December 2006 (the

first field trip for this study), soldiers were conducting cordon and search activities at

multiple locations, and the reputation of the disarmament operation preceded it to areas

that had not yet been targeted. The operation was clearly forceful (including the use of

helicopter gunships) and very harsh, and male youth began hiding their guns and using

them sparingly in an effort to avoid unwanted military attention.[23] Additionally, the

UPDF instituted the first protected kraals soon after the start of the disarmament

campaign. The protected kraal system hindered the ability of all but the very boldest

raiding parties to capture large numbers of animals at any one time. Lastly, once the

military became actively involved in animal protection (although responses vary as to the

effectiveness of this protection), any raided animals had to be sold or transferred very

quickly to avoid tracking and recovery and repercussions by the military. While the need

to rapidly offload raided animals has always been an issue (Eaton 2010a; Akabwai and

Ateyo 2007) and was one of the factors making attractive the use of raided animals for

bridewealth, interviews revealed that the families of brides became less willing to accept

animals of suspicious provenance because they feared attracting the attention of the

military to their communities.

By the end of the period of field research for this study, there were very few reported

payments of bridewealth in any study sites, and only occasional reports of payment of

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[23] In an informal conversation in mid-2006, a UN official told the author that he had heard that the price of grease had risen sharply in neighboring districts over the first half of 2006 due to purchases by traders for sale in Karamoja. Grease, he explained, was smeared on the guns to protect them from the elements when they were buried. A team member in this study came across a weapon near an interview site that would have benefitted from such a treatment: it was buried in a pile of cow dung.

ekicul or *akirop*. Respondents in multiple locations blame this shift on the combined

factors of drought, disarmament, and insecurity, as summed up by a group of Pian elders:

> There were times when raiders could raid and pay the dowry at once. But as
> disarmament set in and intense raiding and drought reduced the animals in the
> hands of most people in Lorengedwat, payment of dowry has been postponed.[24]

As illustrated above, some respondents viewed the cessation of payments as a temporary

"postponement" or "delay," whereas others assumed that the exchange of livestock for

bridewealth is a thing of the past. This is evident in the response of a group of young

Matheniko women comparing marriage in their generation versus marriage in the time of

their mothers:

> *How is marriage different today?*
>
> There are no cows for marrying; the Jie and Bokora stole them.
>
> *What if a man does have cattle or goats?*
>
> All have lost hope. It will never happen.[25]

The answer of a group of young Bokora men was more forceful when asked if they

expected to be able to marry with cattle: "No! There are no cows!"[26]

The sharp decline in the payment of bridewealth has led to transformations in both the

institution and process of marriage among the Karimojong. Couples are not engaging in

official marriage—or marriage "with cattle"—to nearly the same extent as in previous

generations or even a decade ago. This shift has profound implications on social and

economic relations within and between families and communities, on rites of passage and

their associated meaning, and on the nature of violence.

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[24] Interview No. 160, Pian elders, Lorengedwat, Nakapiripirit District, February 18, 2009.
[25] Interview No. 83, Matheniko young women, Rupa, Moroto District, July 8, 2008.
[26] Interview No. 106, Bokora male youth, Lokopo, Moroto District, July 15, 2008.

<u>Changes to the Marriage Process</u>

In marriages with cattle, the process of marriage begins with the start of courtship and culminates in the final exchange of bridewealth from the suitor to the family and clan of the woman. Numerous important steps and ceremonies, both formal and informal, mark the advancement of this process. These milestones include the preparation of a meal by the woman for the man's friends,[27] the establishment of a special hut (called *akai ka apethe* or *akamaaith*) for the woman within her natal homestead where she can receive her suitor, and ceremonies surrounding the negotiation of the bridewealth amount, the start of the final trimester of pregnancy, the first birth, and the naming of the child. The *ekicul* and *akirop* payments are important markers within this linear process, and allow the man to demonstrate his commitment to the woman and to their children. Both are traditionally paid in the form of livestock. The *ekicul* payment coincides with the first pregnancy and is meant to help the woman's family support the new child. This payment does not count towards the total agreed amount of bridewealth. In contrast, the *akirop*, or "surety" price, is a down-payment on the total bridewealth and signifies the man's commitment to carry through with the marriage. The *akirop* was often paid following the birth of two or more children, and would precede the move of the woman and children to the man's homestead.

> There comes a time when you have produced three to four children. In the past, you would at this time give some animals as a surety that you still love the daughter, and her parents say she can go and live with you and the rest of the cattle will follow.[28]

The decrease in available bridewealth does not stop courtships and unions between young people from occurring, but rather changes the nature of how the process unfolds. Young

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[27] Interview No. 168, Matheniko male youth, Nadunget, Moroto District, April 2, 2009.
[28] Interview No. 117, Bokora male youth, Lokopo, Moroto District, February 24, 2009.

women are still establishing huts within their mothers' homesteads to receive their

suitors, and their pregnancies are still seen as blessings. The data vary from one

respondent to the next as to whether *ekicul* is expected, and is presumably based upon the

specific relationship and wealth of both parties (i.e., whether or not the suitor is likely to

come up with animals and the extent of the woman's family's ability to support the child

or children in the absence of such payments). When asked if she hoped to marry with

cattle, a young woman explained: "I don't expect to. Where would my husband get

cows? I will stay with my parents after I have a man. I do, however, expect *ekicul*."[29] In

another interview in the same location, however, a group of women were asked if they

expected to receive *ekicul* and responded: "No, because there are no animals. People are

now just saying 'let them deliver [the child]' and then hoping [the man] can pay in the

future."[30] While variations exist as to whether or not *ekicul* is still paid or expected, it is

agreed that if only one payment can be made, it is most likely to be the *ekicul* in order to

support the children.[31] Importantly, because *ekicul* is not considered part of bridewealth,

this payment does not establish a father's official rights over his children but simply goes

towards their upkeep. As discussed further below, rights over children are technically

only established with the payment of bridewealth for the mother *and* any children (born

of any union) coming with her to the man's homestead. Custody arrangements, however,

are gradually shifting along with other views and expectations surrounding marriage.

The decrease in ability to pay *ekicul* is an important example of changes within both the

marriage process and in the overall levels of livestock wealth within the study population,

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[29] Interview No. 204, Pian woman, Nabilatuk, Nakapiripirit District, May 13, 2009.
[30] Interview No. 138, Pian women, Nabilatuk, Nakapiripirit District, February 28, 2009.
[31] Interview No. 194, Pian elders, Kakomongole, Nakapiripirit District, May 10, 2009. Key informant No. 1, Moroto town, April 2, 2009.

but it is the lack of ability of men to pay the *akirop* surety payment that has had the more profound impact upon marriage. The transfer of *akirop* is important in its promise that the remainder of the bridewealth will be forthcoming, and also because receipt of *akirop* means that the woman can leave her natal homestead to live with her betrothed. The data indicate that *akirop* was rarely being paid across the study population, particularly by the end of the field research period. This is likely due not only to the lack of animals on hand to make the payment, but also because men realize they are unlikely to be able to raise the remainder of the promised bridewealth as implicit in the transfer of *akirop*. As a result, a large number of the young women within the study population who have male suitors are remaining at their parents' homes, and many state that they will continue this arrangement indefinitely (exceptions to this are discussed below). This situation is described by male and female respondents in multiple locations, and is seen as the more appropriate option, as illustrated by a young woman's thinly veiled disdain for the way things are done in the more urban areas: "In this village, they stay at their parents' homes. In town, girls go to their husbands."[32] Three young Pian women explained that they preferred to remain at their parents' homes, and that their suitors were able to help out a bit, even if not in the form of official payments:

> We would only go to our man's house if he were able to make a payment (*akirop*) on the bridewealth. As soon as he can pay we will go. Otherwise we will stay with our parents indefinitely. This is because we take care of our parents with the small contributions that our men are able to bring. We can just stay at our father's homes and receive our men as visitors. We don't mind, as long as they produce us children.[33]

However, there are also a significant number of respondents within the study population who reported cohabitating at the man's home even in the absence of *akirop*. This can only occur with the blessing or agreement of the woman's family and the man must seek

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[32] Interview No. 152, Bokora young woman, Lotome, Moroto District, February 23, 2009.
[33] Interview No. 199. Pian young women, Kakomongole, Nakapiripirit District, May 10, 2009.

permission from the woman's father.[34] In most cases, this arrangement seems to be

viewed by the older generation as unfavorable but largely unavoidable given the current

reality, as illustrated by a group of older Bokora women:

> There is nothing we can say. We have just let them go to try to survive there,
> because we have nothing to feed them here. Let them just go and try to feed
> themselves.[35]

Although most respondents expressed reluctant resignation, a few appeared to accept this

change without qualification, such as an elderly woman who was asked what happens

when a girl reaches the age of marriage. Her reply: "She chooses a man and they live

together. Marriage itself is not serious; we just pray for reproduction."[36]

It would have been extremely rare in previous generations for couples to live together in

the absence of *akirop* or more preferably the complete transfer of bridewealth.[37] The

shift towards cohabitation without *akirop* is driven by the lack of available animals for

exchange and the concurrent widespread poverty, but also by processes of social change

occurring within the communities. Without animals for *ekicul*, a woman's family bears

the burden of caring for her children from their own resources with limited material

assistance from the children's father. The explanation by women from Lotome as to why

a young woman would move to the man's home is similar to those heard across the study

sites: "She would go to her husband's place as a decision made by her parents. This

would happen when they are tired of feeding her in her parents' home."[38] This view is

reiterated by a young man from Lokopo:

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[34] Respondents in almost every instance across all study sites reported that the man must ask the woman's father for permission.
[35] Interview No. 105, Bokora women, Lokopo, Moroto District, July 15, 2008.
[36] Interview No. 155, Bokora elderly woman, Lokopo, Moroto District, February 24, 2009.
[37] Interview No. 110, Matheniko women, Rupa, Moroto District, July 8, 2008. Interview No. 159, Matheniko elders, Rupa, Moroto District, February 14, 2009.
[38] Interview No. 104, Bokora young women, Lotome, Moroto District, July 14, 2008.

> The old people [woman's parents] are now depending on relief [food]. You are given the girl and the children because it is difficult for her parents to care for their daughter. They now want the man to care for the daughter, as we are all just living off the same relief.[39]

The economic pressure on the woman's family would only increase as the union produced more children and bridewealth was neither forthcoming nor seemed likely to be so in the foreseeable future. In addition, if there are multiple daughters in a family and little chance of incoming bridewealth, the family would have to establish several *akamaaith* for the girls to receive their nightly visitors. A key informant pointed out that a family might have up to three *akamaaith* at any one time, but more than three such huts becomes a source of shame, as their presence points to the family's lack of bridewealth from any sources.[40] In these situations a young woman's parents might be more inclined to allow her to move to her husband's home prior to the payment of *akirop.*

The expectation (and possibly even existence) of bridewealth is likely to continue to adapt over time if the socioeconomic conditions continue in the current vein. As argued by Ensminger and Knight (1997), if most men cannot afford to make the requisite marriage payments, then the bridewealth levels will eventually depreciate or other social adjustments will occur. Such changes are already visible among the Karimojong in the greater acceptance of alternative living arrangements among young couples and the begrudging acceptance of smaller marriage payments.

Increased Agency for the Young: New Forms of Bridewealth Emerging

Additional pressure on the living arrangements during the courtship period comes from young men themselves. Many young men in multiple interviews expressed their

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[39] Interview No. 117, Bokora male youth, Lokopo, Moroto District, February 24, 2009.
[40] Key informant no. 8, via email, April 10, 2012.

annoyance at having to make nightly visits to their women's homes, sometimes across

considerable distance and through insecure areas. This process is captured in the

terminology: a man still in the courtship phase is called *epeyonon*, meaning "visitor" in

reference to his status as a guest in the woman's hut.[41] A group of elders in Rupa

acknowledged that a young "man gets tired of visiting his girl all the time."[42] The

voicing of this annoyance, and the recognition of this by elders, is indicative of an

important social shift reflecting not only the change in living arrangements by young

couples but, perhaps more importantly, the growing weight of the wishes and preferences

of this younger generation. Young men have *always* had to make nightly visits to the

homes of their girlfriends, sometimes for years as they accrued the large herds for

bridewealth and marked the stages of courtship with various rituals and communal

ceremonies. It is only in recent years, however, that the opinions of young men would

weigh into the decisions made by parents about their daughters. This is but one example

of the shift towards increased agency and voice by male youth outside of the normative

authority structures, as discussed in more detail in the following chapter. To note, many

within the older generation – and some within the younger—do nuance their

understanding of the shift towards cohabitation in the absence of *akirop* or bridewealth as

a temporary state. As illustrated by the quote below, they view the move of their

daughters to the man's home as a "loan" and the bridewealth, *akirop* and even *ekicul*

payments as having been "postponed" to a later date.

> Elders have been forced to allow their children to stay with their men on loan,
> hoping that things will improve in future so that the young man will be able to
> pay us later. Even *ekicul* has been postponed.[43]

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[41] Key informant No. 8, via email, April 10, 2012.
[42] Interview No. 102. Matheniko elders, Rupa, Moroto District, July 10, 2008.
[43] Interview No. 160, Pian elders, Lorengedwat, Nakapiripirit District, February 18, 2009. The concept of the daughter being "on loan" to the man's homestead was also raised in Interview 159, Matheniko elders, Rupa, Moroto District, February 14, 2009; Interview 161, Pian elders, Lorengedwat, Nakapiripirit District, February

The understanding of bridewealth and related payments as being "postponed" relates to the findings from the study on important changes to the marriage process. These changes have occurred in response to the difficulties of paying bridewealth through either licit means (such as waiting for herds to reproduce, receiving animals from the older generations, receiving animals through the marriage of sisters, or acquiring animals through horizontal exchanges from age-mates) or illicit means (thefts or raids). The findings discussed here include lower overall levels of bridewealth accepted and negotiated, changes in the composition of the bridewealth received, couples working together to accrue the necessary bridewealth over time, girls "marrying their mothers," and a younger age of first marriage for both males and females.[44] Although there is some overlap between impacts on the process and on the institution of marriage, these findings primarily impact the marriage process, and changes to the institution of marriage are discussed subsequently.

Respondents across the study population stressed that when bridewealth existed at all in the present day, the levels of bridewealth that were negotiated between a man and his intended bride's family were much lower than they would have been in previous decades or past generations. Respondents listed various factors affecting the levels of required bridewealth, including the wealth of the groom's family and the size of the bride's clan, and thus reported levels of "normal" bridewealth differ by respondent, wealth group, and

19, 2009; Interview 172, Bokora male youth, Lokopo, Moroto District, April 4, 2009; Interview No. 196, Pian male youth, Namalu, Nakapiripirit District, May 12, 2009, and was shared among Jie respondents: Interview No. 173, Jie male youth, Rengen, Kotido District, April 6, 2009; Interview No. 175, Jie male youth, Kacheri, Kotido District, April 7, 2009; Interview No. 176, Jie male youth, Kacheri, Kotido District, April 8, 2009.

[44] In all instances, these aspects are more likely to be apparent in poorer than wealthier households. Wealthier households would likely have larger herds which would reproduce more quickly and would also be able to pay the bridewealth more rapidly, thus negating the need for new forms of bridewealth payments and marriage relationships. Due to the widespread erosion of assets as reported by the majority of respondents in the study population, the discussion in this chapter deals primarily with more disadvantaged households.

location. On average, however, bridewealth levels in previous generations among

Bokora, Matheniko and Pian respondents lie in range of 80-100 heads of cattle,[45] with

numbers as low as 40 if the groom's family was of low status[46] and reported transfers of

180-190 head of cattle in one site in Nakapiripirit.[47] Most respondents in all locations

stressed that bridewealth is simply no longer being paid, but there were cases in which

individual families had retained or been able to acquire animals and official marriages

had taken place. The size of bridewealth transfers in these instances ranged from as few

as 10 heads of cattle to as many as 60.[48] One group of male youth at a kraal near the

Moruagengan Hills in Rupa reported current bridewealth levels of 120 head of cattle if

the bride was from a large clan and "only 80 or 90 cattle" if she was from a small clan.

This sole example of bridewealth levels on par with the past is worth noting for three key

points it may reveal, namely that young men in kraals were likely to be from wealthier

families (i.e., they had animals to send to the kraals), that the Matheniko were considered

the wealthiest (in terms of livestock) among the three territorial groups, and that this

interview took place early in the field work for this study (May 2007), at a time prior to

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[45] 100 cattle is given as the bridewealth level in previous generations in many interviews, including: Interview No. 102, Matheniko elders, Rupa, Moroto District, July 10, 2008; Interview No. 104, Bokora young women, Lotome, Moroto District, July 14, 2008; Interview No. 110, Matheniko women, Rupa, Moroto District, July 8, 2008; Interview No. 129, Pian male youth, Lorengedwat, Nakapiripirit District, February 18, 2009; Interview No. 148, Pian elderly women, Lorengedwat, Nakapiripirit District, February 20, 2009. Interestingly, respondents did not discuss bridewealth levels as varying in periods of hardship such as the famine of 1980. This may have been due to generalizations on their part as to the overall improved conditions of previous time periods, or because of the temporary nature of the decrease in bridewealth associated with that event.

[46] Interview No. 159, Matheniko elders, Rupa, Moroto District, February 14, 2009,

[47] Interview No. 140, Pian male youth, Nabilatuk, Nakapiripirit District, February 27, 2009. Note that this was reported by male youth, and might have been an exaggeration to reflect past prosperity. This location, however, reported the highest levels of bridewealth in the present day (60 head of cattle), which may indicate overall greater levels of wealth in this area.

[48] These levels are reflected in multiple interviews across the study sites, including Interview No. 92, Matheniko adolescent girls, Katikekile, Moroto District, July 12, 2008; Interview No. 86, Matheniko woman, Rupa, Moroto District, July 8, 2008; Interview No. 7, Bokora male youth, Lopei, Moroto District, December 9, 2006; Interview No. 160, Pian male elders, Lorengedwat, Nakapiripirit District, February 18, 2009.

the creation of protected kraals in Rupa and before the combined impacts of drought and

disarmament had begun to decimate herds.[49]

Shifts in the composition of bridewealth, *ekicul* and *akirop* payments also reflect the

changes in the process of marriage. As in most pastoral societies, traditional bridewealth

was expected to be primarily in the form of cattle, although other animals were important

for specific ritual purposes, such as goats, bulls and rams given as part of the *ekicul*

payment.[50] Payment in anything other than cows required specific negotiations with the

woman's father,[51] and was looked down upon. Impoverishment is the primary factor in

the reduction of expectations surrounding marriage payments today, and a woman's

family is happy to receive any payment at all, as captured in the response of Bokora male

youth when asked if goats were accepted as part of bridewealth: "Yes! Anything with

four legs, or sometimes even chickens! [*laughter*]"[52] Male elders and key informants

explained that the relative ease of acquiring small ruminants means that there is a greater

portion of goats or sheep in relation to large animals in today's bridewealth payments,

with an exchange rate of 10 goats or sheep for one cow being the long accepted rate of

exchange.[53] The expansion of the cash economy into Karamoja has also affected the

composition of bridewealth payments, and some respondents stated that they would sell

crops or work in town to raise the money needed to buy animals for bridewealth.[54] A few

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[49] Interview No. 61, Matheniko male youth, Rupa, Moroto District, March 11, 2007.
[50] Interview No. 118, Bokora young women, Lokopo, Moroto District, February 24, 2009. The ram was part of a cleansing ritual for the mother after the birth of the child.
[51] Interview No. 140, Pian male youth, Nabilatuk, Nakapiripirit District, February 27, 2009.
[52] Interview No. 103, Bokora male youth, Lotome, Moroto District, July 14, 2008.
[53] Interview No. 102, Matheniko male elders, Rupa, July 10, 2008; Key informants Nos. 1, 3 and 4, Moroto town, July 11, 2008.
[54] Interview No. 106, Bokora male youth, Lokopo, Moroto District, July 15, 2008. Interview No. 109, Matheniko male youth, Rupa, Moroto District, July 8, 2008. Interview No. 142, Matheniko young woman, Nadunget, Moroto District, February15, 2009.

respondents said that payments could include cash, but this was most likely for the

ekicul[55] or a trend specifically occurring among the elite and/or those living in towns.[56]

One of the most interesting trends in the data with implications for both the process and institution of marriage has to do with the shift in responsibility for bridewealth acquisition and payment from the man on his own to the couple. This shift is indicative of broader changes in gender roles in Karimojong society, in which gendered divisions of labor are more fluid and both men and women are engaging, to varying degrees, in tasks previously considered the purview of the opposite gender.[57] In these livelihood strategies we normally see men taking on traditionally female roles (such as natural resource collection); in the case of marriage, on the other hand, the process entails men and women working together towards a goal that was once strictly the responsibility of men. The explanation of a Matheniko woman highlights several of these points:

> Men still do have that thinking or option [of paying bridewealth], even if it is just a few animals to give the in-laws. But there is a problem with this because there is nothing these days; therefore you engage in a partnership to cut charcoal and wood together and work together.[58]

As explained by a key informant, the cultivation could also take place at the home of the woman, and served the dual purpose of demonstrating the man's extent of his commitment to the woman as well as to the eventual accrual of bridewealth:

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[55] Interview No. 199, Pian women, Lolachat, Nakapiripirit District, May 9, 2009.
[56] Interview with Evelyn Ilukol, IRC, Moroto town, December 5, 2006. Interview No. 199, Pian women, Kakomongole, Nakapiripirit District, May 10, 2010. Key informants Nos. 1, 3 and 4, Moroto town, July 11, 2008.
[57] As discussed in more detail in chapter XX, men have expanded in to the collection of natural resources, a task previously done only by women. In addition, men's participation to agriculture has increased and diversified beyond the clearing of the fields and plowing, which were previously considered the "male" tasks of cultivation. One of many examples: "Men help in the fields; these days men also join women in the garden. In the past men only grazed and women did the work in the gardens. This is how it was in the time of our mothers." Interview No. 110, Matheniko women, Rupa, Moroto District, July 8, 2008.
[58] Interview No. 124, Matheniko woman, Rupa, Moroto District, February 14, 2009. Interview No. 102, Matheniko elders, Rupa, July 10, 2008. Interview No. 114, Matheniko male youth, Nadunget, Moroto District, July 11, 2008.

> One way to get respect is for the man to cultivate sorghum with the *Akapukupukut* [unofficial wife]. He comes and cultivates together with her at her father's house. Then the couple invests this in a goat, and then they next year in a cow. They start to get respect through diligence and gradual paying of the bridewealth.[59]

This finding is particularly interesting in that it highlights what could be considered the modernization of marriage on the one hand—with the emphasis on the couple as a unit working towards a common goal, as opposed to the couple being absorbed into the extended family—but also highlights the continuing strength of the traditional institution of bridewealth on the other. This trend is most visible in the data among Matheniko respondents. This may mean that more Matheniko couples are working together to accrue bridewealth than couples among the Pian or Bokora. It is more likely that this practice is widespread when couples are living together prior to the full transfer of bridewealth, but that it was only highlighted as such (or translated as such) in select interviews, most of which happened to be with Matheniko respondents. A corollary finding has to do with the period of time required for the complete transfer of bridewealth from the man to the women's family, if bridewealth is paid at all. Payments that are made are likely to be spread over a much longer period of time, and each installment is likely to be much smaller than it was in previous generations. In the words of Bokora male elders, "Bridewealth can be paid in bits."[60]

The number of couples living together without full payment of bridewealth has greatly increased in comparison to the past, and this status is continuing for extended periods or indefinitely. As discussed in more detail below, this living arrangement has become so

[59] Key informant No. 1, Matany, Moroto District, July 14, 2008.
[60] Interview No. 164, Bokora elders, Lokopo, Moroto District, February 24, 2009. Interview No. 168, Matheniko male youth, Nadunget, Moroto District, April 2, 2009. Interview No. 195, Pian male youth, Namalu, Nakapiripirit District, May 11, 2009. Interview No. 205, Pian male youth, Lorengedwat, Nakapiripirit District, May 14, 2009.

commonplace that both men and women use the terms "husband" (*eteran*) and "wife" (*ateran*) even when the official marriage process has not been completed. Acceptance of these social arrangements does not, however, mean that the debt of bridewealth has been forgotten by any of the parties. This debt becomes particularly relevant when it is time for the first daughter of the couple to marry. As bridewealth was never paid for the girl's mother, the daughter technically still belongs to her maternal grandfather's family and is not officially the offspring of her biological father. If bridewealth is to be paid for this daughter, the bridewealth will therefore go to her maternal grandfather and his kin. There is, however, a social mechanism that enables the marriage of the daughter to rectify the debts of her parents' generation, known as *Eit ikoku atokeng* and translated as "the girl marries her mother."[61] The exact details would be negotiated on a case-by-case basis, but the concept and meaning remain the same, whereby the bridewealth payment received for the first daughter of a couple that is not officially married is given to her maternal grandparents (as is their right), *but* that this bridewealth "counts" not as the daughter's bridewealth, but as the bridewealth payment for her mother.

> When a daughter of *Akapukupukut* marries the father will get one cow, though if the in-laws are good they might allow this to count as the bride price. If this is the case they will give him the animals and then he will use these to pay for his wife. This is when 'the daughter marries her mother.'[62]

Bridewealth payments from subsequent daughters are therefore owed to the daughters' father, who has finally met his responsibility to his in-laws. The girl's biological father would normally receive one cow in this process, known as *nauriyet*, in recognition of his

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[61] This practice was brought up in numerous interviews. Terminology provided by Key informant No. 8, via email, April 10, 2012.
[62] Interview No. 194, Pian elders, Kakomongole, Nakapiripirit, May 10, 2009. This arrangement was mentioned in all three territorial sections, but, as it depends upon the largesse of the in-laws, it is difficult to say how widespread the practice may be.

role in raising the daughter.[63] If his in-laws refused to recognize the bridewealth of their

granddaughter as covering the marriage of their own daughter, then their son-in-law

would continue to receive only the token payment of *nauriyet* at the marriage of each of

his subsequent daughters until he had paid the separate outstanding bridewealth for his

wife. The extent of benefits for the girl's father depends on each individual family

relationship, but respondents in several locations in Nakapiripirit stated that in-laws were

likely to be generous and to split all bridewealth from the granddaughters of unofficial

unions at a ratio up to 50:50 with the fathers.[64] These arrangements are only meaningful,

of course, if livestock are available for bridewealth.

The final finding on changes in the marriage process is the younger age at which both

males and females are entering into serious courtships as a result of shifts in livelihood

patterns and difficulty in acquiring bridewealth. This finding seems at first to be

counterintuitive, as one might expect age of first serious liaison to rise due to the

difficulties in acquiring bridewealth. However, because many males report that they are

simply unable to pay bridewealth in any form and this is coming to be both recognized

and accepted by the older generations, the imperative to build herds prior to beginning

the marriage process no longer exists. In addition, when cattle were plentiful a girl might

have multiple suitors in her adolescent years and into her early 20s, but a more serious

liaison would most likely occur after it was clear who was in the best position to pay her

bridewealth. In many instances this decision would have involved active participation on

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[63] Interview No. 166, Pian elders, Nabilatuk, Nakapiripirit District, February 18, 2009. Key informant No. 8, via email, April 12, 2012.
[64] Interview No. 194, Pian elders, Kakomongole, Nakapiripirit District, May 10, 2009. Interview No. 196, Pian male youth, Namalu, Nakapiripirit District, May 12, 2009.

the part of the girl's parents (and sometimes selection of a mate by the parents).[65] If

bridewealth payments were excessively delayed or not forthcoming on schedule, the girl

(or her parents) could instead offer her hand to another suitor able to pay bridewealth for

the girl and any children she might have (from any union).[66] In the absence of

bridewealth there is little viable competition after the initial pairing off of couples, and

thus both boys and girls end up coupling earlier. Respondents of all ages and both

genders stated that these courtships were occurring at a younger age and provided a

variety of reasons for this shift. Some elders blamed this change on the sexuality of

female youth and the increased idleness due to lack of animal-based livelihoods. A group

of Pian elders linked this to the increased prevalence of relief food, food that you did not

have to work to get:

> In the past the *karacuna* (girls and boys) would mature fully at home. But now
> the girls are marrying in their early teens—as soon as they start adolescence and
> the breasts start shooting—ages 12-15. There is no waiting! The girls are
> initiating these marriages at a young age. They have eaten WFP food and they
> have not been doing work, so their blood is very hot. In the past they were doing
> lots of work and doing all of this work with animals, but now they do not work
> with animals and there is WFP food so their blood is very hot. They are the first
> to provoke the young men. You find that they have gone to their men without
> *akirop* or anything. [67]

Young female respondents were more likely to ascribe this change to financial necessity

or survival, as opposed to "hot-bloodedness:"

> In the past, girls were fully matured before having children, but there are many
> changes in this generation. Because of hunger a girl needs a man to care for her,
> so she seeks to be with a man at a younger age. She thinks, 'Let me marry so a
> man can help care for me.'[68]

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[65] Interview No. 157, Pian elderly woman, Nabilatuk, Nakapiripirit District, February 28, 2009. Interview
No. 147, Pian women, Lorengedwat, Nakapiripirit District, February 19, 2009. Interview No. 154, Bokora
young woman, Lokopo, Moroto District, February 24, 2009.
[66] Key informant No. 1, Dartmouth, Massachusetts, May 16, 2008. Interview No. 102, Matheniko elders,
Rupa, Moroto District, July 10, 2008. Interview No. 160, Pian elders, Lorengedwat, Nakapiripirit District,
February 18, 2009.
[67] Interview No. 194, Pian elders, Kakomongole, Nakapiripirit District, May 10, 2009.
[68] Interview No. 138, Pian young women, Nabilatuk, Nakapiripirit District, February 28, 2009.

Many respondents mentioned the demise of the traditional kraal system as contributing to the reduction in the age of marriage. Adolescents would get to know each other at the kraals, often removed from their parents' supervision, but official courtships would not begin until much later. Boys and girls also learned skills that were important for supporting their own households:

> In the past we would take the animals to the kraals and by the time we came back we would be very mature, and marriage would take place only at that time. The girls were old enough to know how to water animals, to build the house, to take care of the animals.[69]

This period of casual social mixing ended with the collapse of the kraal system, reducing the age of marriage. This is touched on in the following quotation, as is the need to move animals to prevent them from being taken in a raid:

> In the past, girls and boys used to go to the kraal together. They would drink milk and dance, and when they came back and asked parents for marriage they would be very mature. But these days things have changed. They marry in a hurry. The parents say 'go marry, instead of these animals getting raided or thin because of drought, go give these to some in-laws.' This passes the problems to the in-laws, who also quickly move them off to marry their boys. During the marriage season [after harvest], animals can change many hands.[70]

In a particularly candid moment, a different group of young men in the same location explained that the need to move animals quickly might not always be defensive in nature:

> *Why do you think the age of marriage is coming down?*
>
> Because if you raid a few cows you need to pass them on, so you take advantage of giving them to the girl's parents and then you have started the marriage process.[71]

These same young men highlighted the importance of having a mate to their own identity, as well as their relationship with their peers: "Also, *pride* makes you want to get a girl. This makes you feel proud about yourself. You see other men having girls and

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[69] Interview No. 168, Matheniko male youth, Nadunget, Moroto District, April 2, 2009.
[70] Interview No. 169, Matheniko male youth, Nadunget, Moroto District, April 2, 2009.
[71] Interview No. 178, Matheniko male youth, Nadunget, Moroto District, April 2, 2009.

you want this as well." Regardless of the reasons for the decreasing age of unions, many respondents bemoaned the increased strain that these relationships placed upon families and communities who end up caring for a growing number of young children. The changes to the marriage process and the diversification of the means of paying bridewealth as apparent in the data for this study are indicative of many factors, including increased impoverishment, loss of livelihoods, and growing acceptance on the part of the elder generations of the new lifestyles experienced by the youth. In thinking about the role of violence as both a cause and result of social change, perhaps the most important theme in the ways the marriage process has changed is in the increased agency of youth, both male and female. Young men and women have much greater influence over the marriage process than previously, and the shifts in gender roles and generational expectations are apparent in the examples of couples working together to raise bridewealth, cohabitating before full payment of bridewealth or even *akirop*, and the younger age of marriage. In addition, by entering into marriages that do not require the exchange of cattle – physical and financial capital closely controlled by the elders – young men and women are creating new (and potentially positive) institutions that operate outside of the traditional and hierarchy-based systems of authority and control.

As discussed earlier, violence underpins many of these changes in the marriage process. Violence is fundamentally linked to the demise of a livestock-based bridewealth system, as well as the erosion of social ties and systems of exchange that supported traditional forms of marriage. The changes in the marriage process are but one visible example of the ways in which young men (and, in different ways, young women) have gained agency and autonomy. Engagement in violence that is outside the realm of what is permissible or condoned by the elders is another highly visible example of this increased agency. As

discussed in more depth in the coming chapters, this increased violence has transformed

social and economic processes and has created a growing chasm within the system of

male political authority, with important and widespread implications on systems of

governance. The next section of this chapter continues the narrative on marriage and

illustrates the ways in which violence and livelihoods change altered the institution as

well as the marriage process.

Changes in the Institution of Marriage

This study finds that changes in Karimojong marriage are also visible in the institution of

marriage itself, and that these changes hallmark a blurring of the distinction between

"official" and "unofficial" marriage. These institutional aspects are most readily apparent

in the perceptions of individuals within marriages and by the larger community, and have

important implications for the status, rights and obligations of men and women engaged

in marriage. The related findings discussed here cover the changing nomenclature of

marriage and shifts in the protections offered to and status of women and children.

Implications for the status of men are addressed in the following section.

Changes in Marriage as Evidenced in Changes in Nomenclature

The evolution of marriage is apparent, in part, in how it is discussed and understood by

respondents within the study. The correct term for a woman who is in a relationship prior

to the full payment of bridewealth is *apethe* (best translated as "a young girl grown up")

or *akapukupukut*. The man who makes nightly visits to his female partner is *epeyonon*

(visitor). These terms appear to be declining in usage among young people, and are most

often only mentioned if people were asked details of their official marital status. A key

informant, himself a young man from Bokora, explained that the term *akapukupukut* called attention to the lack of bridewealth, and was out of favor today:

> In years back when there were many cattle the name *Akapukupukut* was widely used and accepted but now with very few able bodied men capable to give many cattle for marriage the name appears like an insult to those women whose husbands could not afford the many cattle for marrying them.[72]

Instead, couples are using the terms *eteran* (husband) and *ateran* (wife) even in the absence of official marriage. In fact, the "unfinished" nature of their marital status is often not referenced at all. This was particularly apparent in interviews with women, in which respondents in multiple locations would refer repeatedly to their "husbands," both before and after it was established that bridewealth had not been paid, either at all or in full.[73] This study finds that this is more than a change in terminology, but a shift in the very understanding of the institution of marriage. As evident in the explanation of a young Matheniko woman, the transformation of the marriage process has led to new understandings of matrimony: "Women no longer marry officially. Men and women meet, have an affair, and then live together."[74] This is seen as a marked change from the past. For example, when a young Pian woman was asked if she would leave her "husband" if another man came along who could pay bridewealth, she responded, "No! If I am with this man, even if he is poor, I will stay with him! It is only in the past that these things happened."[75] She explained that "these things"—going to another man who had cattle—happened in the past because people "were ignorant" and did not "understand how it would pain a man if someone came for his wife and children." A different situation again illustrates the changes in how people view marriage: two young women

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[72] Key informant No. 8, via email, March 30, 2012.
[73] When this trend became apparent, the first assumption was that respondents wished to downplay their unofficial liaisons out of embarrassment or shame in the context of an interview discussion with outsiders. This explanation was discarded after multiple discussions regarding differences in the status of men and women accordingly to their marital status, and is covered in more detail below.
[74] Interview No. 141, Matheniko young woman, Nadunget, Moroto District, February 15, 2009.
[75] Interview No. 135, Pian young woman, Lorengedwat, Nakapiripirit District, February 20, 2009.

interviewed in Rupa explained that their "husbands" had been detained by the UPDF the previous year and there had been no news of either man since. No bridewealth had been paid and the women were still living in their parents' homes, but they considered themselves married and said they would not consider finding another man, even one who could pay bridewealth, until they knew their husbands' fates.[76] Young people's lack of differentiation between official and unofficial marriage is less consistently expressed by the older generation. Older respondents were more likely to conceive of marriage as only being complete or official upon the full payment of bridewealth and, accordingly, to use the term *Akapukupukut* when referring to their unmarried daughters or daughters-in-law.[77] However, respondents of all ages and in all locations acknowledged that such unofficial unions were widespread and had become the new status quo.[78]

Implications for Female Status

A result of the blurring of the line between official and unofficial marriage is the changing understanding of female status within a household and community based upon marital status. In previous generations, if a man paid *akirop* and brought his intended bride into his homestead prior to the full payment of bridewealth, she would have held a greatly inferior status to any officially married women (both her own co-wives and the wives of other males) within the man's extended family. She would occupy the lowest rung on the social hierarchy, and be treated as such. At the time of this study, however, respondents in multiple sites across the study population stressed that there was very little

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[76] Interview No. 124, Matheniko young women, Rupa, February 14, 2009.
[77] For instance, Interview No. 102, Matheniko elders, Rupa, Moroto District, July 10, 2008; Interview No. 165, Pian elders, Nabilatuk, Nakapiripirit District, February 27, 2009; Interview No. 155, Bokora elderly woman, Lokopo, Moroto District, February 24, 2009.
[78] The terms "husband" and "wife" and "marry" will be used throughout the remainder of this dissertation to reflect the updated understandings of these words. When relevant, a distinction will be made between "official" and "unofficial."

difference in the status of women based on payment or non-payment of bridewealth.[79]

As a young Bokora woman explained, even visible status markers are considered

unimportant today:

> It is all the same these days. [All women] dress alike. Formerly, the difference was in the necklaces that were worn by officially married women. Now even some officially married women no longer wear them.[80]

Several respondents emphasized the shared experience of hardship in explaining the

irrelevance of status in today's society: "Everyone here is in the same condition—

married, not married, women, men, etc. We all eat the same wild vegetables."[81] Put

another way, these social distinctions become less relevant when everyone is struggling

for basic daily subsistence and survival. In fact, the only time that the status of women as

officially or unofficially married *does* matter is during rituals or ceremonies, which are

themselves rare occurrences due to the lack of surplus food for feasts or beer making.

When such events do take place, however, women who are officially married receive

priority in seating and access to meat over those who are not officially part of their

husband's clan.[82] Again, the view that status among women was no longer linked to

marriage was most commonly expressed by younger men and women, with male elders

the most likely to insist that status differentials were still in place. "A young woman in

the man's clan who is properly married will be more respected than the old

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[79] Interview No. 82, Matheniko women, Rupa, Moroto District, July 8, 2008. Interview No. 103, Bokora male youth, Lotome, Moroto District, July 14, 2008. Interview No. 114, Matheniko male youth, Nadunget, Moroto District, July 11, 2008. Interview No. 135, Pian young women, Lorengedwat, Nakapiripirit District, February 20, 2009.

[80] Interview No. 154, Bokora young woman, Lokopo, Moroto District, February 24, 2009. The changing significance of the metal necklaces—considered the signal of official marriage—was reiterated in multiple interviews. Some women reported having removed their necklaces because they no longer had the animal fat needed to keep them polished and rust-free. Other young women said they wore the necklaces "just for play" even when they were not officially married.

[81] Interview No. 107, Matheniko woman, Rupa, Moroto District, July 8, 2008.

[82] Interview No. 135, Pian young women, Lorengedwat, Nakapiripirit District, February 20, 2009. Interview No. 138, Pian young women, Nabilatuk, Nakapiripirit District, February 28, 2009. Interview No. 142, Matheniko young woman, Nadunget, Moroto District, February 15, 2009. Interview No. 152, Bokora young women, Lotome, Moroto District, February 23, 2009.

Akapukupukut. In fact the young woman will be ordering the old *Akapukupukut* to do things for her."[83]

The question of status for a woman who joins her husband's home goes beyond the social hierarchy. When bridewealth is paid in full, a woman and her children become official members of the man's clan, and, as such, are entitled to protection and support from the clan. If, for instance, the woman or children needed medical treatment that is beyond the means of their household the family could turn to the clan for assistance. A widow within the clan has rights to the property (including livestock) of her deceased husband, but is normally "inherited" within the clan and is expected to marry her husband's brother or other suitable male relative. The new husband then takes control of the inherited property.[84] Orphaned children are fostered by the husband's relatives or other clan members. These social obligations are grounded in the exchange of bridewealth: the transfer of cattle means that the woman and children are not only members of the clan but also *assets* of the clan and, as such, the clan seeks to maintain control over their reproductive and productive capacities, not the least of which are the bridewealth payments that will ideally be amassed upon the marriage of any daughters. As such, it is extremely difficult for a woman to leave her husband or his clan once bridewealth has

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[83] Interview No. 102, Matheniko elders, Rupa, Moroto District, July 10, 2008
[84] Respondents stated that a woman could refuse to be inherited and would be allowed to remain within the clan, but that if she took up with another man (from outside the clan) her family would have to repay the bridewealth. Interview No. 82, Matheniko women, Rupa, Moroto District, July 8, 2008; Interview No. 110, Matheniko women, Rupa, Moroto District, July 8, 2008; Interview No. 139, Pian young women, Nabilatuk, Nakapiripirit District, February 27, 2009. A woman who refuses to marry one of her husband's relatives often loses access to anything she inherited from her husband as such assets are taken over by his extended family. Interview with Evelyn Ilukol, IRC, Moroto town, December 5, 2006. As such, many women stated that they preferred marrying within the family in order to have at least indirect benefits from the property left by their husbands. However, as some pointed out, raids are the most common cause of death of men in their prime years and most livestock wealth would be lost over the course of a deadly raid, meaning there is little to inherit anyway. Other women had opted to remain single as they did not perceive an economic benefit in marrying man who was already poor. Interview No. 107, Matheniko woman, Rupa, Moroto District, July 8, 2008.

been paid to her family. Intra-household disputes are mediated by the community (male) elders and, if necessary, the (male) clan hierarchy. If domestic problems are extreme enough to warrant the woman's return to her natal clan it would be expected that bridewealth would be repaid. This is unlikely to be welcomed by the woman's family who has since dispersed the animals for the bridewealth payments of sons, horizontal debts and vertical transfers, etc. In addition, the woman would not retain custody of her children unless her family was prepared to offer cattle in exchange—again, an unlikely arrangement.[85]

This study found that the nature of clan protections, status and expectations for women and children are evolving in line with the changing nature of marriage. As expected in a dynamic and evolving system, variations existed by location and sometimes from one respondent to the next within the same study site. The predominant trend in the data, however, is that women who move to their husbands' homes without full payment of bridewealth can expect some protection and support from the clan but are able to retain a great deal more autonomy than women for whom full bridewealth was paid. The expectation of provision of support appears to be the case even if the woman is not living in the man's home. For example, a respondent in an interview with four young Pian women, all of whom considered themselves married but were still living in their parents' homes, said:

> *What happens if there is a medical problem with a child and you are not officially married?*
>
> If the man is not around, the woman can go the man's parents even though she is not officially married and they will assist—also [his] brothers. This does not happen only for an officially married woman. Anyone who is with the man has

[85] Interview No. 119, Bokora male youth, Lotome, Moroto District, February 23, 2009.

the right to go to his clan and ask for help. They will all be treated the same because they are all equal.[86]

The obligations of the man's family were also referenced by the two young Matheniko women whose husbands had disappeared into military custody: these women and their children were still residing with their parents, but said that the missing men's families had obligations to provide support if needed. In addition, should they learn of the death of their husbands, the women explained that they would negotiate with the men's families either to be inherited by another male relative or to clear the way for remarriage to an outsider. They explained, "We will do this [negotiate] because we came to an agreement with our husbands when we married them, even though we weren't officially married."[87] However, there is no hard and fast rule dictating the nature of these relationships, and each specific arrangement clearly depends on the families and personalities involved.[88] However, the very fact that marriage-like protections and expectations are being extended in the absence of official marriage indicates the extent of the transformation of the institution or, at the very least, the acceptance of the continuation of the institution even without certain formalities.

The study found that widows from unofficial unions can be inherited by their husband's male relatives in most cases, and may, in some cases, be able to retain access to his property.[89] When a woman from an unofficial marriage is inherited, the obligation for

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[86] Interview No. 135, Pian young women, Lorengedwat, Nakapiripirit District, February 20, 2009.
[87] Interview No. 124, Matheniko young women, Rupa, Moroto District, February 14, 2009.
[88] For instance, a young Bokora woman whose (unofficial) husband had been sent to jail for eight years stated, "I will find another husband. Since I am unmarried, it will not be a problem to find another. They will come to me to express interest in marrying me. They have not come yet, because they still fear that he will return." Interview No. 154, Bokora young woman, Lokopo, Moroto District, February 24, 2009.
[89] Interview No. 105, Bokora women, Lokopo, Moroto District, July 15, 2008. Interview No. 110, Matheniko women, Rupa, Moroto District, July 8, 2008. Interview No. 116, Matheniko women, Katikekile, Moroto District, July 12, 2008.

any unpaid bridewealth is transferred to her new husband;[90] in contrast, if she were

officially married (and hence already a member of the clan) there would be no

bridewealth expectations at the time of inheritance. A widow from an unofficial marriage

can refuse to be inherited but, unlike in the case of official marriage, she would most

likely then leave her husband's clan and return to her natal home.[91] Again, arrangements

vary on a case-by-case basis, which illustrates the loosening of the significance and

expectations of bridewealth. Of greater importance is the nature of relationships, as

captured in the response of a young woman when asked what happens to a widow who

was not officially married: "If his family loves her, they will take her in; if not, she will

need to find support for herself by marrying someone else."[92]

Implications for Male Status and Differing Views by Gender

This study finds that while the evolution of the process and institution of marriage in

recent years has created much more flexibility for women at the individual level, these

changes are, by and large, viewed as mostly *negative* for men when compared to what

marriage once bestowed. These negative aspects directly related to what would be seen

as an increase in women's rights from a western liberal perspective—namely, the

freedom to leave a union at any time and the right of child custody. Men do not have

ownership over their women and children unless marriage is made official through the

payment of bridewealth. Respondents across the study population explained that this

enables women to leave their husbands for a variety of reasons, including abuse, neglect,

marital disputes, or financial necessity. Men who were in unofficial unions expressed

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[90] Interview No. 108, Matheniko male youth, Rupa, Moroto District, July 8, 2008.
[91] Interview No. 86, Matheniko woman, Rupa, Moroto District, July 8, 2008. Key informant no. 1, Dartmouth, Massachusetts, May 16, 2008. Interview No. 102, Matheniko elders, Rupa, Moroto District, July 10, 2008.
[92] Interview No. 141, Matheniko young woman, Nadunget, Moroto District, February 15, 2009.

frustration with women who "go home to their parents when the slightest thing happens,"[93] and several male and female respondents said that men were less likely to beat wives if they were not officially married. The widespread impoverishment in the region is cited as one of the main underlying problems, and many women return to their parents when their husbands cannot support them. This shifts the burden to the woman's father; in the case of official marriage, the obligation would be on the husband.[94] Out-migration is an increasingly common livelihood strategy, and many of those moving to urban areas and/or leaving the region are young women who have more readily transferable livelihood skills (such as domestic experience and food preparation) than their male counterparts whose talents lie primarily in animal husbandry (Sundal 2010).[95] Respondents report that many women leave of their own volition without discussing the matter with their families. The husbands they leave behind have little choice but to accept the situation:

> Since they just climb on vehicles and go and they are looking for support elsewhere, we no longer consider them our women. They are not our wives anymore. This is because she is someone else's daughter and we did not pay for her, so we could not keep her as ours.[96]

Men in these positions lose not only their wives but also their children, as a woman in an unofficial union retains custody of her children. This applies whether she leaves during the marriage or upon widowhood, and includes even those children born after moving to the husband's homestead, as the children remain the property of the woman's family unless bridewealth has been paid.[97]

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[93] Interview No. 103, Bokora male youth, Lotome, Moroto District, July 14, 2008.
[94] Interview No. 96, Bokora women, Lokopo, Moroto District, July 15, 2008.
[95] As Sundal explains, members of the Bokora territorial group make up the majority of migrants leaving the area. This is due to a longer history of out-migration, greater interaction with the Teso communities across the border, closer proximity to other parts of Uganda, and early losses of cattle in the 1980s.
[96] Interview No. 119, Bokora male youth, Lotome, Moroto District, February 23, 2009.
[97] Interview No. 89, Matheniko women, Nadunget, Moroto District, July 11, 2008. Interview No. 110, Matheniko women, Rupa, Moroto District, July 8, 2008.

The loss of the children is a particularly difficult blow to a man's status on several levels, and is indicative of the mostly negative impacts for men brought by the changing nature of marriage. First and foremost, the departure of children with their mother for any reason is a stark comment on the failure of the man to provide for his family, either through the bridewealth that would ensure custody or through regular support that would decrease the economic incentives for migration. As discussed in greater depth in chapter six, the cross-cultural importance of the masculine role of protector and provider is highly applicable to Karamoja, and the inability of a man to play these roles within his household is an insult to his status and identity. Secondly, extended families place great value on children for the benefits they may bring through social, human and financial capital. Interestingly, even though current payments of bridewealth are rare and many young people do not expect to marry through the exchange of cattle, the association between girl children and future bridewealth remains strong. This view is held by both young and old men and women, as illustrated in the following from a discussion with young Bokora women: "The value of a girl is her eventual bridewealth! It will benefit the co-wives and the uncles and everyone! What is the value of a daughter without this?"[98] Boys are also seen as sources of eventual future benefits to their families through the support they will provide and the families they will eventual raise themselves within the homestead. These benefits are only possible when bridewealth has been paid, as evident in the emphasis in the following:

> You care for these children and when they grow you will benefit from them if they are *yours*. You benefit through marriage if they are girls, and through their jobs and money if they are either boys or girls.[99]

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[98] Interview No. 118, Bokora young women, Lokopo, Moroto District, February 14, 2009.
[99] Interview No. 205, Pian male youth, Lorengedwat, Nakapiripirit District, May 14, 2009.

Children's human capital is of central important to the functioning of household livelihood strategies. Duties for boy and girl children begin at a very young age and include herding goats and other small animals (for boys), helping with food preparation and child care (for girls), fetching water, collecting firewood, and collecting wild vegetables (girls), and assisting with cultivation (girls and boys).[100] Although more children mean more mouths to feed, having many children of both genders is widely considered essential to successful livelihood strategies and thus a reflection of a man's potential for wealth over the course of his lifetime. When a woman departs with her children, a man – and his community—are left bereft of not only the current children, but of the prospect of future children from this union.

The third reason that child custody is important to men is because of the social status brought by having a large family. This relates to the above points about the human and eventual financial capital of children, but links more directly to a man's stature. Having children naturally indicates male virility and is a boost to male identity, but also contains a promise of future social capital. The cows brought in through the bridewealth of daughters are about more than financial well-being; by bolstering a man's herds they increase his ability to make horizontal transfers and loans to his age-mates or offerings to his elders. Expectations of reciprocity increase with his ability to make these exchanges, and a man's standing among his peer group and within the wider community increases accordingly. A young woman gave her view on why a man needed many wives and many children:

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[100] The gender specific roles for children were discussed in all interviews in which we covered household livelihood strategies, and were similar across all study sites.

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> They look to the future and they want their families to be large! This is because in case he dies, he wants to be known for producing many children. Having many wives and children makes a man *popular* in his community.[101]

As discussed in reference to stock associates in chapter one, social connectivity is central to the functioning of pastoral societies, and these connections become strained in the absence of regular exchanges. "Free things are always exchanged for friendship. You may ask your friend for something and exchange with him."[102] At the family level, having women and children gives a man adequate status and capital to start their own homes and homesteads, as opposed to remaining within the homes of their fathers. Men who are not guaranteed of continued custody over their children (and wives) lack the credibility to establish their own homes and therefore remain as junior members of their father's family.[103] It is perhaps due to these connections between wealth and cattle and male status that a group of young Matheniko men associate what they see as negative changes in their culture to the changes within marriage:

> The wealth [in cattle] kept our culture strong. The main issue of culture being reduced today has to do with the change in marriage. Because there is poverty and no food the culture is changing—this is mainly around marriage. But also it is changing in other ways. For instance, in the past we would have you [a visitor] at our homes to eat while we talked.[104]

In the view of these men, changes in marriage bring a decline in the culture, which is both fueled by and resulting in poverty. This poverty, in turn, further undermines not only marriage, but also the customs surrounding hospitality and exchange and expectations of providing food for a guest to your home. The young men in the study population do not say so directly—perhaps because of the implied admission of responsibility—but this study finds that it is *violence,* not poverty, that is the critical

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[101] Interview No. 135, Pian young woman, Lorengedwat, Nakapiripirit District, February 20, 2009. Emphasis as provided in translation.
[102] Interview No. 61, Matheniko male youth, Rupa, Moroto District, March 11, 2007.
[103] Interview No. 126, Matheniko male youth, Nadunget, Moroto District, February 15, 2009.
[104] Interview No. 109, Matheniko male youth, Rupa, Moroto District, July 8, 2008.

underlying change agent behind the demise of wealth in cattle, evolution of the marriage

process and institution, and ultimately leads to the poverty and loss of culture that these

men lament. As a result of the linked processes of violence, livelihoods loss and poverty,

these men are no longer able to control the assets of marriage—women and children—

and as such are losing access to wealth and social status.

Not all the changes to marriage are viewed as negative, particularly from the female

perspective. One of the reasons that some women within the study population may feel

that there are positive elements of unofficial marriage is because of the changing status of

children born of these marriages. Key informants explained that in previous eras the

children of such unions would have a lesser status than children from official marriages if

they lived within their fathers' homes and also often received poor treatment by their

uncles if they stayed within the mother's natal homestead. At their fathers' homes they

were looked down upon as "children of concubines" and often particularly poorly treated

by any official co-wives of their mothers.[105] Those who remained within their mothers'

family homes were seen as extra mouths to feed prior to the payment of bridewealth (for

the children and their mothers) and were normally assigned the worst chores. A key

informant who worked in peace building reported that intra-family disputes often entailed

disagreements between women and their fathers or uncles over the treatment of their

children.[106] The data for this study, however, indicate that unofficial marriage is now so

widespread that women perceive little if any difference in either the status or treatment of

children from official versus unofficial unions regardless of place of residence.[107] No

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[105] Key informant No. 1, Dartmouth, Massachusetts, May 16, 2008.
[106] Ibid.
[107] Interview No. 104, Bokora young women, Lotome, Moroto District, July 14, 2008. Interview No. 105, Bokora young women, Lokopo, Moroto District, July 15, 2008. Interview No. 107, Matheniko woman, Rupa,

longer having to worry about daily ostracism or mistreatment of their children may contribute to the more positive view held by women of the new form of marriage.

Some women saw positive personal benefits while also recognizing the less beneficial aspects for their extended families. This finding is particularly relevant as an example of the growing sense of personal identity of the younger generations, whereby an individual can acknowledge the coexistence of positive personal benefits and negative community repercussions. In several instances, the main positive aspect for individual women was being able to leave the union with her children if and when desired.[108] The concept of individual as opposed to communal benefits is indicative of the evolution of marriage as an institution. This is illustrated by the discussion of a number of women of their love for their husbands, even in the absence of bridewealth, and, while recognizing that their parents would certainly have preferred bridewealth payments, they themselves did not find this particularly relevant in the short to medium term.[109] These couples are forging a new and increasingly prevalent model of marriage, whereby the man and woman cohabitate and work as a domestic unit even in the absence of wider clan involvement.[110] Importantly, this evolution of marriage does not indicate a complete abandonment of bridewealth, and men and women continued to recognize this transfer as an important—if perhaps unattainable—ritual in their lives. The statement of a young Matheniko woman

Moroto District, July 8, 2008. Interview No. 135, Pian young women, Lorengedwat, Nakapiripirit District, February 20, 2009. Interview No. 138, Pian young women, Nabilatuk, Nakapiripirit District, February 28, 2009.
[108] Interview No. 89, Matheniko women, Nadunget, Moroto District, July 11, 2008. Interview No. 93, Bokora women, Lotome, Moroto District, July 14, 2008. As discussed earlier, the freedom for women to leave relationships was raised by men in multiple interviews as well.
[109] Interview No. 135, Pian young woman, Lorengedwat, Nakapiripirit District, February 20, 2009.
[110] An example of the shift towards a domestic unit based on the couple is the increased involvement of men in all aspects of cultivation, as reported by some male and female respondents. In previous generations, male roles around cultivation would have been more specifically limited to clearing the fields at the start of the season, but today they are more likely to be involved in the digging as well, a job previously reserved for women. Interview No. 114, Matheniko male youth, Nadunget, Moroto District, July 11, 2008. Interview No. 130, Pian young women, Lorengedwat, Nakapiripirit District, February 18, 2009.

points to the longer-term goal of eventual bridewealth that many of these young women

do hold on to:

> No one here is married with cattle of my age mates. We are all just
> *Akapukupukut*. Three of my friends have children and three of us don't. The
> ones with children plan to marry with cattle the father of those children. They
> say they love these men. If another man comes with animals, though, we won't
> accept. Even if our men are poor and burn charcoal, we'll just stay with them.[111]

The explanation above highlights the perceived *validity* of unofficial marriage in the eyes

of young women, even while they hope for an eventual official marriage. Most young

women within the study, in addition to many respondents of all ages and both genders,

accept the current reality of marriage, a marriage in which few if any cattle are exchanged

and in which men and women live together and raise children in the absence of official

marriage rituals and recognition. However, even the young women who saw some

personal benefits to this arrangement were clear that their preference would be official

marriage with cattle, marriage which brought assets to their parents, protection and

official clan membership for their children, and increased status for themselves and their

husbands.

The Quest for Bridewealth as an Explanation for Violence, To a Point

Returning to the earlier discussion in this chapter, the findings on the evolution of the

process and institution of marriage allow for a reexamination of the relationship between

marriage and raiding. The dominant hypothesis predicts that men's quest for bridewealth

is a driving factor in cattle raids and the associated violence, and the data from this study

not only confirm this hypothesis but also show that raiding for bridewealth became even

more prevalent as male initiations dwindled. With the primary and preferred rite of

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[111] Interview No. 35, Matheniko young woman, Rupa, Moroto District, March 10, 2007.

passage unavailable and the ranks of uninitiated male adults swelling rapidly through the

1980s and 1990s, marriage became increasingly important as one of the only means

available to establish oneself as an adult male in the eyes of the community. Raiding and

the violence associated with raiding increased dramatically throughout this period, and

intensified as livestock gradually became more difficult to acquire. As such, the data

confirm the validity of this hypothesis and explain how the relationship between marriage

and raiding fluctuated as a function of the decreasing prevalence of male initiation.

As part of the investigation of marriage, however, this study also uncovered the on-going

evolution of marriage itself. Marriage *was* a very important aspect in establishing

manhood, and raiding for bridewealth *was* an effective and rapid means of amassing the

necessary cattle while at the same time operating beyond the reach of control of the

established authority systems. Raided animals (including some that were given in

bridewealth) were often sold quickly to avoid tracking and punitive attacks, leading to the

transfer of animal wealth out of the region. This process of asset stripping and associated

spiraling violence combined with and reinforced a series of external processes including

growing restrictions on livestock mobility and the collapse of stock associate

relationships that had allowed for access to dry season grazing. In what Young et al.

(2007) term indirect asset stripping, the violence and upheaval brought wider scale

economic turmoil and collapse. These factors led to overall declines in livestock health, a

drop in market prices, reduced terms of trade for commodities, and increased wealth

inequity among the Karimojong. Grave impacts were apparent in human well-being by

the late 1990s, including increased morbidity and mortality of both adults (especially men

in their reproductive prime) and children, undernutrition (wasting and stunting) of

children, low female fertility, and relief-induced changes in settlement patterns (Gray et

al. 2003). The violence eventually led to a forceful crack-down by the state, and the resulting but uneven disarmament campaign in 2001-2002 exacerbated many of the existing vulnerabilities and left disarmed groups open to attack from stronger neighbors, with disastrous consequences.

This study finds that as a result of the above processes, the ability of young men to pay bridewealth had decreased substantially by the early 2000s. By the start of the field research and the 2006 disarmament campaign, many people were unable to make even the *akirop* or *ekicul* payments. As detailed in this chapter, this had profound effects on both the process and institution of marriage, with important impacts on living arrangements, male and female status relations, gender roles within the household, inheritance, and child custody. This also had critical impacts on the role of raiding within society and, in particular, the relationship between violent livestock raiding and marriage. In short, by the early to mid 2000s, the quest for bridewealth no longer offered an explanation for the pervasive insecurity in society, as bridewealth payments were simply not being made in most cases. Hence, we see that while this dominant hypothesis—that men raid for bridewealth—was both highly applicable in previous decades and an explanation for the *increased* violence that took place as a function of decreasing initiations, this hypothesis fails to adequately explain the violence that still ravaged Karimojong society in the 2000s.

Official marriage had dwindled in prevalence and possibility by the mid 2000s, meaning that a growing number of males were unable to realize recognized manhood through either initiation or marriage. In addition, a shift in gender dynamics paralleled the transformation of marriage, and men found that while women were realizing greater

flexibility and autonomy in the new marriage arrangements, men were experiencing a

decrease in status and had little stability in their partnerships. Perhaps not surprisingly,

violence perpetrated by male youth continued. The next chapter turns to the first

alternative hypothesis for the explanation of violence in Karimojong society: that

violence is part of an inter-generational struggle for authority between men.

CHAPTER THREE: AUTHORITY, POWER AND GOVERNANCE

Overview

The previous chapter illustrated that the strong correlation between bridewealth payments and raiding was, as predicted by the dominant hypothesis, a central factor in the violence in Karimojong society in the 1980s and 1990s. As shown, however, a combination of both external pressures and the direct and indirect asset stripping caused by raiding led to changes in wealth, social relationships, and asset ownership. One of the main ways these changes were felt was in the evolution of marriage, with bridewealth payments becoming less frequent—and, as a result, less relevant to the lived reality of marriage—over the past decade. If bridewealth is not being paid, the motive of raiding for bridewealth would seemingly have been removed. But violence caused by raiding was still very prevalent even as official marriage was becoming less common. Even if we accept that the link between bridewealth and raiding goes a long way in explaining the increase in violence in the 1980s and 1990s, the continuation of violence as marriage payments dwindled indicates that the question as to the underlying cause of violence has not yet been sufficiently answered. This chapter therefore examines the first alternative hypothesis that emerges from the literature: that the forms of violence associated with cattle raiding, banditry and similar criminal activities are a factor of tensions between generations of men.

The generation-set authority system in place within Karamoja and other East African pastoral societies appears to lend itself to competition and tensions between generations

of males vying for control, wealth and influence. Analyses of the upheaval in Karamoja

often allude to this issue, as do external observers and the politically savvy members of

the local population. Examining the data from respondents, this study supports this

hypothesis and finds that violence is indeed linked to male inter-generational tensions

caused by stagnation in the succession of power and the resulting cessation (or near

cessation) of regular initiations for young men. Building on this theory, this study finds

that of particular relevance is the emergence of a generation gap: an entire generation of

males in biological adulthood who are unlikely to initiate for many decades (if at all)

because their fathers have yet to be initiated. The existence of this generation gap is a

direct result of the extended delay in succession and has effectively undermined the

system of influence and deference between grandfathers and grandsons that was premised

on the promise of initiation and succession. The erosion of this system has limited both

the means of the elder generations to control the actions of young men and the

willingness of young men to conform to the expectations of a system that offers little

tangible reward or recognition. Furthermore, individual and group identity, status and

recognition for young men are no less important simply because initiations are rare.

Dissatisfied with their current social status, male youth seek alternate means for

establishing individual and group identity in the absence of formal rites of passage. This

study shows that the combination of these factors is central to understanding the violence

in Karamoja.

Traditional Authority (and Stagnation) in Karamoja

Similar to other East African pastoral societies and as discussed in the literature review,

traditional political authority in Karamoja is based on a gerontocratic system (Morton

1979; Kertzer 1978; Legesse 1973; Gulliver 1953; Knighton 2005), in which the senior

generation of males (known as a generation-set or *anyamet*) holds power at a given time.[1]

Only two official generation-sets can exist at one time: the senior generation-set, made up

of those in power, and the junior generation-set, which will eventually assume power.

Generation-set identification passes from grandfather to grandson, and a man cannot be

in the same generation-set as his father, even if his father is deceased (with few

exceptions, see Dyson-Hudson 1966).   There are four distinct generation-sets which

"succeed each other cyclically and continually" (Dyson-Hudson 1963, 359). At present,

the senior generation-set in Karamoja is the *Ngimoru* (Mountains) and the junior

generation-set is the *Ngigete* (Gazelles) (Knighton 2005; Dyson-Hudson 1966).

Generation-sets are further divided into four age-sets,[2] and an age-set must be 'open' in

order to accept initiates. Age-sets are open for varying lengths of time, and include all

males initiated within, ideally, a period of five to six years (Dyson-Hudson 1963). Age-

sets for women existed historically, but there is disagreement in the literature and among

local respondents as to the continuation of the female system today.[3]

For Karimojong, initiation (*asapan*) marks the transition to adulthood: a man is only

considered an adult and able to fully participate in the social and political order after he

has been initiated (Gulliver 1955). Men join the junior generation-set upon initiation into

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[1] The introduction to this chapter draws on (Stites in press)
[2] Some authors report five age-sets, but respondents and key informants for this study were confident that there were only four age-sets within at least the Ngigete generation set.
[3] The system of age-classes for women traditionally mirrored that of the men, but Sandra Gray's research shows that the last women's age-class was initiated in the 1940s and that this system has since fallen into disuse. See Sandra Gray, "A Memory of Loss: Ecological Politics, Local History, and the Evolution of Karimojong Violence" *Human Organization* 59 (4) Winter 2000: 401-418. This was also the impression of three of our key informants, both male and female. Ben Knighton, on the other hand, says that the female age-class system is still functioning. He explains that while the initiation for men requires the spearing of oxen, for women, a marriage with cattle was the central facet of initiation. See Knighton 2005, 252-253 for a detailed discussion on the ceremonies for the initiation of women.

the appropriate open age-set. Initiation would ideally take place when a man was in his

late teens or early twenties (although this could be earlier), but, as explained below, this

is today rarely the case. On the broader political level, the symbolic, ritual and real

passing of power occur when the senior generation-set of male elders steps down and

promotes the junior generation-set in a succession ceremony called *akidung amuro*. This

succession opens space for a new generation-set (the new 'juniors') and age-sets are open

for initiation for the next generation.

Elders control the timeframe for succession of power from one generation-set to the next:

only when the elders collectively decide that power should be ceded do preparations for

the elaborate succession ceremony begin.[4] Initiations and the related 'opening' and

'closing' of age-sets are closely linked to this process, and hence elders exert nearly

complete control over the process of initiations at the local level. Even when an age-set

is open, external conditions can dictate whether or not initiations for appropriately aged

males will take place. For instance, initiations can only take place in a year with a

sufficient harvest in order to ensure adequate oxen, grain and brew for initiation

ceremonies (Knighton 2005; Lamphear 1976).[5] Similar requirements exist for the

succession ceremony from the seniors to the juniors, with the additional caveat that

succession can only take place in a time of peace. This is of particular importance

because succession is a Karimojong-wide process with its roots (and last occurrence of)

in the period before the splitting of the Three Stones into their separate territorial units.

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[4] Interview No. 17, Matheniko male youth, Rupa, Moroto District, December 3, 2006. Interview No. 137, Pian male youth, Nabilatuk, Nakapiripirit District, February 28, 2009.
[5] Interview No. 119, Bokora male youth, Lotome, Moroto District, February 23, 2009. Interview No. 125, Matheniko male youth, Rupa, Moroto District, February 14, 2009. Interview No. 129, Pian male youth, Lorengedwat, Nakapiripirit District, February 18, 2009. Interview No. 155, Bokora elderly woman, Lokopo, Moroto District, February 24, 2009.

In other words, succession is technically only possible with agreement, coordination and planning across the Matheniko, Bokora and Pian —groups that have engaged in periods of sporadic but often brutal conflict for the past 40 years.

The necessary conditions for initiation and succession to take place—namely peace among the Three Stones and relative prosperity in the form of a good harvest—were mentioned repeatedly across the study population and are discussed in more depth later in this chapter. At present, this aspect is best summed up in the words of a group of Pian male elders:

> There are many not initiated. The *ngiru* [final age-set] have not been initiated due to lack of rain and the insecurity has finished all the animals. There is continuous drought. We also blame disarmament for the lack of initiation—as soon as the disarmament started there was a long drought. When you are constantly running away from the soldiers there is no time to cultivate. And also the enemies take advantage of us being on the run to steal the animals.
>
> *What are the conditions for initiation to take place?*
>
> Peace among the Karimojong. It can only happen if there is peace—this is the base for everything. Then we will be able to cultivate, have more food, and all of that.[6]

Based on oral and recorded history, generation-sets in Karamoja normally held power for approximately 25-30 years (Dyson-Hudson 1966), after which a succession ceremony would move the juniors up to the senior position (the remaining living elders of the deposed senior generation take on a position akin to retirement or emeritus advisors).[7]

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[6] Interview No. 194, Pian elders, Kakomongole, Nakapiripirit District, May 10, 2009.
[7] There is disagreement on the length of time between succession in the literature, with Dyson-Hudson claiming 25-30 years, Lamphear (1976) stating 35-40 years, and Knighton (2005) stating 50-60 years. Based on discussion with key informants (Key informant no. 9, Nakapiripirit town, Nakapiripirit District, February 17 and May 8, 2009) and academics (Sandra Gray, personal correspondence, June 10, 2011), I posit that the Dyson-Hudson model is likely the most accurate. The views of the study population on this time lapse are provided in the text.

The *Ngimoru* generation-set took the reins of control in 1956-1958[8] and began to initiate

their sons into the first age-set of the *Ngigete* generation-set at the same time. These two

generation-sets—*Ngimoru* and *Ngigete* – have occupied the senior and junior positions

respectively for the intervening fifty-plus years, approximately twice as long as indicated

in the historical record. A variety of factors have contributed to this delay, including

enmity between the groups who must engage in a unified succession ceremony and the

lack of peace and prosperity to ensure auspicious conditions for the handover (Mkutu

2008).[9] In the absence of preparations for a power transition, initiations have all but

ceased, with the last initiations reportedly taking place sometime between 1998 and 2006,

depending on the study site. There is one remaining age-set (called *Ngiru)* within the

Ngigete which could be opened, but to open this final age-set would be a sign of

imminent succession, and the elders are thus reportedly reluctant to take this step.[10] The

larger problem, however, is the large number of sons of *Ngigete* who cannot be initiated

at all, as they cannot join the same generation-set as their fathers. Many of these men

have adults sons of their own (the grandsons of *Ngigete*), further swelling the ranks of

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[8] There is debate over the precise date—usually given as 1957 or 1958—because the Pian appear to have carried out a separate ceremony, breaking from the rest of the Karamojong groups (Gray 2000). The existence of this earlier example of a non-unified succession would imply that such an arrangement might be possible today; interestingly, no key informants or respondents for this study felt this was the case, and were adamant that the succession should take place at the same time among the Bokora, Matheniko and Pian. The reasons behind this view were difficult to parse out, as today's older generation was not involved in the decision making in the 1950s and hence could not explain why such an adaptation had occurred at that time. Dyson-Hudson (1966) posits that this fracture had more to do with fierce fighting between the Pokot and the Pian and a simultaneous drought than with internal Karimojong relationships. These external aspects had undermined the age-set system of the Pian and new leadership was needed. Dyson-Hudson predicted that this was one early step in what would be the break-up of the Karimojong alliance.

[9] The importance of a succession occurring in a unified and simultaneous manner is backed up by numerous respondents for this study, including: Key informant no. 4, Moroto town, Moroto, July 11, 2008. Interview No. 129, Pian male youth, Lorengedwat, Nakapiripirit District, February 18, 2009. Interview No. 165, Pian elders, Nabilatuk, Nakapiripirit District, February 27, 2009. Interview No. 194, Pian elders, Kakomongole, Nakapiripirit District, May 10, 2009. Interview No. 207, Matheniko elders, Rupa, Moroto District, November 11, 2009. Interview No. 214, Bokora elders, Lopei, Moroto District, November 16, 2009. Interview No. 216, Bokora elders, Lotome, Moroto District, November 17, 2009.

[10] Key informant no. 4, Moroto town, Moroto District, July 11, 2008. Key informant no. 1, Matany, Moroto District, July 14, 2008. Key informant no. 9, Nakapiripirit town, Nakapiripirit District May 8, 2009. Note that reports from the field in 2012 indicate that *Ngiru* may soon be opened in some areas, but this dissertation does not address this more recent development.

uninitiated male youth. This creates immense population pressure and political and

social strife, as noted by Gray:

> A number of male informants, who were in their late middle age in 1998-1999,
> complained that they were nothing more than 'rats' (*ngidoi*), or uninitiated men,
> without a formal identity in the traditional power structure of Karimojong
> society. (2000, 408)

The demographic pressure resulting from the uninitiated ranks of male youth is best

illustrated with a fictitious example: suppose a man was 18 years old in 1958 when power

was last transferred from one generation-set to the next. The *Ngimoru* generation-set

took power, the *Ngigete* became the junior set, the first age-class within the *Ngigete* was

opened, and this young man initiated. This man is now 72 years of age; his eldest sons

are approaching their 50s, and their sons are nearly 30 and likely to have sons of their

own. But because there has been no succession ceremony moving the *Ngigete* into the

senior position since 1958, this 72 year-old man remains in the junior grouping and

cannot initiate his sons, as sons cannot be in the same generation-set as their father. His

sons are well into middle-age yet still technically 'youth;' *their* sons are nearly 30 and

have no hope of being initiated for many years to come. This large group of men—in

their 20s, 30s, 40s and even 50s—are technically not adults within the structure and

hierarchy of the customary system. They are thus not able to participate in decision-

making and hold no formal authority.

Understanding Customary Authority in Karamoja Today

Before continuing the discussion of generation-sets and initiations, this section turns

briefly to the broader function and changes within the system of customary authority in

Karamoja in order to provide context for the remainder of the chapter.

Traditional legal systems in Karamoja are more than codes that govern right from wrong or that stipulate punishments for violations of an established order. Unlike the more narrow confines of Western judicial and legislative systems, customary law in Karamoja is the normative framework that regulates judicial, political, social, and religious processes, with an overall goal of maintaining community bonds and group integrity. Systems of punishments and reconciliation thus focus on the restoration of harmony and unity in response to disputes and conflicts. Customary mechanisms govern the performance of religious ceremonies and divination rituals concerning matters of security, community health, animal migration, and marriage, among many other aspects both sacred and profane (Knighton 2005). Each individual has a position and a role within the customary structure—determined by age, sex and group affiliation – and maintaining this role and the associated responsibilities and expectations is the obligation of each member of society. These combined efforts towards a communal process maintain the social organization and ultimately define the cultural fabric.

A recent study by a team of researchers (including this author) with four groups in Karamoja found that, overall, customary authority has not been able to keep pace with the changes and challenges brought by rapidly evolving livelihoods and a changing security environment.[11] Although these data are not included in the data set for this dissertation and only one of three territorial sections of the Karimojong was included in the study population for the more recent research, the relevant findings are worthy of brief

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[11] The author of this dissertation was the principle investigator for this research study, titled "Customary Law, Livelihoods Change, and Conflict Mitigation" and funded by Irish Aid Kampala. This project ran from October 2010 to October 2012 and hence the field research (in four parts) did not overlap with data collection for this PhD thesis. The study took place in four communities, the Dodoth, Jie, Tepeth and Matheniko. See (Carlson et al. 2012)

examination here.[12]   The study found that the influence and effectiveness of customary

authority as exercised by the male elders has declined in recent decades due to a number

of interrelated factors. First, the depletion of livestock herds due to raiding and the

demise of pastoral livelihood systems has fundamentally transformed the systems of

compensation and the rituals that underpinned customary institutions. Second, the influx

of new ideas and practices within Karamoja—through processes of trade, education, and

migration – have challenging the previous cultural monopoly of traditional approaches.

Third, and as discussed in depth in this chapter, traditional political authority in Karamoja

is rooted in the process of generational succession and the predictability of this process

has broken down, resulting in a rift between elders and the younger men who relied on

this system as an avenue for adulthood and establishing their own authority. Fourth, the

rise of criminality as practiced by young men has strained customary institutions,

aggravated livestock shortages, and led to direct and indirect asset stripping with

widespread livelihood impacts. Fifth, as elders' control over their own communities has

declined, they have also lost the ability to negotiate as effectively with other groups,

thereby undermining the role of customary institutions in creating and maintain broader

peace relations. Lastly, the gradually expanding role of the formal state is increasingly

providing another nexus of power which often clashes with and at times undermines the

authority systems of the male elders (Carlson et al. 2012).

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[12] Although variations existed, the patterns and themes in the data were highly consistent across the four
groups studied. As wide differences exist among these groups (the Jie and the Dodoth are in northern
Karamoja; the Tepeth are a minority hill population that have retained their own language and elements of
their culture) the research team surmises that many of these findings are applicable to other groups in
Karamoja, including the Karimojong territorial sections which were not part of the study (the Bokora and
Pian).

The waning influence of customary authority does not mean that these institutions no longer play a role in governance. The referenced study found quite the contrary: these institutions still perform multiple roles, to varying degrees of effectiveness determine in part by personality and external circumstances (such as the presence of hostile groups), and many respondents prefer to take issues and complaints to traditional as opposed to official authorities. In particular, customary institutions were appreciated for their systems of adjudication that prioritized community cohesion and healing, in contrast to the model of individual punishment favored by the official legal and penal codes. Although responses differed by location and demographic group, in select study sites (primarily Jie and Tepeth locations) respondents felt that systems of punishment meted out by the elders were still effective, including *ameto*, a form of punishment in which the offender's peers inflict physical beating under the elders' instructions (Muhereza, Ossiya, and Ovonji-Odida 2008; Gray 2010). The continuing effectiveness of punitive measures by elders among the Jie and Tepeth may be one reason why these two groups were often mentioned by respondents for this dissertation as having stronger systems of traditional authority.

For the purposes of this dissertation, one of the most important findings from the 2012 study on customary authority was the variation in perceptions of the effectiveness of customary authority by demographic group. As shown in this chapter, these findings are very much in line with the data from the fieldwork for this dissertation. Overall, women of all ages were the most skeptical about the relevance of customary authority to their lives in the present day. They felt that the traditional system dominated by male elders had severely eroded and, in particular, was inadequate in providing protection or maintaining the degree of peace that women required in order to go about their daily

livelihood activities.[13] In contrast, while male elders recognized the demise in the extent of their authority, they blamed this primarily on the loss of livestock and hence the inability to conduct rituals or to make rulings that required compensation. By and large, male elder respondents perceived this situation as a temporary setback that would be resolved following the recovery of livestock herds in the region. Male youth had the most varied and interesting perception of the continuing relevance of customary authority, with marked differences across respondents. Some youth stated that the traditional systems were still entirely intact, while others said that the authority systems had been unable to adapt to the changing times, as evident in both the lack of response to the emergence of new livelihoods and the extended stagnation of initiation and generational succession.

While the 2012 study is neither representative nor covers the full study area for this dissertation, the findings were generally consistent across the four study groups and, as such, the authors surmise that these themes would be present among other population groups in the region. In addition, many of the findings from the 2012 work are reflected in this dissertation's data from among the Bokora, Pian and Matheniko. The 2012 study provides additional and relevant context for this dissertation in its examination of aspects of customary authority that are perceived to function well and those that are not and, in particular, for the insight on the evolving relationship between male youth and male elders and the possible repercussions of these changes. The next section returns to the importance of initiation for young men and the implications of the lack of succession on the relations among male generations.

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[13] Women also complained of gender bias on the part of male elders in their rulings and punishments, particularly in cases of domestic violence.

The Importance of Initiation

Not being initiated has practical implications for participation in decision-making but an even more profound impact on the identity of male youth. This identity is reflected in their status in the community, whereby the common term for these male youth—*ngikaracuna*—translates to "they of the apron," indicating that their official position in the social order is akin to that of women (Knighton 2005, 135; Gulliver 1953, 148). The discussions of male youth about the importance of initiation offer an indication of the importance of this to their individual identity, as illustrated in the response to why initiation matters: "It shows that you have become a big man and you are not a small boy."[14] The individual male moves from his role of a boy to that of a man, but initiation is perhaps even more important for its role in establishing group identity for men. Membership within a group is considered central to the development and identity of young men in a range of cultural contexts, as illustrated by the work of Gary Barker on Brazil, Nigeria and inner-city Chicago (Barker 2005). This significance is clearly visible in the age-set system of East African gerontocratic authority systems, whereby men who initiate together or share an age-set have a unique bond that lasts a lifetime. As explained by a key informant, men who have been initiated into an age-set use visible markers to indicate their shared identity:

> They will also select the [unofficial] name for their age-set…. They then will do something to physically distinguish themselves – similar tattoos, scarification, long earrings with chains, etc. While the [official] name for their age-set is already determined, it will be their choice to distinguish themselves so that people say this and that about the age-set with long chain earrings, for example.

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[14] Interview No. 196, Pian male youth, Namalu, Nakapiripirit District, May 12, 2009.

> A person is in his age-set for life. At the initiation ceremony they will have agreed up and set for sure the [unofficial] name of their age-set.[15]

An age-set has a predetermined name selected by the elders, such as *Ngiru* for the set that is not yet opened within the *Ngigete*.[16] As discussed above, male youth also create a nickname for their group, which can correlate to their visual group identity. For instance, a middle aged group today call themselves the *Ngiwoyariko*, referring to their preference for long chain earrings, while an older group with facial scarification is the *Ngidinkai*, a reference to the Dinka of South Sudan, from whom they reportedly borrowed their form of scarification.[17] Once established, the group of young men sets about making a name for itself, and particular age-sets have a shared reputation (wild, violent, marrying early, etc).[18] Group identity for young men is no less important simply because initiations are rare, and young men forge links (and garner reputations) in the absence of formal rites of passage. This study shows that the process of establishing group identity is central to understanding the violence in Karamoja.

Violence and Inter-Generational Authority

In line with the first alternative hypothesis, this study finds that violence is indeed linked to male inter-generational tensions caused by the stagnation of succession and, more immediately, the halting of the initiation process. Building on this theory, this study finds that the generation gap created through the delay in succession further erodes male authority and the ability of customary systems to adequately respond to the violence.

[15] Key informant no. 1, while driving through Soroti District, March 14, 2007.
[16] Data from 2012 indicate that *Ngiru* was being opened in some areas. The implications of this important development on the larger process of generational succession and, in particular, on male violence will not be known for some time. As this development lies outside the chronological focus of this dissertation it will not be addressed here.
[17] Key informants no. 7 and 1, Moroto town, Moroto District, April 3, 2009.
[18] Key informant no. 1, while driving through Soroti District, March 14, 2007.

Within the realm of male generational authority, violence serves more than one purpose. The remainder of this chapter first discusses shifts in authority, perceptions regarding these shifts, and the ways in which violence manifests as part of this struggle. The discussion then turns to the role of violence in achieving intra-group status and recognition in the absence of official recognition of adult male status within the customary structures.

Few respondents in the study population draw a direct causal reference between political stagnation and violence. Not surprisingly, most reasons listed for violence were more about day-to-day reality, involving theft due to hunger or the importance of cattle as an asset. In examining the patterns across the data, however, there is extensive discussion on the two-way relationship between the elders' loss of control over the youth and the upsurge in violence. To understand this relationship we must further examine the nature of the elder-youth relationship. This study finds that the elders' control over youth was managed, in part, through the looming promise of initiation and the immense influence that elders have in the timing and execution of this critical rite of passage. As initiations became less and less frequent and another generation of men reached biological adulthood, this influence and control began to slip away, leading to worsening violence as traditional systems of mitigation, punishment and control weakened. The intensifying violence and lack of effective response on the part of the elders further undermined their influence and control. An analysis of the views by demographic group illustrates how the data for this study support the interpretation of violence as part of the struggle for power. For example, one group of Matheniko elders explained the behavior of the youth:

> Young men wanting to marry and tired of being abused as useless decided to pick up AK47s for raiding cattle so that they can also marry. From then on they used

the power of the barrel and no longer respected their elders. They only bow to us during initiation.[19]

Another group of Matheniko elders said, "Today elders are not strong. People ignore the authority of elders."[20] Similarly, a group of Pian male elders explained that "even if [we] want to intervene, no one listens."[21] Lamentations about this loss of control were common among male elders, but by no means uniform. Elders in some locations felt that they still had a great deal of authority, as illustrated by a group of Bokora elders, "The elders are still very strong; they control the youth and women."[22] The perceived extent of authority on the part of the elders, however, differed by both location and realm over which they sought to exercise control. Elders across the Karimojong groups were more likely to pinpoint their lack of control to issues surrounding raiding, while by and large felt that they still controlled management of natural resources. (As discussed in depth in the next chapter, however, the extent of the elders' influence over natural resources is hotly contested by other demographic groups, particularly women.) The elders' perception of their own authority was also neither consistent by group nor static over time. For instance, most Matheniko elders interviewed in 2006 and 2007 expressed a high degree of confidence in their authority, whereas only some Bokora and Pian leaders felt this way. By 2009, however, Matheniko leaders were complaining about their lack of control over their youth, as illustrated by the quotations above. In contrast, a group of Bokora elders felt that the disarmament campaign had changed the situation to their benefit:

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[19] Interview No. 102, Matheniko elders, Rupa, Moroto District, July 10, 2008.
[20] Interview No. 206 Matheniko elders, Nadunget, Moroto District, November 10, 2009.
[21] Interview No. 201, Pian elders, Namalu, Nakapiripirit District, May 12, 2009.
[22] Interview No. 216, Bokora elders, Lotome, Moroto District, November 17, 2009.

In the past it was difficult to control the youth because they had the gun. Today they have no gun therefore they are controlled by elders; we order them and advise them on daily chores like grazing and watering animals.[23]

The array of views on authority as expressed by the male elders indicates the contentious nature of this question. Prior to the upheaval that started in the 1980s, the reins of control were generally considered to be firmly in hands of the elders. There would have been no variation by economic activity (e.g., natural resources versus animal husbandry), over time, or by population group. Similar to the findings from the 2012 study referenced earlier, while many elders spoke of the demise of power relations, male youth among the Bokora and Matheniko stressed the continuing authority of the elders, though in most cases referenced the power of the elders as falling within specific parameters. In line with the views of the elders, these parameters often included the role of the elders in natural resource management. As with the example below, at times these views on power implied a wider range of control:

Elders are the custodian of customs and traditions. In our village, elders advise on good management practices of livestock and natural resources. They pray to God to provide rescue for people from drought. Elders still maintain their roles—youth and women have to adhere and heed the elders' word.[24]

No responses from Bokora or Matheniko youth in the study population refer specifically to lack of control by the elders. However, based on a text analysis of response, the youth in these two groups never refer specifically to authority in regard to violence—this topic almost seems to be carefully avoided. For example, in a discussion about local dynamics and relations within the community, a group of Matheniko male youth said that the only "crucial matters" for potential disagreement were how rituals were performed in cultural ceremonies, whereby "the elders might think that we have done it wrong."[25] The

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[23] Interview No. 214, Bokora elders, Lopei, Moroto District, November 16, 2009.
[24] Interview No. 229, Matheniko male youth, Rupa, Moroto District, November 11, 2009.
[25] Interview No. 17, Matheniko male youth, Rupa, Moroto District, December 3, 2006.

responses of the Pian youth were markedly different to those of the Bokora and

Matheniko. Many male respondents across the Pian study sites talked openly about the

collapse of the elders' authority and how this cut across multiple aspects of life. This

study finds that the differences in perceptions of the control of the elders' authority (or

differences in willingness to discuss the elders' authority) links closely to the experiences

of conflict in these three areas. If we were to examine only the views of male youth in

this regard we would come up with one of two possible analyses for the differences in

views on authority and control among these three groups. Taking into account that for

the Matheniko and Bokora, violence is mostly outward reaching and perpetrated against

groups defined as "other" based on their "enemy" status,[26] we might assume that there is

complicity between the youth and elders in support of the raids against these "enemy"

groups.[27] Under this analysis, the assumption would be that the youth do not perceive

any fissure with their elders, but that it is in the interests of the elders to distance

themselves from the actions of the youth. The importance of group cohesion created

through the establishment of the "other" also informs the second possible analysis, but in

this interpretation this cohesion is intentionally stressed by the male youth who strive to

demonstrate the social harmony and, in particular, their "correct" position within the

social and political hierarchy. In other words, male youth *do* hold a good deal of power

at the expense of the authority of the elders, but seek to deflect attention from this aspect,

as this also highlights their involvement as the perpetrators of unsanctioned violence.

Understood in this way, it would be counter-intuitive for male youth to highlight tensions

with their elders, as it is in their interest to present an image of social harmony,

particularly to outsiders. Any problems as the male youth chose to express them are thus

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[26] Clearly domestic violence and inter-personal disputes would be an exception.
[27] The role of the elders and the community at large in sanctioning raids and how this has changed over time is discussed in more depth in chapter five.

external and removed from the internal social order. Male youth in all locations (with

exceptions among the Pian, as discussed below) placed blame for insecurity upon their

neighboring "enemies" who would be described as unjust, out of control, "crazy like

dogs."[28] Very rarely did male youth take responsibility for violence themselves. In the

adjacent "enemy" locations the sources of insecurity were the same, referencing the

neighboring groups who had played the part of victim the day before. In a rare display of

candidness, Bokora men opened up to the male elder member of the study team who

pushed them to explain why the Bokora blamed the neighboring Jie for raids, while the

Jie in turn blamed the Bokora.

> Today most of the *karacuna* are just loitering. These are the ones that are
> causing problems in the manyattas. Don't listen to this 'Jie, Jie, Jie' stuff. It is
> those among us—real Bokora—who are causing these problems. They know
> who has sold local brew and at night they go and tell her 'bring all the money' at
> gun point. The government should continue to follow-up with these wayward
> thieves who might be Bokora or Matheniko or Jie, but don't accept this word
> 'Jie' all the time. It is just thieves.[29]

The Case of the Pian

Comparing the situation of the Bokora and Matheniko to that of the Pian further

illustrates the importance of group cohesion in determining how and why views are

shared with outsiders. At the time of data collection, internal strife within the Pian

territorial group was a serious problem, with active violence between residents of

Lorengedwat sub-county and those in Nabilatuk, Lolachat and Namalu. This violence

among the Pian was said to have begun around the time of the 2001-2002 disarmament

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[28] Interview No. 103, Bokora male youth, Lotome, Moroto District, July 14, 2008.
[29] Interview No. 171, Bokora male youth, Lokopo, Moroto District, April 4, 2009. This interview took place at a kraal, which may explain the greater degree of candidness, as the study team observed that young men in particular were often more relaxed and forthcoming when interviewed at the kraals. This may be due to the difficulties in accessing the kraals and the (extreme) rarity of outsiders visiting these areas. This may have given our team a boost in trustworthiness based on location, even though we were almost always already known to the group due to our earlier visits to the associated manyattas.

campaign, and, of the three Karimojong groups, the Pian was the only one to have experienced internal violence. This study theorizes that the internal violence within Pian society was both a direct result of and further perpetrated by the collapse of social control as exerted by the elders. In contrast to Bokora and Matheniko youth, Pian youth in multiple sites called attention to the erosion of the elders' authority. The response from a group of Pian youth in Lorengedwat highlights the way in which this strife itself undermines any control the elders might have had: "The elders have no command. We worry that there is nothing they can do now because it is brother [Pian] against brother [Pian]."[30] This is very much in line with the views of elders, as shown from an interview in Namalu: "There is no father or leader for all the Pian who can hold us and our youth together."[31] This combination of frankness and despondency was widespread in the Pian study areas, and influenced people's views on future, as illustrated in the views of youth in Nabilatuk on the prognosis for possible succession:

> *What will happen if the Mountains die out without a transition taking place?*
>
> Violence will continue because there will be no elders to maintain control. There will just be insecurity.[32]

Violence within the Pian community—as opposed to violence aimed at neighboring groups—served to erode the social cohesion that might have contributed to male youth's reluctance to talk about the collapse of the authority system in other locations. In addition, respondents in one Pian location volunteered information on targeted attacks occurring *within* their own manyatta, where the study team was told "[w]e are living as if

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[30] Interview No. 129, Pian male youth, Lorengedwat, Nakapiripirit District, February 18, 2009.
[31] Interview No. 201, Pian elders, Namalu, Nakapiripirit District, May 12, 2009.
[32] Interview No. 137, Pian male youth, Nabilatuk, Nakapiripirit District, February 28, 2009.

we have no leaders."[33]   Young women were the most vocal regarding the situation in

their manyatta:

> The raiders who loot for food are from *within.* Yes, from this very same village.
> No, they don't take it to their families, they just exchange it for drinks or sell
> it….
>
> *Do the parents of these youth know they are stealing from within their own*
> *village?*
>
> No! This is without their consent, which is why he has to sell it. He doesn't
> bring the money back to his family because he fears the family will say 'where
> did you get this money?'[34]

Even though data on this phenomenon for this dissertation only come from one location,

data from subsequent research in 2011 and 2012 confirm the growing practice of internal

thievery.[35] This study theorizes that the early emergence of this practice among the Pian

is a logical extension of the internal upheaval within the broader Pian community, and

may very well have been happening in other locations as well. The views of young men

in this same location also illustrate the earlier point about the reluctance of young men, as

the perpetrators of these problems, to call attention to any tensions or problems with their

position in their communities. The study team learned of the internal violence from

multiple sources (including the local council and neighboring communities), but the

young men interviewed in this location were adamant about the broad scope of the

authority of the elders:

> The elders make the decisions about how and where to move the animals. They
> ask for our ideas in this.
>
> *How would a dispute with the elders over these topics be resolved?*
>
> There is no way the youth can reject the elders' decisions. We obey them….

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[33] Interview No. 132, Group introduction, Lorengedwat, Nakapiripirit District, February 18, 2009.
[34] Interview No. 133, Pian young women, Lorengedwat, Nakapiripirit District, February 19, 2009.
[35] The emergence of internal theft and at times violence, committed by groups referred to as *lonetia*, is
discussed in chapter six.

Do the Mountains still have as much power as they did in the past?

Yes, they do! They still can curse or bless you. They are still feared. Anything bad they say [i.e., a curse] will just happen.

Do the elders of the groups that raid you still have power?

Yes, they do, and we think that they are the ones commanding their sons to raid.[36]

The Female Perspective

 As indicated by the above discussion, there is discordance in the data by generation when we compare the impressions of men regarding the nature of authority. In addition, competing narratives exist throughout the study data, sometimes even in the same location or within the same focus group. These discrepancies are not surprising considering the subjective nature of many of the topics. In reference to differences in the data between the generations, it is worth nothing that the generational divide is the very dichotomy along which the tensions in authority are occurring, but still leaves some doubt as to the relevance of the premise that a split along generational lines underpins and exacerbates violence in the region. It is illuminating, therefore, to examine the views of women on questions of the sources of tensions within their communities. Women have a unique position as internal observers of the struggle for power; they have no official authority within the system, and yet are privy to at least some aspects of this power dynamic on a daily basis. It is important to stress that not all women were comfortable pondering such aspects or, more commonly, they would attribute problems

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[36] Interview No. 135, Pian male youth, Lorengedwat, Nakapiripirit District, February 18, 2009. To note, a week after this interview we came upon the body of a young man in Namalu sub-county. The local officials explained (and this was backed up in interviews with neighboring communities) that two young men had been killed after carrying out a raid. The young men--- teenage boys—were from this community in question in Lorengedwat.

of crime, violence, lack of marriage and the collapse of succession to the sole causal

factor of "hunger." However, a number of female respondents across the study

population did speak directly to the collapse of inter-generation authority, including a

Matheniko woman who explained, "It is the new generation who broke with their

elders—these youth of today."[37] Similarly, a group of elderly Bokora women stated,

"Youth have no more respect for the old. There is no more discipline."[38] Such

interpretations might be considered standard complaints about "these youth of today,"

regardless of the society or topic being addressed. These discussions, however, took

place within the context of the experience of crime and violence, and the perspective of

women as observers of male-male relations affords these voices added weight within the

analysis.

> *What is the cause of conflict?*
>
> This generation is terrible. Children don't listen to their parents who tell them not to raid. Or perhaps it is a curse that is causing children to no longer listen to the older generations. In the past, parents could discipline children who did not obey, but today children will fight their parents. If they didn't listen to their parents, they would have been disciplined and reformed by community elders. Today, a disciplined child will kill those who disciplined him with the elders.[39]

The possibility of youth physically harming elders—a complete anathema in a society

predicated on values of generation respect—was raised by a small but not insignificant

number of respondents, including these young women from the Pian community noted

for the presence of internal crime:

> *What happens when you tell an elder that his son is stealing from old women?*
>
> The *mzee* [male elder] will curse! But do you know what will happen if the son is cursed by his father? He will hire his friend to come beat his father or mother.
>
> *Is this actually happening?*

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[37] Interview No. 110, Matheniko woman, Rupa, Moroto District, July 8, 2008.
[38] Interview No. 153, Bokora elderly women, Lokopo, Moroto District, February 24, 2009.
[39] Interview No. 145, Pian women, Lorengedwat, Nakapiripirit District, February 18, 2009.

Yes, it is true and it happens! It is hunger that has brought all this confusion! If there is enough food people will be united and enjoy themselves.

Who has more power, the youth or the elders?

The elders have lost power! It is the youth who have the power! Our culture says 'respect your father' but that has been lost completely.[40]

Some women posited that the erosion of norms and traditions were also responsible for the changing nature of violence and shifts in the targeting of victims:

Were women killed in the time of your mothers?

No, this did not happen in that time. It is just in this generation that does not know the culture.[41]

What caused the fighting to start?

It started between the Matheniko and Bokora. Then it spread to Lotome and Lorengedwat, and now it has spread up to here and continues to spread. We women do not know what caused it. This war, hunger, and disease are all effects of the recent generation. This generation is worse because they kill people in addition to taking their animals.[42]

There were, of course, women within the study population who disagreed with the notion that there was a demise of traditional authority, as evident in the opinion of an elderly Pian woman who said, "Here, the relationships between sons and fathers are fair. Some boys listen, and the stubborn ones still do wild things. We have maintained our relationships, and still talk to our children."[43] By and large, however, this study finds that women's opinions and experiences support the hypothesis that the collapse of inter-generation authority is an important determining factor in violence among the Karimojong.

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[40] Interview No. 133, Pian young women, Lorengedwat, Nakapiripirit District, February 19, 2009.
[41] Interview No. 116, Matheniko women, Katikekile, Moroto District, July 12, 2008.
[42] Interview No. 158, Pian women, Nabilatuk, Nakapiripirit District, February 27, 2009.
[43] Interview No. 157, Pian elderly woman, Nabilatuk, Nakapiripirit, February 28, 2009.

Perspectives of Key Informants

The views of key informants interviewed for this study support the finding that violence is linked to male inter-generational tensions and the frustration of the male youth over the stagnation of succession. Recognizing that each key informant carries his (in this case) own bias and perspective, this study sought to balance views across the generations in gathering data from these informants on the relationships between male generations. Relevant key informants included esteemed elderly leaders of the three territorial groups or adjacent populations, members of the younger generation in positions of influence and authority (such as local government), and members of the Karimojong "elite" known to have the respect of the local populations. Perhaps surprisingly, there was remarkable concordance in responses, with both young and older male informants agreeing that a fissure between the generations was a major causal factor in the violence in the region. For example, an older male informant who is considered a leader of the Pian explained:

> Today in Karamoja, the Mountains have grown old without [succeeding to] the Gazelles, leading to a very wide gap. The Mountains are unable to control the Rats, the children of the Gazelles. I am a Gazelle. I would normally be punished [for] the transgressions of my children, but now these children have grown children themselves, and I have no reach to control them. Because we have let the initiation period become very long, the Rats now have their own children who are also old. We are losing our culture because we are not initiating our children.[44]

The male elder on our study team, an Iteso with decades of experience in Karamoja and close ties to elders in the region, believes that while the weakening of the elders is directly linked to the influx of weapons into the region, the repercussion of the

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[44] Key Informant no. 6, Namalu, Nakapiripirit District, May 11, 2009.

weakening of this relationship is a fissure between the elders and the youth.[45] Turning to

younger voices, a Pian man who held a position with the district authority supports the

view that weapons play a key role in the demise of the relationship between the youth and

the elders, and that the demise of this relationship has in turn undermined the authority

system:

> There used to be an elaborate structure of authority led by initiation system.
> There are the Mountains, Gazelles and Rats [uninitiated], with specific classes
> within them. Up until the early 1970s, this hierarchy and the power of the
> Mountains were still strong. The Mountains controlled how people lived in
> communities, how to maintain security, how to resolve conflict. But when the
> youth acquired guns the elders lost their authority and it became the guns that
> were talking. I could say that the youth hijacked the power of the elders.[46]

A member of the younger generation of Bokora origins expressed similar views, saying it

was his "gut feeling that it is that the AK-47 changed power relations," and that this was

most evidence in the changing nature of violence committed by male youth:

> This enabled the younger generation to take power into their own hands. An
> elder would *never* sanction a road ambush. A youth would never ask permission
> for this either.[47]

While such opinions do not establish direct causality for violence, they do represent a

consistent viewpoint held by those respondents and informants whose positions allowed

for a slightly broader perspective on the situation.

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[45] Key Informant no. 1, Dartmouth, Massachusetts, May 16, 2008. He feels that elders within some groups in the region, such as the Jie and the Tepeth, do maintain control over their youth to a greater extent than among the Karimojong. See Akabwai and Ateyo, 2007.

[46] Key Informant no. 9, Nakapiripirit Town, Nakapiripirit District, February 17, 2009. To note, the 'young' men who served as key informants were, by virtue of their livelihoods (a district official, a translator, a NGO worker), removed from the violence themselves. This goes a long way in explaining their perspective—they were able to reflect on the situation of their age cohort while also speaking openly about violence without fear of incriminating themselves or their friends.

[47] Key informant no. 10, Matany Town, Nakapiripirit District, July 13, 2008.

A Blessing and a Curse

The views of key informants highlight the importance of sanctioning actions and
punishing those behaviors that fall outside of accepted parameters. The elders' most
important means of exercising authority is through the ability to curse or bless (Mkutu
2008).[48] A curse is the most serious form of approbation , particularly when levied
collectively by the elders (Dyson-Hudson 1966), and the power of the curse is greatly
feared (Novelli 1999).[49] This study examined current views on the ability of elders to
curse or bless the youth, and found, perhaps not surprisingly, that these views differed by
generation, with older men adamant that they still have the power to bless or curse at will,
while younger men were more likely to question the strength of such actions.[50] Views
also differed by group and location within the study population. Pian respondents in
southern Karamoja—both elders and youth—were more likely to stress the collapse of
these mechanisms of exercising control. For instance, when asked if the senior
generation still cursed their youth, a group of young Pian men responded:

> No, the power to curse has ceased! We look around and we don't see anyone
> with the power to curse. Maybe this is because they have been weakened by the
> violence…Cursing has also failed in [the neighboring districts]. There is no one
> who can command their children anymore, even when the [children] do
> something bad in another area. When we were boys the elders had the power to
> curse us. We don't know what has happened to this—we think the gun took
> away the power to curse.[51]

Pian elders in Kakomongole sub-county said that while elders would curse the raiding
'children' from other groups, "They will not curse their own children."[52] The internal

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[48] The discussion on cursing draws on Stites, in press.
[49] Spencer posits that the elders' curse can lead to the death of young men who go against their will (1973)
[50] Views on the power to curse also differ in the academic literature. Knighton (2005) is adamant that the Jie
elders still have the power to censure their youth.
[51] Interview No. 197, Pian male youth, Lolachat, Nakapiripirit District, May 9, 2009.
[52] Interview No. 194, Pian elders, Kakomongole, Nakapiripirit District, May 10, 2009.

conflict among the Pian may account for the more strident view by both elders and youth

on the decline of the power to curse. In comparison, a group of Matheniko male youth

was convinced that the curse of the elders still remained strong; strong enough, in fact, to

alter the harvest in a given year (thereby affecting the necessary conditions for initiation):

> At present [the elders] are refusing to hand over power. The *Ngimoru* have
> power to command. When they hear murmuring from the youth that they want to
> have more initiations they curse *the year*—they have done this many times up
> until now! When they curse the year there can be no initiations![53]

Another group of Matheniko youth pondered the stagnation in succession and initiations,

but felt that the power of the elders on this issue remained absolute, "Nothing can be

done to resolve this. The elders have the power to curse us. We will never be able to

take power unless they hand it to us."[54]

Some male respondents, both young and old, believed that the elders still had the ability

to curse but said that they were no longer using this power to prevent raids. When asked

why this might be the case, one young man said that the elders "have the power to curse

the raids, but they don't use it. This is because of the gun—the elders fear the power of

the gun."[55] Still others felt that the elders had lost the power to curse and were only able

to offer blessings, including those secretly offered for raids in exchange for gifts of stolen

cattle.[56] (This view is also supported by some elders.[57]) Traditionally, the blessing of

raids was one way for elders to keep control of raiding and to limit the extent of the

violence.[58] As discussed in more detail in chapter five, elders would traditionally bless

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[53] Interview No. 114, Matheniko male youth, Nadunget, Moroto District, July 11, 2008.
[54] Interview No. 126, Matheniko male youth, Nadunget, Moroto District, February 15, 2009.
[55] Interview No. 195, Pian male youth, Namalu, Nakapiripirit District, May 11, 2009.
[56] Interview No. 195, Pian male youth, Namalu, Nakapiripirit District, May 11, 2009. Interview No. 197, Pian
male youth, Lolachat, Nakapiripirit District, May 9, 2009.
[57] Key informant no. 4, Moroto Town, July 11, 2008. Interview No. 194, Pian elders, Kakomongole,
Nakapiripirit District, May 10, 2009.
[58] Interview No. 9, Matheniko elder, Rupa, Moroto District, December 2, 2006.

those raids that were taken on behalf of the community, but the overt sanctioning of raids

is rare in the present day, in part likely due to the reluctance to draw the attention of

UPDF to the presence of guns within a community and thereby invite disarmament

activities. According to one respondent, however, certain elders use their powers to curse

or bless, even when this meant overriding the approbation of their age-mates:

> This is because there are wrong elements who are still friends with the elders.
> They bring them blood and bulls [as offerings]. Then when the elders curse them
> it has no effect! And they know it! All the ethnic groups have this same
> situation going on. The bad elements target the *top* elder because his curses are
> the most powerful. They override the curses of the lesser elders. They may try
> to curse the youth but if the senior elder has been bought off it is without
> effect![59]

Elders benefit from raids they have blessed through receipt of *lokokwa*, the animal from a

raid offered to the elders as tribute and/or in return for this blessing.[60] The payment of

lokokwa has declined in accordance with the erosion of influence of the elders to either

curse or bless the actions of the younger generation. While opinions within the study

population varied on the ability of the elders to curse or bless, it is not the veracity of the

provision of sanction or condemnation of violence that matters as much as the fact that

the supreme authority traditionally held by the elders is a topic of debate. The younger

generations are pushing against and at times questioning the established dynamics of

authority and control, which has widespread ripple effects upon both the functionality

and reasons behind the violence.

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[59] Interview No. 205, Pian male youth, Lorengedwat, Nakapiripirit District, May 14, 2009.
[60] A group of Tepeth male youth (neighboring the Matheniko study sites) reported that youth would at times give *lokokwa* even if a raid had not been sanctioned in advance as a means to appease the potential ire of the elders. Interview No. 64, Tepeth male youth, Katikekile, Moroto District, March 13, 2007.

Creating new Parameters for Status: The Role of Violence

In examining the data on violence from all groups of respondents, this study finds that the violence committed by male youth serves to provide status that is no longer attainable within the parameters of the social order due to the stagnation of the customary authority system and the halting of initiations. Unable to achieve status as adult men recognized by the wider community, young men seek stature within their immediate peer group. This process is best understood as a *reaction* to the stagnation of the traditional authority systems and the collapse of the initiation rituals that allowed male youth to achieve recognition and status through the normal means. This status is attained, in part, through the demonstration of bravery and skills associated with weaponry and through the material trappings that can be acquired through the use of such weapons. Committing raids or theft enables men to gain prowess as brave warriors through acts of daring and skill (Olowo Onyango 2010). While the looted or stolen animals were once incorporated into the existing herds or transferred to a woman's family as bridewealth, today these animals are normally quickly converted to cash. These aspects are discussed in detail in chapter five on the transformation of raiding, but at this point it is sufficient to say that by engaging in the burgeoning cash economy in the region, men are able to amass goods that themselves signify status among their age groups, such as jewelry, clothing, and cell phones. As supported by the findings of Mirzeler and Young (2000), the ability to not only acquire but also to share such status items within the peer group is a means of establishing oneself as both wealthy and generous. This pattern of exchange points to the emergence of horizontal—as opposed to strictly vertical – offerings or tributes as a means of establishing standing and building respect. As observed over the course of the

fieldwork for this study and supported by Fleisher's (1999) work in Tanzania, an important ritual for young men able to engage in the cash economy is the purchase of beer for their friends.

The increased importance of these horizontal linkages illustrates the shift in emphasis from the role of the individual within the hierarchical system to the position of the individual within his peer group. In practical terms, this shift is mirrored by changes in the sources of livestock as needed for marriages, rituals, sale or other purposes. As discussed in chapter two, whereas in the past a young man would often have sought a vertical transfer or loan of animals for these purposes, today he is more likely to turn to his friends or male affines of the same generation. The growing inequality of animal ownership, however, means that often a man's age-mates will not have adequate animals to lend. Thus the collapse of vertical transfers and the scarcity of resources (for loans or reciprocation) for horizontal transfers push the equation towards raiding as a means to acquire the animals. The role of material goods (or cash) as a means of building status within the peer group is important for young men, but so too is their role as providers for their families. Thus the decline of animal-based systems means that young men, who are central to pastoral household livelihood strategies, are forced to diversify their livelihood strategies if they are to provide the same level of support to their households. Many of these means of diversification are licit, such as engaging in petty trade, sale of natural resources, or manual labor, while others are illicit and often entail violence, such as acquisition of assets or cash through theft and raids.

The Generation Gap Theory

Violence is thus motivated in part by the need for young men to establish their identity within their peer groups. This study further theorizes that the structural aspects that allow this violence to occur relate to the *additional* generation gap created by the existence of two or more generations of uninitiated adult men existing simultaneously. While, as will be discussed below, there may always be violence in the run-up to succession, the anomaly in this current situation is the extended time period since the last succession ceremony. This has led to a generation gap—perhaps better understood as a generation caught *within* a gap—which in turn is making the process of succession itself more difficult and, this study finds, the violence emerging from this generation gap is one of the main reasons why succession has not yet occurred. This is explained following a brief description of how these specific findings fit into the debate within the literature regarding the 'normal' period between succession ceremonies.

The debate in the literature and among experts centers on whether the current period between successions is "normal" or an anomaly. According to Ben Knighton, who has done extensive anthropological work with the neighboring Jie who share the generation-set model and timeframe for succession with the Karimojong, a period of 50-60 years is within the realm of normal, which would make the present 60-odd years since the last ceremony only slightly longer than ordinary. Other scholars on the region, however, disagree with Knighton, with Dyson-Hudson (1966) stating a norm of 25-30 years and Lamphear (1976) stating 35-40 years. Sandra Gray believes that the actual time period was likely never as important as combined ecological and social factors that meant a

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succession ceremony would proceed, but feels that the estimates of Dyson-Hudson and

Lamphear are "closer to the mark" and that succession is currently "long overdue"

(personal correspondence, June 10, 2011). While this study did not set out to test the

merits of this debate, the succession timeframe was raised by respondents across the

study population, and an analysis of responses finds that the delay in handover of power

is considered anomalous and is directly related to the upheaval in the region. This

upheaval, in turn, further hinders the chances for handover of power. Young men within

the study population commonly expressed frustration at the lack of initiations, or even

despondence regarding their hopes at initiating, as evidenced in the following from a

group of Pian youth:

> Initiation has not been done in some years. This only happened when it was
> peaceful and lots of food was available. Since all the fighting there has been no
> initiation. Without food and with fighting—initiation cannot happen in these
> conditions.[61]

This attitude was echoed in multiple locations, as evident in the responses from a group

of Bokora:

> Initiations have also stopped due to the continuously bad weather. We need to
> have animals to initiate. You need blood, butter, milk. There have been no
> initiations in eight years, but there are men here who are eligible.[62]

The anomaly of the delay in succession is laid out clearly by a key informant, a young

Pian man who was serving within the district government during the fieldwork:

> The succession should have taken place in 1983 [25 years after 1958] and the
> four age-sets of the Gazelles should have been completed at this time. There is
> meant to be a 'term limit' within this informal democracy, but nothing took place
> [in 1983]. As of 2008 [another 25 years], the Gazelles should have relinquished
> to the Rats.[63]

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[61] Interview No. 197, Pian male youth, Lolachat, Nakapiripirit District, May 9, 2009.
[62] Interview No. 119, Bokora male youth, Lotome, Moroto District, February 23, 2009.
[63] Key informant no. 9, Nakapiripirit town, Nakapiripirit District, May 8, 2009.

In other words, by the time of the fieldwork for this study, there should have been a

second succession ceremony, in which the Gazelles retired and made today's Rats the

senior generation set.[64] Without even the first of these succession ceremonies occurring,

there are now multiple generations of adult (or near adult) men who have not been

initiated. The co-existence of these generations means that there are likely large numbers

of men who will not initiate within their lifetimes – i.e., they will die with a ritual status

akin to children. The key informant quoted above, approximately age 30, is himself the

son of a Rat, meaning that *two* succession ceremonies (Mountains to Gazelles, allowing

the Rats to initiate, and then the Gazelles to the Rats, allowing *their* sons to initiate) will

have to occur before he can initiate and enter the junior generation. The same was true

for another key informant who worked with our team, who was in his late 40s and the

father of 9 living children, the eldest in her mid-20s.

The generation gap creates frustration for the adult men who realize they are unlikely to

initiate in their lifetimes. This frustration, in turn, is a factor in the violence that itself

undermines the conditions of peace and stability that are required (along with abundant

harvests) in order for both initiations and the eventual succession ceremony to take place.

Initiations into the as of yet unopened *Ngiru* age-set should coincide with the

preparations for succession from the *Ngimoru* to *Ngigete*. Even if elders were prepared

to herald in the start of the succession preparations by opening the *Ngiru* age-set, the lack

of stability would be a problem, as explained by a group of Pian male youth:

"[Initiations] only take place when it is a good year and when there is total peace. There

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[64] Referring back to the fictitious example of the 72 year old who is still within the junior generation-set: this man not only has sons in their 40s who are uninitiated (because they can't join the same generation-set as their father), but also has grandsons in their 20s. Importantly, this particular example was conservative in the ages assigned. If the man in question had been 35 as opposed to 18 when he was initiated into *Ngigete,* his grandsons would likely be in their 40s and his great-grandsons in their 20s.

must be good production of food as well."[65] Total peace is difficult to achieve in the

absence of effective authority. The generation gap coupled with the on-going violence

undermines the important role of the elders in creating and maintaining authority.

The relationship between the elder and the younger generations is based on a system of

tributes, deference, and respect.[66] Respect is paid to the elders and the elders exercise

control and influence over the actions of the youth (Simala and Amutabi 2005). Rituals

to demonstrate respect are central to a seniority based authority system, and youth in

Karamoja would traditionally offer sacrificial animals as tributes to their elders. A given

group of youth would offer the meat to their 'grandfathers' who would be in the senior

generation set, with the ceremonially most important pieces of the animal doled out based

on seniority (Knighton 2005). However, as youth in Lorengedwat sub-county explained,

so few *Ngimoru* remain alive that the youth now share offerings with "our fathers, the

Ngigete, not our grandfathers," as it is the *Ngigete* who now preside at rituals.[67] This

illustrates the *de facto* authority adopted by the junior generation set in the absence of

succession of power (discussed in more detail below). Importantly, while the terms

"father" or "grandfather" were once accurate reflections of the relationship between those

paying tribute and those being respected, the presence of additional uninitiated

generations has up-ended the generation matching between grandfathers and their

grandsons. In the past most uninitiated young men would have fathers in the junior

generation set and grandfathers in the senior set, and the relationships and reciprocal lines

of respect and control were clear. As is the case with at least two of the key informants in

this study, however, in many cases today a man's father is himself not initiated, meaning

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[65] Interview No. 129, Pian male youth, Lorengedwat, Nakapiripirit District, February 18, 2009.
[66] This paragraph draws on Stites (in press).
[67] Interview No. 205, Pian male youth, Lorengedwat, Nakapiripirit District, May 14, 2009.

that fathers and sons have the same official status, thereby upsetting the hierarchical

system of tributes and respect. The key informant in the district office at Nakapiripirit

described how this undermines the power dynamic:

> The Mountains have been in power for 51 years and have robbed the next two
> generations of their authority. As a result, these younger ones say, 'Don't talk to
> us of this power! You have refused to hand over power so we do not listen to
> you!' The Mountains will say to the Gazelles, 'It is you who are not organizing
> [controlling] your children!' But the Gazelles reply, 'But it is your fault! You
> have the power and you have not handed over power so we cannot sanction or
> condemn our youth!'[68]

As explained earlier, following a successful sanctioned raid, elders would receive a

lokokwa animal as a tribute. These and other offerings demonstrated respect and

deference, but also allowed for communication, exchange and influence. Elders were

thus able to have a degree of influence over the raids of the youth, which might include

moderation in the use of violence or in the occurrence of the raid itself (Almagor 1979;

Mkutu 2003, 2008). It can be posited that the *lokokwa* offerings have declined because

many raids are occurring without the blessing of the elders and because the proceeds

from raids are quickly sold off or transferred to avoid detection (Mkutu 2008; Akabwai

and Ateyo 2007). This, however, is only part of the story and does not take into account

the generation gap which means that the youth no longer have direct close ties with the

elders in power. This has led to the erosion of the vertical system that balanced deference

and influence. Without influence, the elders lack the ability to regulate the behavior of

the youth. This, in turn, leads to the instability that undermines the conditions required

for a handover of power.

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[68] Key informant no. 9, Nakapiripirit Town, Nakapiripirit District, February 17, 2009.

<u>Tensions between *Ngimoru* and *Ngigete*</u>

While most of this study has examined the power dynamic between initiated and uninitiated men, the views of the key informant quoted above highlight another important dimension to this struggle—the tensions between the *Ngimoru* and the *Ngigete*. Just as the uninitiated want to be recognized as adult men and given a place at the table, the junior *Ngigete* want to be allowed to take the reins of control and succeed the *Ngimoru*. This delay in granting authority has had negative repercussions upon the relationship between these generations, as well as upon overall stability. The same key informant believed that by 1983 (the year marking the end of the first 25 years), "the Gazelles stopped respecting the authority of their fathers" and had acquired their own guns and cows and could get wealth. This led to "a period of separation" in which communities "had lost their center."[69] The *Ngigete* (Gazelles) experienced collapse of their relationship with their own children a generation later, adding pressure to interpersonal male relationships. By this argument, if the *Ngimoru* were to cede power today the *Ngigete* would be able to satisfy both their own desire to be in the senior position and the need to appease their sons by allowing for initiations to take place. As discussed above, however, this study finds that the existence of additional uninitiated generations created through the extended delay in succession means that even though the *Ngigete* may be able to appease their sons, their *sons' sons* would continue to rebel and seek alternate forms of power and recognition.

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[69] Key informant no. 9, Nakapiripirit town, Nakapiripirit District, May 8, 2009.

Thus there exist tensions between and among multiple generations of adult men and leads

to turmoil, a collapse of the deference-respect system of tributes and influence, and an

inability to control violence. The resulting turmoil contributes to the stagnation of

authority, as the *Ngimoru* are reluctant to hand over power in a time of upheaval, both

because this is seen as inauspicious and also because they are reportedly reluctant to have

their already tumultuous legacy end on such a sour note. The *Ngimoru* are "annoyed" at

the *Ngigete* for what they see as the *Ngigete*'s failure to regulate and discipline their

children:

> The Mountains believe that the Gazelles' children have spoiled things with the
> spilling of the blood. This group [Gazelles] is held ransom by the power of the
> elders, because it is their sons who are raiding. [These boys] are not controlled
> by the Gazelles, and these children pour blood unto the earth and anger Akuju.[70]

In turn, the *Ngigete* feel that the *Ngimoru* have failed them by refusing to cede power in a

timely fashion. This means that there is no functioning system of promised rites of

passage that previously served to keep youth in line.

Implications for Traditional Systems of Law and Order

One of the key roles of the elders in the past was engaging in diplomacy and

peacemaking with other groups. These activities ranged from ensuring access to shared

grazing lands and watering points with neighboring groups to establishing inter-

community meetings and managing reparations following transgressions or violations

(Carlson et al. 2012). In the converse, elders also played an important role in conflict,

whether in blessing raids, encouraging revenge attacks, or accepting stolen animals in

exchange for ignoring transgressions. This study finds that as violence committed by the

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[70] Key informant no. 1, Matany, Moroto District, July 14, 2008.

youth increased and the elders' ability to control the violence waned, the function of the

elders as diplomats and mediators was undermined. Although few elders within the study

population spoke directly about their relative lack of power, a group of Matheniko elders

in Nadunget is a notable exception:

> They were elders like Apoloris who used to control grazing areas and the way the
> Three Stones of Karamoja used to move and share dry season grazing areas even
> when they crossed over to Teso. Today elders are not strong. People ignore the
> authority of elders.[71]

This demise saw not only the weakened authority of the elders within and among groups,

but also had a negative impact on their standing and position of respect within their

communities. Once the authority and standing of the elders was compromised internally

there was a parallel decline in their ability to act as negotiators or peace makers among

the different groups. As highlighted in the discussion on cursing, the erosion in this role

is apparent in the fact that each territorial group believes that the elders of their enemies

are no longer able to condemn—and hence prevent—the actions of their youth. The

disillusionment on the part of the male youth with the power of their elders is supported

by the work of Mkutu:

> The erosion of traditional governance institutions among the pastoralist
> communities has weakened the ability of community elders to exercise control
> over young men. Indeed, 'eldership' can now be attained by wealth, and youth
> are often well positioned to attain wealth if they can gain access to guns. Elders
> now have to 'negotiate' with such youth in a way that has not been the case in the
> past. (2003, 11)

With the youth in control of the guns and the associated access to the new forms of

associated wealth, the "negotiations" between the youth and their elders takes on new

dimensions. *Lokokwa* might be offered in appreciation of a covert blessing of a raid or

even as appeasement after an unauthorized raid, but just as often the youth ignore such

protocol entirely.

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[71] Interview No. 206, Matheniko elders, Nadunget, Moroto District, November 10, 2009.

The Impact of Disarmament

The violence committed by the younger generations was both an outcome of the lack of control held by the elders and served to further perpetuate the disintegration of rapport between the generations. Movement and exchange had allowed for regular relations and interactions between groups, but violence hampered trade, mobility and the sharing of resources. Violence also eventually brought the involvement of outside actors, namely the UPDF, whose presence further restricted mobility, exchange and limited locally initiated peace negotiations and community interactions that were conducive to peaceful relations for shared ends.[72] One such example can be found in the collapse of the *arigan,* or large kraals in traditional grazing areas, that occurred over the course of this research. In times of peace, these *arigan* would be inhabited by herdsmen and animals from different groups who come together for improved security, exchange and use of resources.[73] These mixed settlements allowed for building of relationships among not only the elders from the various groups, but also across all age groups, including groups of youth who might otherwise be engaged in tit-for-tat attacks. Meetings between young people in these settings would often lead to intermarriage and the building of kinship relations and social exchange.[74] The study team visited such a kraal in December of 2006 in the Nakonyen grazing area in Katikekile and found a mixed population of

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[72] The obstruction (intentional or otherwise) of peace meetings was raised in an interview with the neighboring Jie group in Kotido District. Male elders said that the UPDF had prevented them from meeting both the Dodoth and the Bokora in two separate attempts to broker peace in order to allow access to grazing lands. Interview No. 176, Jie elders, Kacheri, Kotido District, April 8, 2009.
[73] Key informant no. 1, while driving through Soroti District, March 14, 2007. Interview No. 78, Matheniko elders, Rupa, Moroto District, March 10, 2007.
[74] Interview No. 113, Matheniko elderly woman, Nadunget, Moroto District, July 11, 2008.

Tepeth, Matheniko, Pokot and Bokora. This mixed kraal dispersed shortly after our visit as a result of UPDF activities in the area and fear, as reported by respondents, that the large (and heavily protected) kraal made an easy target for disarmament. Respondents interviewed subsequently lamented the loss of opportunities for peace and exchange that had been provided through the presence of the Nakonyen *arigan.*[75]

The extended presence of the military in Karamoja has also had more general impacts on authority. The already tenuous control by the elders and the respect afforded to the traditional systems by the youth were undermined by the arrival and influence of a far stronger actor. This important shift in power dynamics was acknowledged by all demographic groups within the study population. Some elders, perhaps reluctant to admit to other factors undermining their influence, saw this as an issue of direct substitution: "In the past when we had kraals [the] elders used to control everything; today it is the army to order."[76] For male youth in many areas, the arrival of the military further undermined the power of the elders and highlighted the general weakness of the elders in being able to maintain law and order through traditional means.[77] The shift in power brought by the actions and extended presence of the military as part of disarmament did not, however, stop at functions of law and order. As discussed in more depth in chapter six, with the introduction of protected kraals, the soldiers became intimately involved in animal husbandry and effectively crowded out the decision making role of the elders (involving aspects such as herd maintenance and movement) as well as the warrior/herder role of male youth. Youth soon found themselves "idle" and "redundant" and expressed

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[75] Interview No. 81, Tepeth men, Katikekile, Moroto District, March 13, 2007. Interview No. 207, Matheniko elders, Rupa, Moroto District, November 11, 2009.
[76] Interview No. 214, Bokora elders, Lopei, Moroto District, November 16, 2009.
[77] This was stated and implied in multiple interviews.

frustrated at both the usurping of control by the military and the ineffectiveness of the

male elders in countering such actions. In sum, the presence of the military and the

extent of the soldiers' influence over and involvement in what had been essential

governance activities brought a fundamental shift in the locus of power and further

undermined the already tenuous authority as held by elders.

Reconfiguring Authority

Leaving the external factor of disarmament aside for the moment, this study finds two

distinct ways in which power is shifting within Karimojong society. The first is the

reconfiguration of the parameters of status and authority in the hands of young initiated

men, and the second is the erosion of *de jure* authority as located in the *Ngimoru* senior

generation-set. At the same time that there has been a shift in the locus of power among

the male elders of society, young men have been reformulating the nature of authority

and establishing parameters of status that are totally separate from the official realms of

power as mandated by the gerontocratic system. The system of tributes and respect has

eroded to a point where youth often simply ignore the ritual order through which youth

are meant to pay tribute to their elders. Whereas a raid would have once been followed

by offering of *lokokwo,* elders now say "we do not see these stolen animals as the youth

sell them straight in cattle markets to avoid being found in their kraals"[78] and "the young

men began selling the animals without giving any to the old men."[79] Related to the

system of tributes is the ceremonial consumption of meat in accordance with seniority,

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[78] Interview No. 100, Matheniko elders, Rupa, Moroto District, July 8, 2008.
[79] Interview No. 194, Pian elders, Kakomongole, Nakapiripirit District, May 10, 2009.

whereby select parts of the animal are presented according to age and gender. But, as a

key informant explained:

> [T]hese younger ones [the uninitiated] have started to build their own ceremonies and traditions. For instance, you are not meant to be able to eat the thigh of an animal unless you are a Mountain, but these young uninitiated men have started to share these pieces of meat among themselves, ignoring the cultural norms and regulations.[80]

Since the early 1980s, weapons have been a part of the equation in the establishment of

status and new parameters of control. Until the impacts of the current disarmament, this

ready access to weapons allowed uninitiated men to take power into their own hands and

to acquire material hallmarks of wealth and to engage in social exchanges with age

mates. While most respondents in this study and some outside experts believe that the

violence linked to weapons is both a cause and indicator of the governance crisis

discussed in this chapter, Ben Knighton posits nearly the exact opposite. Knighton

agrees that violence is linked to the struggle for succession, but does not see anything

unique about the current situation. He argues that the "rule of the elders…necessarily

goes through a crisis" before a succession ceremony can take place (2005, 145) and that

this upheaval is a normal part of the process. As such, it is the very behavior of the

younger generations—including the possible use of violence—that assists in pushing the

seniors towards succession. The juniors are eventually promoted and their sons can be

initiated into the next generation-set. When this happens, the former young "trouble-

makers" conform to the established patterns of allocated roles and re-emphasize the

hierarchy of the age-class system (Dyson-Hudson 1966, 199). This study posits that the

violence currently experienced *is* in fact unique from previous periods of upheaval due to

the extended period in which succession has not taken place. Whereas Knighton feels

that the current delay itself is within the realm of normal, the data from this study indicate

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[80] Key informant no. 9, Nakapiripirit town, Nakapiripirit District, May 8, 2009.

otherwise. In particular, the emergence of the generation gap and associated problems in control and influence illustrate the impracticality of a system with so long a delay between succession ceremonies.

Returning to the second way in which power has shifted, this study finds that although the rules of the gerontocratic system stipulate that the senior generation-set holds power until succession, this does not reflect the reality of the situation in Karamoja at present. The remaining men of *Ngimoru* are few and far between and those that are still living are advanced in their years and many lack the mental or physical capabilities to be actively involved in decision-making or leadership. As such, it is the younger age-sets of the *Ngigete* generation that hold *de facto* power and are making the important day to day decisions regarding aspects such as access to grazing areas, splitting of herds, and migration (Olowo Onyango 2010). *Ngigete* may ask lucid *Ngimoru* to bless these decisions, but the *Ngimoru* are no longer in the position to make these decisions themselves.[81] (This finding is not without controversy, with other external observers such as Knighton stating that the authority of the elders remains intact.) As discussed earlier, in many cases it is the *Ngigete* who also hold ceremonial power as evident in presiding over rituals and receiving offerings. The exact nature of the authority systems varies not only from one location to the next as determined by the mental and physical health of the eldest males, but is also dynamic over time. The oldest living *Ngimoru* may preside over certain events or make specific decisions, while in other instances in the same community the baton falls to senior *Ngigete*. More and more often, the LCIs (local councilors at the village level) also play a central role in local governance. While LCs are ideally members of the set of initiated men, the examples among the key informants

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[81] Key informant no. 1, while driving through Soroti District, March 14, 2007.

for this study illustrate that many men can reach an advanced age without having gone through initiation. The exact role played by and status afforded to a given LC appears to be a factor of his standing within the community as well as the matter over which he might be presiding.[82]

The Growing Importance of Economic Factors

The research for this study indicates that economic considerations are increasingly starting to impact questions of authority and control. Traditional power was once determined purely by social and cultural norms, and the emergence of power according to military prowess and access to weapons marked the period from the 1980s until the most recent disarmament. Today a growing source of authority is neither social nor cultural, but economic. New livelihood strategies—including those characterized by migration, casual labor, natural resource collection and also violence—are outside the realm of the traditional system of governance. As discussed in the next chapter, as the mode of providing for households has changed, the areas where authority and regulations are needed has also changed. The inability of customary authority structures to evolve at a rate of change that is parallel to the economic and livelihood shifts has hindered their ability to govern effectively or with the necessary credibility. This has led to the further demise of the authority of the elders and has contributed to the need for male youth – as well as other population groups—to take matters of both governance and economic survival into their own hands.

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[82] This study did not examine how views regarding LCs differed based on the initiate status, but this would be a worthwhile question to examine.

Conclusion

This chapter examines the hypothesis that violence is a factor of tensions between generations of men. The findings from this study supports this hypothesis, and the analysis in this chapter attempts to explain and illustrate both *why* this tension exists and *how* this tension in turn contributes to violence. This study theorizes that one of the central aspects behind this tension is the existence of *multiple* generations of uninitiated adult men, thereby creating discordance in what should be a reciprocated system of deference on the part of the youth and influence on the part of the elders. This generation gap causes tensions not only between the male elders and the uninitiated male youth, but also between the junior and senior generation of men who respectively blame each other for failure to cede power and inability to control their "children." These tensions, in turn, alienate the generations from each other, effectively nullifying the ability to come together to mend the rifts and lay the groundwork for the peace that is needed prior to succession.

The current stagnation of succession and initiation rites excludes young men from the normative social, political and economic order. This exclusion has widespread repercussions, leading to conflict between generations of men as well as an ongoing and evolving struggle by these male "youth" to establish and define their own systems for status and respect. Occurring against the backdrop of a society already marred by heavy violence, these systems themselves often entail and further perpetuate the very violence that stands as an obstacle to succession.

The tensions, erosion of authority, and emergence of multiple uninitiated generations creates an environment in which young men seek new forms of status, authority, and respect. These actions are often taken outside the parameters of the traditional hierarchy and communal system in which the good of the community took precedent over the good of the individual. In order to achieve status and standing within a system that no longer afforded official recognition, young men's strategies became increasingly motivated by individual or peer-group goals. Many of these strategies were non-violent and had few negative consequences, such as out-migration or diversification of livelihoods into more urban and wage-based endeavors. Many others, however, were aimed at amassing personal wealth or establishing a reputation among age-mates. In a society with few viable alternatives to demonstrate capabilities, these latter strategies very often entailed criminal behavior and violence in order to demonstrate prowess and bravery, acquire material goods to exchange with friends or use as personal status markers, and illustrate leadership skills.

In the absence of succession and initiations, the traditional roles for both male elders and young men have been and are being reconfigured and construed in new ways. This process of reconfiguration itself serves to further increase the division between the male generations: with the demise of the normal system of exchange and reciprocity, elders and youth turn increasingly inward (on an individual and group level) and some of their actions and activities are focused on building their own wealth, standing and status outside the parameters of the once integrated system. These include the elders' (reported) blessing of illicit raids against the proscriptions of other elders and the efforts of young men to build status and influence within their peer group through violent bravado and the

sharing of looted resources. While there are many actions taken by both groups that do continue to support and uphold the traditional order (such as management by the elders of at least some natural resources and the role of young men in animal husbandry), behaviors outside the communal interests of the group have disproportionate effects and wide resonance. It is in the way these actions resonate that the reconfiguring takes place: as the authority and validity of the actions of the elders is questioned, the elders start to lose their esteemed position as peace negotiators and diplomats. This loss in turn impacts the effectiveness of any peace they attempt to create because it is the male youth who ultimately must uphold or ignore such peace deals, and if the youth do not have faith in the sanctity of actions taken by the elders they are much less likely to respect these arrangements. For young men, the quest for status and respect within a system where such markers cannot be obtained through traditional avenues becomes central, but, as apparent in the experiences of other members of the communities and outside observers, this quest is largely construed as one of violence and upheaval.

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CHAPTER FOUR: THE STRUGGLE OVER NATURAL RESOURCES?

<u>Overview</u>

Having established the relevance of generational tensions among men as a factor

contributing to violence in the region, this chapter examines the relationship between

violence and access to natural resources. As described in the literature review, the

hypothesis that natural resource scarcity and competition are key drivers of conflict in

pastoral areas is widespread and is replicated in media sources (Gettleman 2009) and

planning of programs, including early warning systems that track resource depletion and

efforts by multiple NGOs to support local reconciliation programs that emphasize shared

access to resources (Lind 2013; Eaton 2008). This argument makes a great deal of sense

for Karamoja when examining the evidence: a growing population in an increasingly

confined area (due to closure of borders to migration and gazetting of lands for specific

purposes such as nature preserves, game parks, and private development) facing

environmental shocks caused by intensifying drought cycles and deforestation. From a

bird's-eye view, these environmental changes seem to correspond relatively neatly to the

gradual increase in conflict over the past several decades. In particular, these changes

would seem to explain the shrinking geographic and demographic reach of conflict—i.e.,

in the past, a given group's enemies were a distant and clearly delineated group, but these

distances and distinctions have shrunk over time, reflected first in the splintering of the

Karimojong into separate and hostile territorial groups and today visible as intra-group violence among the Pian.[1]

Given the seeming pervasiveness of this hypothesis in the wider academic debate, this study specifically gathered data on whether or not respondents themselves saw a correlation between conflict and natural resource access or scarcity. In order to do so, data for this research question were collected through participatory approaches including: creating maps to show important local natural resources and then overlaying areas of conflict on the same map; proportional piling exercises to rank resources by importance, scarcity, and difficulty of access; and creating ranked lists of barriers to the most important resources. The research team then discussed how barriers to access and availability had changed over time, and what the perceived factors were behind these changes. At the end of the exercise, we directly probed the impact of conflict on access to resources.[2]

The data show that while key informants (like much of the literature) consider there to be a clear correlation between resource scarcity and conflict, respondents at the local level do not attribute conflict, episodes of violence, or prolonged periods of tension with other groups to resource scarcity or even to competition over access to the resources. The study argues that there is a critical difference between violent conflict that occurs *at sites*

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[1] This chapter draws upon (Stites and Fries 2010)

[2] To note, however, at no point did the research team ask "Does resource scarcity cause conflict, violence among or between groups, or problems in your relations?" Rather, we sought to capture perceptions on this correlation through triangulation and to then answer this question through the analysis. While believing that this was an appropriate method for investigating this question, it is important to consider whether or not a more direct approach (i.e., "What is the correlation between resource competition and conflict?") may have generated a different set of data. This study does not rule out this possibility, but feels confident that the methods used indicate that in the views of the respondents, there was no direct correlation between violence and resource competition.

of resource use and violent conflict that occurs *over* the use of resources at these sites. This study finds that while there is no evidence for natural resource competition as a factor in male violence within the study population, there are important aspects and changes related to natural resources with implications for authority, identity and, ultimately violence. This chapter illustrates the shifts in authority and governance that relate to natural resource management but have much broader and far reaching implications for the customary authority mechanisms, livelihood strategies, and conflict management. The livelihood shifts by gender detailed in this chapter show how the role of men within households have evolved in recent years and how these shifts impact male identity and position within households and communities.

Access and Availability

In order to understand the role of natural resources in livelihoods and the potential links to conflict, the study examined both availability of and access to natural resources. The analysis focused on those resources identified by respondents as being most important to their livelihoods, namely pasture (free ranging foraged grasslands and shrubs) and water (from dams and river beds) for herds, water for human consumption, firewood, and wild foods. A critical distinction emerged in the analysis: while declining resource *availability*[3] was of concern to respondents, issues of *access* had a much greater impact on livelihood strategies and interaction with other groups. The emphasis on questions of access does not mean that availability was not an issue, and both young and old respondents within the study population felt that resources had been more plentiful in previous decades and for earlier generations. Many respondents attributed this to greater

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[3] Defined as adequate availability of both pasture and water in a given area.

amounts of rain and longer periods of sustained peace in the past, and uniformly agreed

that availability of natural resources had diminished significantly in the several years

prior to the collection of data. Drought over four consecutive seasons (FEWSNet 2010)

prior to the research study undoubtedly resulted in lower amounts of seasonally

regenerative resources such as water, pasture and wild fruit. When asked why fewer

natural resources are available in the present day, respondents spoke about both natural

causes and increased destruction of resources in times of scarcity:

> During past generations, natural resources and people were in abundance. There
> was peace and rain, so people could access what they needed. People used to
> cultivate so they didn't have to go out and destroy the natural resources like we
> do now. There is now famine, which is making people access and destroy these
> resources.[4]

Respondents also reported that "normal" seasonal patterns of natural resource availability

have been disrupted by more frequent and prolonged droughts. Asked about availability

during the rainy season, respondents mapped proximal and plentiful sources for their

most important natural resources; most often, however, these descriptions were

accompanied by the statement that such rains have been absent for several years: "These

days, the wet seasons are the same as the dry seasons. There is no wet season."[5] As a

result of these changes, respondents reported decreased herd sizes through death and

distress sales. Those animals that do remain are taken greater distances and in smaller

groups in order to access dry season pasture. As illustrated, however, UPDF

interventions associated with disarmament have limited livestock mobility, exacerbating

vulnerability and rates of loss in the process.

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[4] Interview No. 227, Bokora women, Lotome, Moroto District, November 17, 2009.
[5] Interview No. 237, Bokora female youth, Lokopo, Moroto District, November 16, 2009.

Obstacles to Access

Availability of resources was seen as limited, but access was uniformly stressed as a more pressing problem. This study finds that the fundamental obstacle to access was insecurity: this perception was ubiquitous in responses from all demographic and territorial groups within the study population. As a young Pian man explained, "Insecurity denies access to fruits, firewood and pasture as well as water. Fruits are now rotting in the bush because of insecurity … only the jackals feed on them."[6] This study finds that insecurity hinders access to resources in three critical ways. First, accessing natural resources can result in violent encounters, especially when in the bush. Women in Nadunget sub-county described their journeys to gather firewood:

> When the enemies catch you sometimes they will remove your beads, remove your clothes, and rape you. If there are many men, they all will rape you. For women they usually leave you alive but will ask you many questions about how many cows you have and in which direction they are, the location of your guns, and other things. When they catch a man they will usually kill him.[7]

Accounts of women attacked were most commonly associated with the collection of natural resources. Men and boys might also be killed or injured under these circumstances, but the collection of natural resources brought the primary physical threats for women.

Second, perceived risk is paramount to actual risk in its impact on resource access. Physical violence against even a small number of people creates a ripple effect and sends fear across a community, expressed by one Bokora woman as being "psychologically

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[6] Interview No. 231, Pian male youth, Nabilatuk, Nakapiripirit District, November 13, 2009.
[7] Interview No. 219, Matheniko women, Nadunget, Moroto District, November 10, 2009.

tortured."[8] Moreover, perceived risk prevents or limits the pursuit of natural resources,

as explained by a group of young Bokora women:

> These days we are not able to access these resources because of rampant
> insecurity. We cannot go out there to look for something to eat. The Jie are
> always there waiting for us. We are just waiting to starve to death.[9]

Third, insecurity over the past three decades has led to changed settlement patterns which

have in turn negatively impacted access to natural resources. Settlements have become

more tightly clustered in an effort to improve defenses against attack, and the resulting

population density increases competition and resource depletion of natural resources in

the immediate vicinity of manyattas and kraals. This trend was discussed by a key

informant:

> Manyattas used to be smaller in size, and they were further apart. Before the
> internal Karamojong fighting started, all the groups had similar manyatta patterns
> and they were all spaced apart. The Tepeth have not changed that much, because
> they have the mountains to help protect them. But for the rest, the internal
> fighting has resulted in the individual manyattas growing larger, and the distance
> between them shrinking as they cluster together. Because of increased
> insecurity, they moved nearer to town centers, in part because this is where the
> military detaches were posted. They moved hoping to be safer. As a result, a
> number of smaller more distance manyattas have been completely abandoned,
> such as those in Lokopo, which is largely abandoned.[10]

The dynamic was confirmed by older respondents, such as a group of Matheniko elders

who said, "The people are staying together. Because of insecurity they cannot dare have

separate manyattas as they used to during those good days!"[11] A group of male youth in

a nearby location explained the impacts of this on their ability to reach necessary

resources: "People now concentrate in one place and this has affected natural resources.

In the past, we were dispersed and were able to access such resources easily."[12]

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[8] Interview No. 226, Bokora woman, Lokopo, Moroto District, November 16, 2009.
[9] Interview No. 237, Bokora female youth, Lokopo, Moroto District, November 16, 2009.
[10] Key informant no. 1, while driving through Soroti District, March 14, 2007.
[11] Interview No. 207, Matheniko elders, Rupa, Moroto District, November 11, 2009.
[12] Interview No. 229, Matheniko male youth, Rupa, Moroto District, November 11, 2009.

This study also finds that there is a correlation between the distance of travel required to access resources and the likelihood of experiencing physical attack. Distance from resources increases the perceived risk of attack, which in turn affects decision-making regarding resource access. Those allegedly responsible for attacks are groups of young men hiding in the bush in hopes of an opportunity to seize livestock or other assets. The direct relationship between distance and risk/perceived risk is compounded by the clustering of settlements, as people must travel greater distances to access resources due to the population density and demand on resources in any given area. This distance-risk correlation was reported by both men and women. Male herders, who travel greater distances in search of adequate resources for animals, feel that threats increased when they moved to distant grazing lands or water sources, as explained by a group of Bokora men: "Availability of natural resources has reduced because of drought. These resources are found far away from the village. As we try to go for them there, we are attacked."[13] A group of Pian women said, "When we go for firewood, we get attacked and our livestock is taken. The further we go the more insecure it is."[14] A group of Bokora women were blunter: "If you go very deep into the wilderness, you are looking for death."[15] Many female respondents chose to avoid these risks at the expense of the quality and quantity of resources they could collect, and spent long hours looking for scattered resources in lieu of those more plentiful in less secure sites. The perception of attacks being more likely deeper into the bush has led to heavy depletion of resources near settlements, which eventually pushes people farther in their searches.

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[13] Interview No. 238, Bokora male youth, Lotome, Moroto District, November 17, 2009.
[14] Interview No. 220, Pian women, Nabilatuk, Nakapiripirit District, November 13, 2009.
[15] Interview No. 225, Bokora women, Lopei, Moroto District, November 16, 2009.

Experiences and Perceptions by Gender

This study finds that insecurity in accessing natural resources is highly gendered. As

detailed in the literature review, women and girls are responsible for collecting resources

that are essential for domestic production such as water and firewood and, in lean

periods, wild fruits and vegetables to supplement the family diet. As this chapter

discusses, households have increased their reliance on the exploitation of foraged

resources (firewood, charcoal, grasses for thatch, building poles and wild foods) for both

domestic consumption and sale or barter in exchange for food and basic commodities.[16]

This livelihood shift is borne primarily (though not entirely, as will be shown) by women

and girls who travel great distances and spend long portions of their day accessing these

resources. The extent of the distance increases risk, as does the relatively solitary nature

of foraged resource collection when compared to the resource use of men, who normally

herd in groups with other males. Women do go out for firewood and wild foods in

groups, but the scattered nature of these resources means that the groups are small and

that women must often separate when they reach their destination in order to find an

adequate supply.

The data for this study show wide discrepancies by age and gender in perceptions of who

manages natural resources and access to these resources. This study posits that

understanding perceptions of governance over natural resources is key to understanding

shifts in resource use and the intersection between these resources and conflict.

Perceptions of management or control of resources varied markedly by demographic

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[16] One of the reviewers for a draft of this dissertation pointed out that these conditions implied the likely
presence of a market for livestock fodder. Unfortunately, this data was not collected as part of the study and
was not raised by any informants or respondents, and hence is not discussed in this context.

group. Male elders reported that they were in control of resources. Women, in contrast, had one of three answers: no one controlled resources, God controlled resources, or women themselves controlled resources. Male youth most commonly reported that elders controlled resources, but were much more circumspect and conditional in these responses than the elders themselves, and many male youth in the study population pointed to areas where the elders' authority fell short.

The variations in these responses are closely linked to primary resource use by gender. This, in turn, links to the ways in which natural resource use—and hence governance thereof—is shifting over time and in response to current stresses. When asked who controls or manages natural resources, respondents answered with regard to the resources that they prioritize and that have traditionally been most closely linked to their gender-specific roles within household livelihood strategies. The study team used a ranking exercise to establish resource prioritization by group, and found that while water was considered most important by all respondents, men ranked pasture as the next most important resource while women felt that trees were the next most important resource. Interestingly, while women were in general agreement regardless of age, older men listed water and pasture almost exclusively whereas younger men expanded this focus to include resources such as trees, wild fruits and stones (i.e., for quarrying). These rankings indicate that women are usually reflecting upon access to water (for human as well as animal consumption) and foraged resources for household consumption and sale or trade. Older men are considering access to the resources needed for animal husbandry (water and pasture), while younger men are prioritizing these resources but cognizant of a broader range of needs.

Turning to the responses by group, elders in the study population were unanimous in identifying themselves as being in charge of resource management. The only exception was in the case of water infrastructure requiring industrial materials, such as boreholes, which they perceived to be under local government authority. A group of Bokora elders stated bluntly, "Elders are the ones who control resources. We just give orders on what needs to be done."[17] While elders in all locations felt that authority rested with them, not all elders were equivocal about the effectiveness or reach of this control. In several locations elders discussed difficulty in extending their authority, which was blamed upon the presence of the army or the recalcitrance of the youth, particularly when youth had guns and thus were "difficult to control."[18] Male youth within the study population offered the greatest nuance in discussing control of resources. They did talk about the proactive work by the elders in making peace to allow access to pasture, but often qualified these comments by pointing to the importance of their own role in daily arrangements needed to maintain access. There was also more disagreement within groups of youth as to the extent of the elders' influence, perhaps indicating the contested nature of this control. Within one group of Pian youth, for instance, the study team heard:

> Elders have too many worries because of intensifying drought, diseases and conflicts. Decision-making and allocation of roles become difficult. Youth do their own things, sometimes not taking elders' advice. Everyone is on his own.[19]

But we were told by another respondent in the same group, "Elders are decision makers. They have the power and authority to direct on how resources are to be used and managed." Differences in perceptions among male youth are due to a variety of factors, including individual and group relations with elders and variations from one location to

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[17] Interview No. 216, Bokora elders, Lokopo, Moroto District, November 16, 2009.
[18] Interview No. 214, Bokora elders, Lopei, Moroto District, November 16, 2009.
[19] Interview No. 231, Pian male youth, Nabilatuk, Nakapiripirit District, November 13, 2009.

another in regard to resource availability. In addition, as seen in the views of male youth discussed elsewhere in this study, it is important for young men to hedge their bets in order not to alienate elders whom they still hope will cede control through succession ceremonies. While these specific questions of governance and perceptions of authority related to management of natural resources, the exertion of control over resource is one of the central tenets of traditional authority and thus investigating views of and shifts in this aspect of governance allows for a broader understanding of the evolution of authority and power and how these management systems are able—or not able—to exert control and influence over male youth.

Broader Implications of the Changing Roles for Women

Female perceptions of control of natural resources in Karamoja reflect changes over time in gendered involvement in natural resource collection. Although the role of women in resource collection may appear tangential to the broader question of factors influencing male violence, this study finds that the gendered dimensions of this shift are central to the transformation of governance and authority—and hence parameters of acceptable violence—in the region. As will be discussed later, the increased economic role for women within households has brought a decrease in the livelihoods contribution—with repercussions for identity—for men.

Women in pastoral areas in East Africa have long played important livelihood roles in caring for animals, particularly ruminants, young offspring, and the milking herd left near the home (Hodgson 2000). As pastoral livelihoods have gradually transformed in Karamoja, however, women have seen decreased involvement in animal husbandry. This

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was particularly pronounced over the course of the research for this study due to the increased presence of the UPDF in the region and the establishment of protected kraals. Milking animals were farther from homesteads and women were discouraged or prevented from spending time in the protected kraals, in marked contrast to the important role that women played previously in traditional kraals on both animal and domestic/reproductive duties.

In line with the same processes that have led to a decrease in women's involvement in animal husbandry, the overall contribution of animal products to household food security has declined. Milk and blood were once central to household diets, but the decline in and growing inequity of animal ownership, poor animal health, and limited access to animals have brought a shift towards the exploitation of foraged resources to fill the gap in household food supply. Females are (and always have been) primarily responsible for the collection of such resources, and this study finds that women have taken on more responsibility for household food security to counter the decreases in animal proteins and income arising as a result of the more limited access to animals by all household members. At first glance, the shift towards increased reliance on plant-based foraged resources would seem likely to have relatively straight-forward and predictable impacts on gender-based livelihood strategies, engagement with markets, and household food security. All of these impacts are evident and as predicted (i.e., women's domestic duties have greatly increased with commensurate impacts on time that can be devoted to child care, food preparation and agrarian labor; there is a much greater reliance on markets in towns and trading centers for sale or exchange of firewood, charcoal, thatch and building poles and the purchase of staple cereals; dietary diversity has decreased and consumption is uneven with negative impacts likely on protein-energy and micronutrient malnutrition),

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but the less predictable and more relevant impacts for the topic of this dissertation are the

changes in governance that have occurred in relation to the shift in natural resource

exploitation.

The first clue to the shift in governance as linked to natural resource exploitation is

evident in the perceptions of women as to who manages natural resources within

Karamoja. As discussed above, natural resource management traditionally fell strictly

within the realm of the authority of the elders, but this management was of a specific *type*

of resources—e.g., the water and pasture that was essential to pastoral livelihood

strategies—and these were managed through a careful system of social capital and

exchange with other groups (Lind 2013). The plant-based materials that now lie at the

center of market exchange, food security, and the very survival of households do not fall

within the realm of customary systems of governance based on these social ties and

reciprocity. As a result, it is not surprising that women point to the lack of active

management of plant-based resources by male elders and stress that women's own

decisions – what trees to cut or not to cut, when to leave fruit producing branches—form

the basis for management of these resources. A group of women in Lotome expressed

this succinctly:

> The elders used to perform good work when the cows were around but now that
> most of the livestock has been taken, it's like they have no other duty. That is
> our challenge when it comes to managing resources – they only pay attention to
> the things that have to do with the animals.[20]

The perception that elders pay little attention to the resources that are relevant to

women—resources that have always been important, but now form the basis of support

for entire communities—was widespread across female respondents in the study

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[20] Interview No. 227, Bokora women, Lotome, Moroto District, November 17, 2009.

population. When women do discuss the involvement of elders in resource management

it is usually in reference to punishments or fines for cutting wood in the wrong place, as

opposed to proactive systems to manage resource use or access. Often women emphasize

the role of God in creating—or denying—*availability* of resources as an underlying

component of access. "God keeps these natural resources. When he brings rain,

everything is nice."[21] Women attribute natural resource availability to God rather than to

management decisions within direct human control.

The Resulting Governance Gap

This study theorizes that a governance gap is emerging in regard to natural resource

management. This gap is due to the growing importance of foraged plant-based natural

resources in livelihood strategies, the accompanying move away from livestock-related

resources, and the shift towards women as the primary providers within households based

on livelihood strategies surrounding resource exploitation. With this shift has come a

governance gap. The traditional role of male elders was *essentially* linked to the

management of natural resources, as this was about not just access to water and pasture

for the animals, but also managing relationships with neighboring groups who were

trying to access those same resources. Thus, the reach of elders over natural resources

was part and parcel of both their internal and external authority. As access to these

livestock-centered natural resources becomes less central to livelihood strategies—due to

loss of livestock, shifts towards more diversified livelihoods, and the military control

over those animals that do remain—the power of the elders has also waned. Male elders

do not have systems in place to manage the foraged resources that are central to today's

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[21] Interview No. 226, Bokora women, Lokopo, Moroto District, November 16, 2009.

livelihood strategies in the region. Their authority over these resources and areas where such resources are collected is limited to prohibitions on cutting wood in sacred sites such as *akiriket,* with management techniques based largely on punishments and fines. These reactive measures are in marked contrast to the proactive system of negotiation and the creation of social ties traditionally used to ensure regular access to pasture and water. The shift from proactive to reactive governing and the waning of spheres of influence for the elders have affected not only the way in which elders control resources and relate to neighboring groups, but also the way that they are able to manage, mitigate, and influence activities within their own communities, whether these activities be cutting wood in prohibited locations or raiding neighboring communities.

This governance gap has been widened by the gendered shifts in livelihood roles whereby women are taking on increased responsibility for household survival as traditional pastoral livelihoods erode. The natural resources collected by women were always part of household livelihood strategies to a degree—firewood was always needed, wild greens were collected seasonally to supplement diets, thatch was essential for regular roof repairs—but commoditization of these resources was not widespread and only the very poor would have needed to convert these materials into cash or food. Therefore, these foraged resources did not *need to be governed* in the same way as water and pasture, as they were primarily collected in small quantities and for individual household needs. The management systems that were in place relied on restrictions to collecting in certain areas, either sacred groves or areas where exploitation was kept to a minimum as an intentional environmental protection strategy.[22] These restrictions were understood and

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[22] Interview data on restrictions for environmental benefits were mixed. The Tepeth (neighboring group) discussed their long-standing respect for the environment and the associated management of trees and wild

adhered to and, as such, were effective based on the local context and need. A group of

Matheniko male youth in Nadunget referenced the shift towards prioritization of different

resources and the associated decline in the authority of the elders:

> In the past, dependence on natural resources was minimal since people had
> enough milk and food to depend on. Because of more reliance on natural
> resources, elders are finding it difficult to manage them. Their role in the
> management of natural resources is declining.[23]

With the shift towards greater emphasis on foraged resources have come the emergence

of new gender roles, gender-based vulnerabilities, and the extent of responsibility within

the household. The data and analysis indicate that this shift has not been matched by an

evolution of governance systems able to respond in a way that adequately manages or

protects these resources. This explains the perception of women that "no one manages

these resources." Interestingly, although male elders in the study population largely

interpret questions of natural resource management to refer to water and pasture, there is

evidence that some are cognizant of this growing governance gap and the gendered

dimensions inherent therein. Elders in one Matheniko community complained:

> It is our duty to protect these resources but we have been defeated by the hungry
> women who say they cannot afford to watch their children starve to death while
> trees are there to cut for firewood and charcoal.[24]

The inability of governance systems to evolve in response to new livelihood roles is

highly evident in regard to natural resources and the gendered dimensions of resource

collection and use. In addition, human population growth means that simply more people

are attempting to utilize – and increasingly *sell*—a finite amount of resources. These

tangible aspects are readily discussed by respondents. This study surmises, however, that

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areas. These conservation practices were reportedly not nearly as widespread among the Matheniko, Bokora
and Pian, though were mentioned occasionally. In study sites bordering Tepeth communities (such as
Nadunget sub-county in Moroto), some Matheniko respondents emphasized that these practices existing
among the Tepeth, but not among the Matheniko.
[23] Interview No. 230, Matheniko male youth, Nadunget, Moroto District, November 15, 2009.
[24] Interview No. 207, Matheniko elders, Rupa, Moroto District, November 11, 2009.

this governance gap covers not only resource collection, but extends much more broadly across all aspects of control and authority.

A related impact of the shift towards foraged natural resources for survival is the expansion of the groups within communities who collect these materials. This study finds that this change in gender-based livelihood roles has broad implications for social relations and gender identity within households and communities. The Matheniko elders quoted above explained that not only had the exploitation of resources spread beyond a traditional coping mechanism reserved for the poor, but that, for the first time, men could also be seen taking these resources to town for sale or exchange:

> Many people are cutting trees for firewood and for burning charcoal to be sold in towns. Men, women and youth carry all these commodities to town. This is a problem because it was meant for the poor only but today they have lost cattle thus making them vulnerable to hunger.[25]

This expansion must be viewed in relative context: men in some areas have become more involved in the sale of natural resources due to the decline in animal husbandry, but these activities are mostly limited to charcoal production and the cutting and carrying of long building poles into towns for construction purposes. The exploitation of most foraged resources, particularly firewood and wild foods, remains almost exclusively a female domain. It is these female-dominated activities that have become the main sources of sustenance and survival at the household level, and for nearly all households within a given community, in recent years. This illustrates not only the expansion of resource collection by gender, but also points to the deepening and spreading impoverishment of entire communities. Even those households that have maintained access to herds had

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[25] Ibid.

trouble protecting them following disarmament, and, as discussed elsewhere, have

suffered from the lack of ready access to animals as a result of the protected kraal system.

Other forms of livelihood diversification have occurred simultaneously to the increased

reliance on natural resource exploitation. Migration to urban areas and out-migration

from the region have both seen marked expansions in recent years, and migration is

undertaken by both men and women in search of economic opportunities (primarily

unskilled labor) (Stites and Akabwai 2012; Stites, Mazurana, and Akabwai 2007; Greany

2011; Sundal 2010; Gackle, Lolem, and Kabanda 2007). Many men and women in rural

areas now also commute daily into towns and trading centers in search of piecemeal work

(called *leji-leja)* through which they are able to earn cash or kind to support their

families. The elders are ill-equipped to regulate or even influence this proliferation of

livelihood strategies. Elders were very much involved in the basic decision making

surrounding animal husbandry, and this engagement was one of the ways in which their

authority was both visible and constantly reinforced. The visible and active role of the

elders in governance has declined, with widespread repercussions for how power is both

exercised and experienced.

Livelihoods Diversification, Survival Strategies, and Gender Roles

The livelihoods shift away from animal husbandry and the emergence of new livelihoods

has contributed to the governance gap and to the intensification, diversification and

migration of livelihood strategies in response to these pressures (Scoones 1998). Within

the study population, the adaptations in livelihood strategies are largely in response to

food insecurity at the household level. No respondent in the study population *chose* to

abandon animal husbandry in order to carry firewood, collect wild greens in insecure areas, or move to Mbale to sleep on the streets and shell peanuts—these choices were made due to the lack of sustainable livelihood options in the rural areas and the accompanying crisis of providing for families. Understanding the importance of basic survival as being at the heart of these livelihood strategies illustrates both why the governance gap is so profound and the implications for gender identity.

Elders – once relied on for leadership at all levels, including management of food security in lean periods[26]—are suddenly largely irrelevant in the daily lives of most households. The economic importance of the new livelihoods and the near complete lack of direction, oversight or guidance that the elders are able to provide have exacerbated the demise of the elders' authority. Instead of being an active, involved presence able to guide their communities through times of crisis, today the elders are perceived as having little relevance to the daily strategies and decisions that are essential to household survival.

The extent of the shocks of recent years, including repeated and prolonged periods of drought, the erosion of systems of animal husbandry, and the imposition of a violent disarmament campaign—all coming on top of the vulnerability created by two or more decades of endemic internal violence—have shifted household livelihood goals to those of procuring basic sustenance for the majority of the study population. Gone are the

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[26] Elders would manage food security in lean periods through several ways, including having women "seal" their granaries in order to ration the amount of food in a community to make it to the next harvest and sending vulnerable community members, usually young children and lactating or pregnant women, to the kraals in the dry season to ensure better access to animal proteins. In most study areas over the course of this field research there was so little yield from the harvests that long-term rationing was not practical, and most households were surviving on a day-to-day basis through the small amount of food, wild greens, or residue (the dregs from traditional beer brewing) that the female household members could procure through collection or trade in towns.

goals of procuring increased animal wealth or building status through creation of a large

and prosperous family. The foraging of natural resources for consumption and/or sale

has replaced animal husbandry as the primary source of economic income and basic

sustenance for most households. As discussed above, this shift in economic means at the

household level is paralleled by an increase in the economic role for women within

households. Women were always integral to food security, including playing an

important role in animal husbandry, but men drove economic production through herd

management. With the decline in access to and control over animals, men are now

secondary to their female counterparts as household providers.

This study finds this shift in economic role and responsibility to be of profound

importance to the identity and role of young men within their households and

communities, as well as to systems of governance as discussed above. Men and women

in all study sites reported that young men were "idle," "redundant," and "like women

now." Simultaneously, women are both taking on much more of the economic burden

and are facing much greater exposure to physical risk as they travel into the bush to

collect the natural resources. This further underscores the inadequacy experienced by

men: not only are they unable to provide for their families, they are also, due to their

disarmed state, unable to protect their women from physical danger as women act in their

stead. As will be examined in more depth in chapter six, the combined loss of status of

both *provider* and *protector* has had wide-reaching repercussions for the young men in

this study population.

Conflict at Sites, but not over Resources

While we might expect the governance gap and the erosion of the influence of the elders

to lead to intensified conflict over natural resources, the data do not support this

conclusion. In fact, the data do not point to any clear correlation between violent conflict

and natural resource competition other than that violence often occurs in areas where

resources are gathered. In other words, attacks *do* occur in sites of resource access—

areas which are normally quite far from human settlements—but there is no evidence that

these attacks are due to efforts to protect or control the resources themselves. Rather,

attacks take place in such areas because either a) these locations are natural hiding places

for those engaged in violent behavior or b) there is a good chance of finding assets

(livestock, natural resources already collected, tools, etc.) at such locations. The same

analysis holds if we exclude the locations for foraged resources frequented by women

and examine only sites of water and pasture required for pastoral production: conflict is

most likely to occur in areas where resources are being accessed or utilized, but the

resources themselves are not driving the conflicts. In contrast to the hypothesis that

resource competition is a driver of violent conflict in pastoral areas, this study theorizes

that the relationship between violence and natural resources is best understood as *site-*

specific conflict versus conflict *over sites*. This more nuanced interpretation the

resource-conflict relationship is illustrated in the following discussion by a group of

young Matheniko men:

> [Pasture] is scarce these days. It is fed [on] by livestock both in the dry seasons
> and wet seasons. Insecurity has really hindered access to pastures especially in
> the dry season grazing areas of Lokorikwei. Insecurity denies access to natural
> resources particularly during dry season. In the dry season, resources are scarce
> and only available in marginal areas bordering communities we conflict with. It
> is not secure for women to fetch firewood when insecurity tension is there.

Access to pasture also becomes difficult as attacks by raiders are always
expected. Areas with wild edible fruits are also avoided due to insecurity.[27]

Insecurity in relation to resource access is clearly a problem, but the problem arises when

herders and others seek to access resources adjacent to groups they "conflict with."

Hostile groups seek to access such resources simultaneously, especially in the dry season,

and clash with each other upon meeting in these marginal locations. This study finds that

the issue is the *encounter* between the groups, which happens to take place at mutually

attractive areas, not the particular activity or resource that is being sought in that

particular area. Respondents repeatedly discussed violent conflict erupting at sites where

interaction occurs, but almost never characterized conflict over the resources as the

source of the problem. The conflict-at-sites logic is apparent in the description of

particular dams by a group of Pian elders:

Nawoyarit dam has a lot of water and fish, Nachagar dam also has water and
grass but enemies like Bokora, Jie, and Matheniko come there too, thus scaring
us [away].[28]

An examination of the type of victims of this form of violence supports the theory of site-

specific violence. Within the study population, women were by far the most common

victims of violence at sites of natural resource collection and, importantly, are perceived

as such by both genders. This gender-specific vulnerability is due, in part, to women's

increased engagement in collection and sale of natural resources and the parallel decrease

of men's engagement in animal husbandry (and hence exposure to threats in remote

areas). Women who are attacked while collecting natural resources are *not* attacked by

others seeking to access the same resources—which would be other women—but by

men. These men do not purport to be staking claim, preventing competing access, or

guarding territory that "belongs" to their group. Rather, the attackers appear to be hiding

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[27] Interview No. 230, Matheniko male youth, Nadunget, Moroto District, November 10, 2009.
[28] Interview No. 210, Pian elders, Lolachat, Nakapiripirit District, November 13, 2009.

in the bush to stage attacks on manyattas, avoid disarmament or harassment by the

UPDF, or to steal items of value that the women might be carrying (such as clothes, tools,

beads, water cans, or the natural resources themselves). Women in the study population

also report that the attackers are seeking information about the location of livestock or

guns.

Although the overall analysis indicates that competition over natural resources is not

driving violent conflict, some respondents did draw a link between these aspects. These

exceptions add an important element of nuance and are worth examining, even though

they are relatively few and far between. As discussed at the beginning of the chapter,

many non-Karimojong outsiders highlighted what they see as obvious links between

resource competition and violent conflict. Likewise, some Karimojong respondents

themselves pointed to examples of conflict over resources. In both scenarios, however,

these views reflect specific contexts that cannot be readily applied to the wider region or,

more specifically, to the type of conflict that was responsible for pulling apart the once-

united Karimojong. A good example of the views of an outsider comes from a district

official in Moroto who felt strongly that resource scarcity was an important driver of

conflict, but his comments were specifically about a) clashes between cultivators and

pastoralists (such as in areas of Teso, Lango and Acholi where herders traditionally

sought dry season grazing), b) concerns over access to potentially lucrative stone quarries

without licenses, and c) fears of the impact of land purchases by private investors in areas

typically used for grazing.[29] These are all relevant points with potential implications for

conflict in the past and present, but none refers to the immediate question as to whether

natural resource competition is a source of violence conflict *among* the pastoral and agro-

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[29] Interview with John Lotyang, District Environmental Officer, Moroto, November 12, 2009.

pastoral groups in the region: this inter-pastoral conflict is the variety under consideration

here. The element of competition over resources between herding and settled populations

is a common variant on conflict over natural resources in the literature (Markakis 2004;

Pavanello 2009) and was also mentioned by those respondents in the study population

who did see a link between natural resources and conflict. The district official was

referring to conflict of this nature that took place beyond the borders of Karamoja, such

as when populations sought dry season pasture in neighboring districts, but a group of

Pian youth highlighted this as a potential source of conflict even within the region:

> Livestock keepers and farmers conflict over pasture for livestock and land for
> crops respectively. Bokora and Pian were sharing resources at Napak peacefully.
> Then small thefts of crops started. This ignited conflict, which has continued
> since 2006.[30]

One of the few instances in which members of the study population expressed that

conflict between pastoral or agro-pastoral groups was directly related to natural resource

access came in the case of a group of Matheniko male youth in Nadunget. They

complained that the Pokot were controlling access to dry season grazing and preventing

access to some water points. This was seen as a factor in the hostilities between the

groups. They emphasized that this was not the case when they were in peace with the

Pokot, but that at present they were engaged in hostile relations and thus had trouble

accessing these areas.[31] The importance of peace in relation to resources access is

discussed in more detail below.

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[30] Interview No. 232, Pian male youth, Lolachat, Nakapiripirit District, November 13, 2009.
[31] Interview No. 230, Matheniko male youth, Nadunget, Moroto District, November 10, 2009.

Returning to the Literature

A number of authors support the view that there is not a direct correlation between competition over resources and violent conflict in Karamoja or in similar situations elsewhere. In a forthcoming chapter on the Turkana-Karamoja border area, Jeremy Lind argues that there is no direct causation between periods of resource scarcity and prevalence of violent conflict. He explains that the conflict over natural resources argument is based on the premise that resource scarcity causes pastoralists to travel greater and greater distances to access critical resources, and that conflict erupts as multiple groups vie for an ever-shrinking supply of water and pasture. Lind writes:

> Importantly, there is no simple, direct causation between scarce resources and conflict in the region or one singular cause of chronic armed violence. Uncertainty and variability of rainfall and physical resource scarcities are altogether *normal* ecological features in the Karimojong Cluster and…have largely defined both customary and contemporary pastoral social relations. Yet, it is not uncommon for social relations to alternate between open hostility and cooperation in variable, highly fluctuating non-equilibrium environments like the Karimojong Cluster. (2013, 6 in draft, original emphasis)

Lind explains that the fact that "most raiding occurs in prime grazing environments…is incidental to the acquisition of livestock as the prime motive for armed violence" (ibid.). In other words, conflict in the form of violence associated with raids occurs in grazing areas because this is where livestock are present and most accessible by hostile groups. As discussed in reference to site-specific conflict, this colocated violence is not the same thing as violence occurring because of the nature of resources at these sites themselves. In support of this theory, Lind found that local people asserted that violence occurred *following* the movement of livestock to these areas—i.e., the attraction was the livestock, not the location (Lind 2007). While this chapter finds that the prime resources needed for livestock—water and pasture—have decreased in relative importance to foraged

resources for the majority of the study population, this does not mean that pasture and

water are no longer relevant for the livelihoods of this same group and for the larger

economic system. Indeed, these resources remain critical to rebuilding the health of

herds that have suffered due to multiple years of drought and limited mobility within the

protected kraal system. Following Lind's logic, violence linked to raiding will likely

continue to occur in grazing areas as groups struggle to restock depleted asset bases.

Findings from research from the Marsabit District of northern Kenya also challenge the

scarcity-conflict literature. Herdsmen were found to be *more* willing to negotiate with

other groups in periods of resource scarcity (correlating to low rainfall), as negotiating

typically had better long-term outcomes than violent conflict for drought survival. In

addition, periods of drought reduced vegetative cover that provided hiding places for

raiders, and hence cattle raiding was found to be *more* prevalent in periods of resource

abundance than resource scarcity (Dietz, Adano, and Witsenburg 2005; Adano and

Witsenburg 2003). These findings support the theory presented in this chapter that

violence occurs at sites of natural resource access (e.g. grazing locations where cattle can

be seized) but that the extent of resource availability itself is not necessarily driving the

violence.

David Eaton's work on the Kenya-Uganda border has also challenged the premise that

resource scarcity is a central driver of conflict in the region. He posits that "this

argument has achieved much of its authority through repetition" (2008, 99) and cites

several studies in which longitudinal data on mortality from cattle raiding in Africa does

not show an appreciable increase over time, even though population densities have

increased.[32] McCabe makes perhaps the most important point of relevance to this

dissertation, which is that access to natural resources can be *either* an issue for

negotiation or something to be fought over, but the actual path will depend on political,

economic and social factors, not just environmental ones (McCabe 2004). Of note, Eaton

points out that both Ton Dietz and J.T. McCabe, two major theorists on pastoral conflict,

had both previously been firmly in the camp that believed resource scarcity was a cause

of raiding, but that recent empirical evidence—or lack thereof—led to an expansion of

their views to take into account a greater number of variables (2008).

As with the data from this study, Eaton's field research pointed to a discrepancy in

external and local views regarding the linkages between resource scarcity and conflict.

Respondents among the Turkana, Pokot and Pian explained that periods of extreme

drought did not lead to conflict, but rather to increased negotiation over access to

resources. This contradicts the assumption that scarcity caused by drought would lead to

greater competition and hence violence, but is highly logical in the views of respondents,

as explained by Eaton:

> The people of the North Rift [valley] are well aware that intensive fighting
> during a drought would be suicidal; at the end of the dry season, they often are
> faced with the choice of sharing what little grazing and water remains, or fighting
> to defend their resources against a well-armed opponent with nothing to lose.
> The choice is obvious, and only in rare circumstances will a destitute ethnic
> group be denied access to scarce resources. Although it may seem logical to
> suggest that scarcity causes violence, in reality local practice ensures that this is
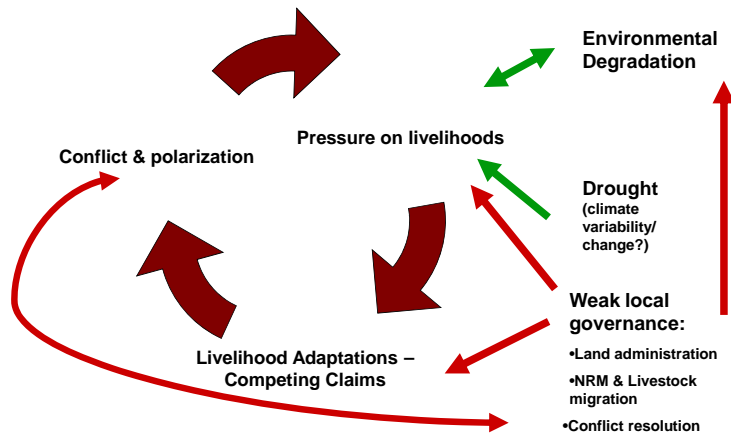> rarely the case. (2008, 101)

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[32] Eaton references the work of Hussein, Sumberg and Sullen (1999) who show that there is no evidence that
conflict between pastoralists and settled farmers has recently increased in Africa. In addition, Dietz, Adano
and Witsenburg (2005) examined violent deaths in the Marsabit region of Kenya from the 1930s to 1999 and
found that, even with an 18 fold increase in population density across the time period, violence peaked in the
1940s.

Eaton thus agrees with the findings from the Marsabit research and finds that periods of

hardship are more likely to be those of peace, not violent conflict, as groups must work

together in order to survive. Back to McCabe's point, the consequences of failing to

negotiate access are apparent, and hence groups are more likely to choose negotiation

over confrontation. Likewise, this dissertation finds that resource sharing and ways to

ensure joint access are more much more central to people's existence and hence their

practical strategies than engaging in violent conflict to ensure or defend such access.

Grievances and Adaptations: Implications for Conflict

Helen Young's analysis of conflict and livelihoods in Darfur introduces a key argument

into the discussion of the role of natural resources in conflict and governance advanced in

this dissertation. Young emphasizes that, at the local level, the conflict in Darfur is

"overlaid with specific grievances often linked to livelihoods" and that these livelihood

grievances often entail competition over natural resource access (2009b, 201). She then

illustrates how the livelihood adaptations that people are making in order to cope with the

conflict are themselves fueling further conflict at the local level, as portrayed in the

diagram below:

Livelihoods-Conflict Cycle

Environmental Degradation

Pressure on livelihoods

Conflict & polarization

Drought
(climate variability/ change?)

Weak local governance:
•Land administration
•NRM & Livestock migration
•Conflict resolution

Livelihood Adaptations – Competing Claims

Young 2009b

Although developed for the Darfur context, the above diagram illustrates how drought and climate variability place pressure on livelihood systems, leading to livelihood adaptations that often include competing claims to natural resources. If local systems for natural resource management and conflict resolution are not able to effectively alleviate these pressures, the strain on livelihoods increases and contributes to local conflicts. Such conflicts, often between livelihood groups, can further weaken and undermine effective governance. Poor natural resource management contributes to environmental degradation, which in turn further pressurizes livelihoods and exacerbates conflicts. The end result is cyclical relationship whereby livelihood adaptations in response to conflict further perpetuate the same conflict (Young 2009b).

Natural resources play a central role in Young's analysis of the conflict in Darfur, but this role is not so much about *access* to resources as it is about the inadequacy of governance *responses* to tensions and competition emerging from the struggle over access. As

introduced earlier, this study theorizes that a governance gap has emerged in Karimojong communities and is caused by a shift in the prioritization of natural resources as part of the diversification and adaptation of local livelihood strategies. Drawing on Young's analysis of Darfur and McCabe's point about the choice between negotiation and fighting, this study posits that the governance gap apparent among the study population is critically linked to natural resource access and control but that the ramifications of this governance gap extend far beyond natural resource management. Revisiting the central importance of natural resources in pastoral livelihoods, the authority and influence of the elders is inextricably linked to the effective management of these resources. Once cracks emerge in the ability of elders to manage these resources effectively, the entire institution of customary governance becomes vulnerable. In the case of Karamoja, the weakened governance systems—as seen in chapter three—have a profound impact on the mitigation of violence as perpetrated by male youth. The next section highlights how the ability or inability to negotiate peace is a central component of governance in regard to resource access in southern Karamoja.

Peace and Governance

This study finds that there is an important difference between conflict that occurs *over* natural resources and conflict that *prevents* access to these resources. The participatory mapping exercise conducted for this study illustrated the negative relationship between conflict and physical access to resources (see Stites and Fries 2010). By the same token, peace that *allows* access to these resources is a critical component of both livelihoods and governance, as the ability to negotiate and maintain peaceful relations gave elders credibility and reinforced their authority. The "social connectivity" required for peace,

which was managed through inter-marriage, trade and exchange, and reciprocity in stock

transfers, occurred both within groups and across national and international borders (Lind

2013, 6 in draft). As a group of Bokora youth explained:

> In the past, we used to share grazing and water resources with the [Teso],
> Matheniko, Lorengedwat [Pian] and Bokora. But this was only possible during
> peacetime.[33]

In contrast, when peace is not present, access is either impossible or entails risks to

personal security. Matheniko women explained the impact of the absence of peace on

their access to water:

> The dam beyond the Porro River is shared with the Jie when there is peace. Now
> it is a challenge. This year there was an incident where the Jie killed most of the
> shepherds and took the animals. This hasn't been reconciled even though our
> elders and the government have tried to reach out to the Jie for peace.[34]

Peaceful relations with neighboring groups were particularly important in times of

drought or hardship in order to enable access to scarce water and pasture. However, the

older male generations do not have an easy time maintaining peace, particularly when

their authority is challenged or weakened. Power dynamics between groups shaped by

access to key assets such as weapons can influence the balance of peace and upset the

system of shared access, as explained by a key informant:

> [D]uring periods of intensive drought, the Bokora would access natural resources
> from the swamps in Teso. The Jie would access water and pasture in Acholiland;
> the Matheniko would access natural resources in Pian and on the slope of Mt
> Moroto. During heavy rainy periods when the green grass becomes poisonous to
> the livestock elsewhere, the Bokora, the Tepeth and the Pian jointly would access
> water and pasture (salty grass called *eleet)* in Nakadanya in Matheniko. This
> [they are] no longer obtaining because of the presence of the guns that have made
> some of these ethnic groups more powerful than others, thus restricting access
> over the natural resources.[35]

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[33] Interview No. 238, Bokora male youth, Lotome, Moroto District, November 17, 2009.
[34] Interview No. 217, Matheniko women, Rupa, Moroto District, November 11, 2009.
[35] Key informant no. 10, email correspondence, November 25, 2009.

Matheniko youth also discussed shifts in access to weapons as caused by disarmament as upsetting the balance among groups in the region with subsequent impacts on natural resource access:

> During peace time we comfortably share natural resources with Bokora and Pokot. We do inter-marry. However, when the government took away the guns the Pokot whose guns were not taken away are in full control of pasture, water and wild fruits we normally depend on during the dry season. In several occasions, before, we have had conflicts with the Pokot over the use of the natural resources.[36]

Male youth in the study population were clear as to the expected role of the elders in building and maintaining relations with other groups to allow access to key resources, but also highlighted their own role in "making" (or, conversely, breaking) the peace. Matheniko youth in Rupa explained:

> Efforts are in place to protect and improve access to natural resources in our area….With peace we will be able to access these resources in a much more relaxed and sustained manner. Elders and leaders take the initiative to make us make peace.[37]

However, the elders have, by and large, lost their ability to make the male youth "make peace" due to the emergence of the governance gap and the continuing disconnect in the deference-influence relationship. In addition, through prohibitions on cross-border movement and the dismantling of shared kraals, the disarmament campaign has effectively prevented the spontaneous interaction, exchange and eventual negotiations that previously secured peace among groups (Stites and Akabwai 2010).

This weakening of governance due to both internal and external factors continues, as Young illustrates, to lead to poor management of natural resources which in turn fuels livelihood grievances, has negative effects on the elders' credibility, and places pressure

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[36] Interview No. 230, Matheniko male youth, Nadunget, Moroto District, November 10, 2009.
[37] Interview No. 228, Matheniko male youth, Rupa, Moroto District, November 11, 2009.

upon the already weakened systems of management and mitigation of violence. As shown in Young's conflict-livelihood cycle, weakened governance systems have difficulty responding to pressures that would otherwise pose few problems. Incidents of theft or acts of sporadic violence between male youth from normally allied groups have always posed a threat to peace, but the elders were normally able to reign in such recalcitrance and make amends. The governance gap that has occurred due to a shift in the nature of livelihood assets and strategies, however, coupled with repeated failed attempts on the part of the elders to make or uphold peace agreements, has created a serious obstacle to effective management of the natural resources relevant to the current livelihood realities in the region. At the same time, the absence of peace between groups—peace which was reinforced through interactions and exchanges in areas of shared resources—contributes to a further collapse of social capital. Once social relations are no longer nurtured, peace becomes more difficult to achieve and maintain. In the absence of peace, natural resources cannot be managed effectively. When resources are not managed effectively, communities are more likely to experience violent clashes as they access resources adjacent to hostile groups, and hence the livelihoods-conflict cycle continues.

Conclusion

This chapter examines the hypothesis that competition over natural resources is a driver of violent conflict in Karamoja. Focusing on the perspectives and experiences of the respondents within the study population, the study finds no clear evidence for this hypothesis. This does not mean that violence is not being committed by young men in areas associated with natural resource collection; in fact, the study finds quite the

opposite. Violence is very common in sites of resource access and collection, whether these locations be grazing areas for animals or bush areas where women collect firewood and other foraged resources, and, like most inter-personal violence in Karamoja, this violence is committed primarily by male youth. This violence, however, is not taking place as a means to protect or defend these sites or as a means of intimidating other potential users. Rather, this site-specific violence is largely opportunistic and occurs at these locations because such areas provide good coverage for criminals and/or allow for relatively easy access to assets.

The analysis of data for this study on natural resource use and violence led to many important findings with implications far beyond those associated with resource access, exploitation or consumption. Natural resource use and access is central to the lives and livelihoods of pastoral and agro-pastoral populations, and, as such, the examination of natural resources allows for a much broader understanding of key issues of governance, change over time, livelihood shifts, and gender roles and identity. This chapter illustrates how shifts in governance and control over natural resources have implications for customary authority, peacemaking among groups, and norms of respect within communities. In addition, by examining *who* is engaged in natural resource access this chapter shows that the male role of subsistence provider at the household level has been taken over by women. Thus we see that what might at first appear to be a straightforward shift from the centrality of resources such as pasture and water to foraged resources of firewood and wild foods in fact has much broader implications and repercussions. Young men describe themselves as idle and without purpose; their fellow community members see them in much the same way. This chapter thus expands our understanding of the nature of governance, gender and identity. The next chapter turns to another commonly

cited explanation for the rise in violence in Karamoja: the transformation of cattle

raiding.

CHAPTER FIVE: THE TRANSFORMATION OF RAIDING

<u>Overview</u>

This study has discussed possible explanations for the increase in violence in southern

Karamoja since the 1980s but has so far has not examined the nuances of this shift in

detail. This chapter diverges slightly from the format of the previous chapters and is

divided into three distinct sections. The first section reviews the findings from the study

as to how violence associated with raiding has changed in Karamoja over the past several

decades. The second part of the chapter then uses these findings to examine the

widespread hypothesis that the changes in violence are due to the commercialization of

cattle raiding. This section argues that "commercialization" is extremely difficult to

quantify and also has relatively little meaning to those either engaging in or experiencing

violence, and that the changes in violent raiding and the links to the cash economy are

better understood by more nuanced examination of commercialization. The analysis

takes a bottom-up perspective to examine the individual motivation for and involvement

in cash sale of animals and other assets. As such, this chapter serves both as an

investigation of the third alternative hypothesis (commercialization of raiding) and an

examination of how the dependent variable of male violence has evolved over time. This

study finds that an examination of these local level changes sheds light upon some of the

motivations behind the sale of animals as well as the social and political repercussions of

these shifts.

The third and final section of this chapter investigates retaliation as a sub-set of the commercialization hypothesis and examines how this relates to the collapse of the Karimojong alliance known as the Three Stones. While arguing that a theory based solely on retaliation is an over- simplification that dismisses too many of the factors behind the violence, the study finds value in aspects of the retaliation theory in helping to understand the collapse of the Three Stones. The third section then examines the livelihood and institutional impact of the spiraling violence that followed the demise of the Three Stones alliance and finds widespread impacts on all forms of capital and the regional asset base as a result of intratribal violence that was not effectively halted or mitigated by weakened governance systems.

Transformation of Raiding and Violence over Time

In line with other studies on the region, this research finds that cattle raiding has changed since the 1980s in multiple key ways, including: a shift from a large to small group or individual involved in the raiding; the loss of sanction from the elders and corresponding decrease in wider community involvement in the planning and execution of raid; a decline in the ritualized aspects of raiding; a change in who accrues the bounty from the raid; a shift from incorporation of raided animals into the family herd to a quick sale; an increase in the range of victims by age and gender; a shift in communities who are targeted by raiders; and a shift in the location of violence. The data from the study point to these changes as broad and often interlinked trends. All have occurred gradually and mostly in a non-linear fashion, meaning that for each example there may be counter examples (one raid carried out with approval by the elders, for instance). As such, it is impossible to pinpoint an exact time or event that marked such changes. Variations also

exist by location and even within the views of specific respondents: when observations or findings regarding raiding were posed back to respondents there was often debate and disagreement as to the exact nature of these changes (such views are of course also influenced by individual positions within society and relation to the status quo). This study does not therefore claim that these changes are absolute or immutable, but rather that the data indicates the resonance of these aspects across broad swathes of the study population. Many of these findings are supported, to varying degrees, by the secondary literature.

Three broad and interlinked trends emerge through a closer examination of the findings relating to the shift in raiding as described above. The first is the shift in *who is involved in the raiding* at multiple levels and the corresponding changes in control, sanction and participation. The second trend relates to *what is done with the loot* from the raids and whether this bounty benefits the individual, household, community or peer group. The third broad trend apparent over the past three decades is the shift in the *targeting of raids*. An examination of how the demographics of the victims of violence have changed over time and why these changes have occurred allows for a better understanding of the underlying shifts in the nature and patterns of violence in Karamoja, as well as how this violence has affected the social fabric and larger livelihood strategies. To note, the on-going disarmament campaign has brought more recent changes in some of these longer-term trends; these aspects are discussed in more depth in the next chapter.

Communal versus Individual Involvement in Raiding

Raiding parties were once very large and could number several hundred young men.[1]

This is supported by the works of Lamphear (1976) and Dyson-Hudson (1966), among

others. In recent years, however, the size of raiding parties has decreased. This, as well

as the aspects of the communal blessings, is discussed by a Matheniko elder:

> Previously when the raids were under the control of the elders there were
> elaborate meetings…when the elders consulted the guidance of the seer who
> would together with elders map out the target area to be raided and bless the
> commanders and his army of the raiders. Each mother would bless her own son.
> But these days the decision to raid is now taken by the raiders themselves who
> may number 5 to 10 or less than 20 and off they go stealthily without consulting
> the elders![2]

A preparation ceremony prior to the raid was held at the *akiriket* and the seer (*emuron*)

would read the entrails of a sacrificial animal to evaluate the raid's chances of success

(Gomes 2002). The instructions of the elders and seer were to be followed closely if the

raiding party wanted to ensure the success of the raids.[3] As these examples make clear, it

was not just that raids were authorized by the elders—the elders were also closely

involved in the intricacies of planning (Jabs 2007; Simala and Amutabi 2005; Adan and

Pkalya 2005; Ocan 1994). The rest of the community played important roles in support

of raids as well. According to Akabwai and Ateyo (2007), the blessings offered by the

warriors' mothers were particularly important, and women cooked special food for their

husbands and sons to carry with them on a raiding expedition. The women also safe-

guarded talismans of the men during raids in the belief that this would prevent harm to

their loved ones. Returning warriors were met with ululations from women giving thanks

for their safety; successful raiders were greeted with additional fanfare and celebration

(Akabwai and Ateyo 2007; Adan and Pkalya 2005; Simala and Amutabi 2005).

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[1] Interview No. 64, Tepeth male youth, Katikekile, Moroto, March 3, 2007.
[2] Interview No. 9, Matheniko elder, Rupa, Moroto District, December 2, 2009.
[3] Key informant no. 2, Moroto town, Moroto, April 3, 2009.

As supported by secondary literature, this study finds that communal involvement in raiding preparation, planning and implementation has greatly decreased over the past several decades. Female respondents in the study population, for example, said that they were no longer involved in the blessings of or preparations for raids, and that they rarely knew when raids were being undertaken or had occurred. Understanding the previous extent of the larger community's involvement in raids makes apparent the seriousness of the condemnation of unsanctioned forays today. In the past, punishments for unauthorized raids included both fines and flogging,[4] and repeat offenders could be cursed, but many respondents claimed that these punitive measures had little impact on the occurrence of raids today.

With the decreased involvement of the larger community came a decline in the ritualized aspects of raiding. Part of this, as discussed above, was the loss of the communal blessing and preparations, but the more significant aspect in regard to violence was the loss of the ritualized aspects in how raids themselves were carried out. Akabwai and Ateyo say that groups were warned of an impending raid:

> It was a convention that the target community had to be forewarned. Messages like this would be sent in advance: 'We are coming to take our cattle on such and such day. Therefore, if you are men enough, rise up to defend your animals for we are coming to take them!' (2007, 25)

In addition, the battles surrounding cattle raids took place outside of the manyattas and away from the women and children. Raiders dressed in battle regalia (Akabwai and Ateyo 2007) and the scope of the conflict was kept to a minimum (Ocan 1994). When spears were the predominant weapon, the close nature of the combat allowed for a

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[4] Interview with Chief Administrative Office and Assistant Chief Administrative Officer, Moroto, July 7, 2008.

"certain code of chivalry to evolve, so that when overwhelmed in a raid the defeated group could lay down their spears and surrender with dignity" (Carr 2008, 73). In contrast, the guns used in the attacks of recent years allow raiders to maintain a distance from their targets and the element of surprise is essential to a successful raid. There are no advanced warnings or battlefield chivalry and, as discussed below, the range of victims of such raids have expanded accordingly.

The Warlord Question

The shift in who does the raiding and the nature and extent of the larger community involvement is often attributed to increased availability of small arms in the region. The fall of the Moroto armory in 1979 and the trade in weapons from conflict-affected countries in the wider region (especially southern Sudan) are the most widely cited sources of weapons, with additional supplies in the form of homemade guns (*amatida*) (Quam 1997) and sales from soldiers, police and local defense units on both the Ugandan and Kenyan sides of the border.   In the views of respondents, while the increased number of weapons in the region was clearly important, the more critical factor was in *who* was accessing weapons. Gun ownership had once been a family affair but, once weapons were cheap and plentiful, young men became increasingly able to acquire weapons on their own. According to Akabwai and Ateyo, this shift was pivotal in understanding violence in the region, and the change in gun ownership can be understood as the transition from the "family gun" used to protect animals to that held by the individual and used for more personal ends. They posit:

> Guns were initially very expensive and only very rich families in the Karamoja
> Cluster could afford to buy their sons a weapon to protect their animals. By the
> 1950s in Turkana and the 1960s in Karamoja, however, it was becoming
> common for more families to acquire guns smuggled through the porous borders
> of Ethiopia and Somalia. However, the gun still belonged to the extended family

and was squarely under the control of the elders and, by extension, the seers. So tight was family control over the gun that few apart from the elders even knew if a *kraal* had one. (2007, 26)

Family control over weapons limited the extent of their uses, but Matheniko elders explained that as young men began to acquire weapons through various means, they began to use these guns for their own purposes:

> When the warriors kill an armed enemy the gun of the victim automatically becomes his. Other sources of guns were from defeated rebel groups, and the youth would buy guns from traders or the army personnel. Such guns have no traditional control like the family gun that was bought by the father! These were guns the youth use for stealing cattle from neighbors.[5]

The role of individual leadership in the transformation of raiding in the region is a point of debate in the literature. Broadly speaking, this argument is best understood as the difference in perspectives between authors and observers who believe that a profound change has taken place in the nature of violence and authority and those who believe that the current violence is a continuum in line with past trends and developments. Those in the former camp are likely to emphasize the role of weapons in undermining traditional authority structures (Akabwai and Ateyo 2007) and some authors have argued that the transformation of raiding is linked to the rise of powerful individuals who are accruing wealth, power, and the ability able to exert control over other men who will act on their behalf (Otim 2002). Ocan's work from the early 1990s (1992, 1994) theorizes that the militarized culture of Karamoja gave rise to a system of "warlords" posing a challenge to the state's monopoly on violence. He states that, in the case of Karamoja, a warlord

> entrenches characteristics of a feudal lord, but the economy he operates in is already mapped out by capitalist demands and conditions. By being armed and possessing an army he negates the overall state which claims monopoly [*sic.*] of violence. (1992, 18)

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[5] Interview No. 100, Matheniko elders, Rupa, Moroto District, July 8, 2008.

Mirzeler and Young also describe the emergence of a warrior culture after the 1979 raids on the Moroto armory as akin to the rise of warlords positioned in opposition to the elders (2000; Mirzeler 2007a, 2007b). This depiction of a highly organized and militarized system of young warlords is refuted by other authors, most forcefully by Ben Knighton, who argues that Karamoja has been highly militarized for over 120 years and that raids have long been extremely violent (2003, 2007). This is again contrasted by the work of Sandra Gray (2000) and Kennedy Mkutu (2007b), who, like Mirzeler and Young, argue that violent raiding has undergone profound change since the 1970s. While this study posits that there has been a marked shift in the nature and extent of violence in the past 30-40 years, this violence is firmly rooted in the social, economic and political order of Karimojong society. This chapter will illustrate that while this violence has become more individualized (to the level of both the individual man and the *specific*—as opposed to communal—young male group), the data do not support the notion that this violence is organized or driven by young men acting in a warlord capacity. The shift in who is involved in the raiding—from planning to implementation—does, however, have important implications for the outcome of raids. When raids were sanctioned by elders and seers and included communal input the casualty rates were lower and mechanisms were in place for compensation for wrongful death and punishments for overzealous acts of violence. In contrast, as raids became more individualized and carried out covertly, the mitigations and controls on the use of force evaporated and the impacts on individuals and communities increased accordingly.

Dispersal of Loot

The second broad trend in the findings on changes in raiding relates to the change in what is done with the material goods and assets acquired through raiding. The dispersal and

use of the bounty from the raid relates closely to who is involved in the raiding planning

and execution. One of the most significant differences from the past is the decline of the

practice whereby the raiders would make a ceremonial offering of a raided animal to the

elders who had been involved in the sanctioning or planning of the raid.[6] This offering,

called *lokokwa,* would reportedly be demanded by the elders upon completion of a

successful raid: "you have succeeded, now we want *lokokwa!"*[7] The earlier prevalence

of this practice is apparent in the existence of a specific and widely recognized term:

lokokwa refers only to an offering made in the post-raid context, not to other tributes

made to the elders. The animal was meant to be a bull and had to be ritually speared as

opposed to slaughtered. The offering of *lokokwa* has gradually diminished over time, and

is reportedly rare today, as explained by a group of Pian elders, "with the spread of the

gun, the young men began selling the animals without giving any to the old men. The old

men were not happy with them."[8]

The *lokokwa* system benefitted the elders but also served as a check on the actions of the

youth in exchange for the sanction provided by the elders. The tribute process

guaranteed that an exchange took place regarding the raid itself. This allowed the elders

to give advice, guidance or corrections if aspects of the raid were not to their liking or

had taken place outside the expected parameters. Elders' lamentations (such as the Pian

quotation above) about today's absence of *lokokwa* are sometimes dismissed by youth as

the complaints of old men who want their meat. While there is likely some merit to this

charge, the elders are also lamenting the demise of the system of influence that allowed

them to keep tabs on the actions of the young men.

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[6] Key informant no. 9, Nakapiripirit town, Nakapiripirit District, May 8, 2009.
[7] Key informant no. 7, Moroto town, Moroto District, April 3, 2009.
[8] Interview No. 194, Pian elders, Kakomongole, Nakapiripirit District, May 10, 2009.

Lokokwa is rarely offered today both because the youth are engaging in raids that take place without sanction and because the raided animals are usually not brought back to the communities. While in some cases a bull may be offered as an after-the-fact appeasement for an unauthorized raid,[9] in many instances the youth simply do not bring home the stolen animals, as explained by a group of Matheniko elders:

> We do not even see these stolen animals as the youth sell them straight in cattle markets to avoid being found in their kraals….The *karacuna* [youth] use the money for drinking and buying household needs for their wives.[10]

By moving animals out of their kraals the young men are seeking to both avoid condemnation by the elders and the tracking or recovery of the animals by their rightful owners. In addition, the sale of the animals meets important needs for both essential commodities ("household needs for their wives") as well as status within their peer group (the ability to buy drinks). The shift towards sale of animals, as opposed to incorporating the animals into their own herds, using them to pay bridewealth, or sharing them through vertical or horizontal social networks, is one of the most important aspects in the transformation of raiding. Traditional cattle raiding had a redistributive component which kept herds in flux among groups but normally within the borders of the region (Barber 1968; Gray 2000; Hendrickson, Armon, and Mearns 1998). In contrast and discussed in more detail below, when animals are sold they enter a broader financial market and are often transported outside of the region or slaughtered for meat, thereby undermining the broader livestock asset base of the region. This study posits that as animals became fewer in number and hence more difficult to acquire, raiders had to work

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[9] Interview No. 64, Tepeth male youth, Katikekile, Moroto District, March 13, 2007.
[10] Interview No. 100, Matheniko elders, Rupa, Moroto District, July 8, 2008.

harder to acquire the same amount of bounty. These intensification of means entailed increased use of violence.

Expansion of Victims of Violence

The third broad trend evident in the findings on the transformation of violence due to raiding is the shift in the nature of targets of raids and victims of this violence. This trend is evident at multiple levels, starting with the change in the acceptability of the group that is to be raided. Karimojong respondents draw a contrast between their "traditional enemies" of the past and the groups they fight today: "Our only enemies were the Jie, Turkana, and Pokot. The Pian, Matheniko, and Bokora were one, with no problems."[11] Understanding the collapse of the alliance of the Three Stones is important as both a symptom and causal factor in the transformation of violence and the expansion of categories of victims. The seizure of the Moroto armory by the Matheniko in 1979 is often referred to as the start of the internal problems in southern Karamoja, but a more in-depth examination locates the start of this demise in the early 1970s with several key incidents, including the Bokora raid on the prominent Matheniko leader Apaloris in 1973[12] and the subsequent allegiance between the Matheniko and the Turkana. The audacity of an attack on such a prominent leader was followed by the surprise of an alliance of one territorial group of the Karimojong with an external enemy, an alliance which quickly had significant impacts on the balance of power in the region. With the Turkana as their allies, the Matheniko had access not only to additional arms and manpower for defensive or offensive purposes, but also to numerous hide-outs for arms and stolen cattle across the Kenyan border. Intra-group raiding now was an established

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[11] Interview No. 52, Bokora trader, Iriri town, Moroto District, March 7, 2007.
[12] Key informant no. 1, Moroto town, Moroto, July 8, 2008; Key informant no. 3, Moroto town, Moroto, July 11, 2008.

practice and shifted from the occasional attack on the part of a recalcitrant youth (normally followed by punitive measures) to a more regular occurrence. Alliances were still made and maintained among specific sub-groups of the Three Stones, but internal fighting continued to flare up through the 1970s. The Matheniko shared their looted guns with their Turkana allies in 1979, further entrenching the skewed power dynamics, and mounted a prolonged attack on Bokora settlements and cattle soon thereafter. Raiding had moved from a purely intertribal affair to an intratribal one that would eventually lead to the erosion of the shared "Karimojong" identity (Gray 2000). The collapse of the Three Stones is revisited later in this chapter.

The rise in intratribal hostilities among the Karimojong is widely lamented among respondents in the study population, as evident in the sentiments of a group of Matheniko young women who said, "We ourselves are the enemies. We have internalized the conflict. The Bokora and the Pian are also our people and yet they are the ones attacking us."[13] While many authors would argue that these changes reflect the fluid and shifting nature of tribal and pastoral allegiances and identities (Gray 2000), local respondents experience these changes in real time as the destruction of their communities and networks. As explained by a key informant, the intratribal divisions are now apparent within sub-groups (the Pian) and beyond:

> Raiding has now moved from sub-county to sub-county [e.g., Bokora against Matheniko, etc.] to sub-county to sub-county, then parish to parish, and eventually home to home. Thefts of goats, chickens, food items from relief, etc. These thefts are happening *within* communities.[14]

The extent of deaths and injuries from raids appears to have increased over time, which is not surprising considering the lethality and efficacy of modern semi-automatic weapons

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[13] Interview No. 181, Matheniko young women, Nadunget, Moroto District, April 2, 2009.
[14] Key informant no. 9, Nakapiripirit town, Nakapiripirit District, February 17, 2009.

as compared to the homemade firearms and spears of the past. Numbers of casualties

from raids are extremely difficult to quantify due to lack of reporting, absence of death

certificates, and limited access to medical facilities combined with the reluctance of

raiding victims to seek treatment in a government facility for fear of drawing punitive

action. That said, a number of authors have sought to gather such data, and the

longitudinal change in raiding victims from 1958 to 1997 is summarized by Carr:[15]

> [I]n the first seven months of 1958 the Karimojong raided neighboring tribes
> more than 200 times, seizing more than 12,000 head of cattle. Approximately
> fifty people were killed on all sides in these raids. Mortality figures for raids in
> the years 1954-1957 indicate that on average one person died for every three
> raids conducted. Very rarely was a female a victim of such raids (Karimojong
> raiders killed two women in the 1958 raids) and even rarer was a child harmed,
> even though the cattle herds were often tended by boys. In contrast, by 1997
> more than seventy people were being killed during a single raid, of whom fifty
> were children and thirty-six were female. In the first seven months of 1997 more
> than 500 Karimojong were killed in raids, a tenfold increase over the same period
> forty years previously. (2008, 71)

As highlighted by Carr, a shift in the demographic of casualties has accompanied the

increase in the extent of casualties. Whereas in times past casualties were largely limited

to the male youth who were directly involved in either the fighting or the herding and

protecting of livestock (Gray et al. 2003), the violence in recent years has expanded by

both gender and generation. Some authors posit that the category of victims expanded

with the replacement of spears by guns as the weapon of choice (Quam 1997, referencing

Wilson 1985), and this is supported by respondents for this study who describe a shift in

tactics from pre-organized battles with spears to surprise attacks that entailed the firing of

rounds into manyattas at night.

> The killing of women and children arose as a result of tactics of attack during a
> manyatta raid. The attackers make sure they shoot directly at the manyatta to
> weaken and frighten the defending people so that they can drive [away] the

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[15] The data from Carr should be taken as illustrative as opposed to exact due to the wide discrepancies in attempts to tally casualties from raids and the clear unreliability of any such figures, especially historical ones.

animals easily. In the process these weak people, women, children, and elderly become victims as the warriors know how to take cover.[16]

Many (but not all) other authors agree that in previous generations there were restrictions on harming women, children or the elderly during raids and that raiders sought to minimize casualties accordingly (Adan and Pkalya 2005; Simala and Amutabi 2005; Akabwai and Ateyo 2007). Numerous respondents in the study population confirm that such regulations once existed but are now largely ignored, as evident in the recollection of an elderly Pian woman: "A long time ago, raids and deaths were limited to men. Now they are killing women, which is a taboo."[17] A group of Matheniko women locate these changes as having started in the mid-1980s, and seem to ascribe this shift to a change in focus of raiding parties:

> These days even shepherds and small children are killed. These changes have existed since the government of Museveni came in…In the past shepherds were never killed. The interest was just in stealing the cattle.[18]

The interest "just in stealing the cattle" is particularly important and is indicative of one aspect of the shift in the nature of victims as found by this study. Human casualties might have occurred previously during the process of securing desired animals, but inflicting harm on humans or property had no purpose in and of itself. To this end, male youth in Nadunget explained that "in the past you might take a shepherd hostage temporarily, but you would not kill him, you would let him go free."[19] Likewise, people who were not involved in protecting animals were normally outside the reach of violence. "In the past there was also a culture that said you would not kill someone who was just collecting wood or poles or charcoal in the bush. This is no longer the case."[20] A group

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[16] Interview No. 100, Matheniko elders, Rupa, Moroto District, July 8, 2008.
[17] Interview No. 158, Pian elderly woman, Nabilatuk, Nakapiripirit District, February 27, 2009.
[18] Interview No. 116, Matheniko women, Katikekile, Moroto District, July 12, 2008.
[19] Interview No. 114, Matheniko male youth, Nadunget, Moroto District, July 11, 2008.
[20] Ibid.

of young Pian women in Lorengedwat also specifically referenced the cultural norms that

dictated that certain categories of people were to be left unmolested:

> In the past, the culture said that it you found a woman in the bush you did not kill her. They maybe just requested a cigarette from the woman. Those who were bad hearted would steal her panga. Today it is the opposite. You are beaten or killed, or those with a bad heart use you as their wife.[21]

As shown in the previous chapter, women collecting firewood and wild foods in the bush

are today particularly at risk. The shift to a wider range of victims should not, however,

be taken to imply that young men are no longer the victims of violence. All studies that

have examined raiding-related casualties show that male youth remained the primary

victims of violence throughout the 1990s and into the 2000s (Gray et al. 2003). The next

chapter discusses further shifts in the location and nature of violence since the start of the

2006 disarmament campaign, including increased attacks within homes and a rise in

sexual violence against women and girls.

Summary of the Changes in Raiding

These study findings, discussed as three broad trends in the changing nature of violence,

illustrate that key aspects of raiding have changed, including who is involved in the raids,

what happens with the loot from the raids, and which groups or individuals are likely to

be the victims of the violence associated with raids. While other research studies support

many of these findings, much of the discourse on raiding in pastoral areas over recent

decades situates these changes within the rubric of the rise of commercial raiding. As

discussed in the literature review, the commercialization of raiding is considered a

common phenomenon in pastoral societies across much of East Africa, and the situation

in Karamoja and the transformation of violence over the past three decades shares many

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[21] Interview No. 135, Pian young women, Lorengedwat, Nakapiripirit District, February 20, 2009.

characteristics with these regions and contexts. However, this study argues that viewing the changes in southern Karamoja strictly through the lens of commercial raiding both masks the specificity and nuances of the changes and is, essentially, an over-simplified and unquantifiable explanation. In addition, ascribing change to commercialized raiding does not account for some of the very recent changes in violence in the region and how these shifts are markedly different from the patterns of the past thirty years. The next section of this chapter examines the commercial raiding hypothesis in light of the findings from this study.

The Commercialization of Raiding as Causal Explanation

Overview and Comment on Methodologies

As discussed in the first chapter, the commercialization of raiding is a relatively broad term and, as a process, occurs gradually and normally in parallel to the growth of the cash economy. At the household level, the expansion of the cash economy is often associated with the increase in demand for purchased foods and the introduction of modern services that required cash for access, such as schools, health clinics, veterinary services and at times water.[22] Commoditization in Karamoja has been both gradual and uneven, with settlements closer to trading centers engaging in cash purchases significantly earlier than their more distant counterparts. The more visible expansions were along the poor but extant road networks, and trade and the flow of information increased with the growth of demand in the region. Towns near to provincial borders, such as Iriri and Matany,

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[22] As pointed out by a reviewer, pastoral populations also at times pay for fodder or access to pasture. This was not recorded or reported among the study population, but may be happening in some areas. Some respondents were paying for access to water from boreholes on private property, but payment for access to water for livestock was not reported.

experienced this growth more rapidly than locations in the heart of the region, as the risk

of ambush on the roads prevented many traders from venturing deep into the region. For

those that did, the prices of their wares increased in accordance with their personal risk.[23]

The commercialization of cattle raiding in Karamoja is best understood as one aspect of

this larger system of commoditization and monetization (Eaton 2010b). As such,

exchanging livestock for cash is not a unique or isolated development, but is one of many

transactions in the region that were once purely exchange-based but now often entail a

cash exchange. Unlike many other market transactions, however, it is difficult to acquire

reliable or accurate data on commercial raiding. Comprehensive studies of cattle off-take

and market prices were nonexistent over the past several decades due both to insecurity

and general lack of interest; more recent assessments (by WFP and FAO, for instance)

are sporadic and cannot cover animals moved out of the region through informal channels

or sold locally for meat. Rigorous analyses of commercial raiding come from other

regions, such as the work of Fleisher on the Kuria (2000a, 2000b; 1998, 1999; Fleisher

and Holloway 2004), with some attempts made at comparison to Karamoja. Mirzeler and

Young, for instance, examine Fleisher's findings that cattle-raiding among the Kuria was

highly organized and carried out by specialized groups of young men with essentially

mercantile activities. Referring to the increase in armed raiding in both Kuria and

Karamoja after the late 1970s, they point out:

> Karamoja cattle-raiding could not be so heavily commercialised because of the
> ban on weapons outside the district. The main cattle markets, in Soroti, or near
> Lira, become largely inaccessible to Karamoja warriors, who fear trying to move
> their cattle without the protection of their AK-47s. (2000, footnote 14)

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[23] Interview No. 52, Bokora male traders, Iriri Town, Moroto, March 7, 2007.

The difficulties in securing reliable data on commercial raiding also include the reluctance of perpetrators to admit to present raiding behavior on any level or for any purpose, sensitivities and silence around any political or private sector links to raiding, and traders turning a blind eye to the source of the cattle they purchase. Researchers looking into these topics can also experience challenges and affronts to their personal security if they seek to investigate such aspects too thoroughly, particularly due to the rise in targeted assassinations and political killings reported in Karamoja in recent years (Bevan 2008).[24] Regardless of these obstacles into investigating raiding of any sort, many authors discuss the commercialization of raiding as a matter of course without acknowledging the serious flaws inherent in any such data. Recognizing these obstacles to gathering reliable information on this topic, this study sought to triangulate data to the greatest extent possible through observation and the perspectives of key informants.[25]

Two Levels of Commercialization in Karamoja

This study theorizes that, in southern Karamoja, the commercialization of raiding is happening at two different but interconnected levels. At first glance, this distinction appears to be based purely on perspective and an examination of different sides of the

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[24] Local members of the research team for this study were very wary of discussing certain topics (such as political involvement in raiding) with local officials or members of the private sector and civil society. The team had a policy against telling anyone in the town where we were going on a given day or when we would be checking out of our lodging. This precaution was taken to prevent targeted attacks on our vehicle disguised as random road ambushes which, in the view of team members, was a common and effective tactic for elimination of political opponents or instigators.

[25] We attempted triangulation by a) cross-referencing the same information from different perspectives within the same community, i.e., discussing the same topics with young men, older men, and women of mixed ages, always in segregated focus groups or private individual interviews; b) seeking out key informants with information on and experience of specific groups, such as traditional leaders; c) discussing observations or findings from one area with groups in a neighboring area, and then returning to the first location to investigate discrepancies (without, of course, pointing out that such information came from their neighbors); d) checking official reports of criminal activity and raiding at the sub-county and district level (though of course the reliability of these reports varied widely). In addition, we had the reference and experience of Darlington Akabwai, a member of the study team and a key informant, who had joined up with a group of weapons/cattle traders for two weeks of travel in the Karamoja Cluster in 2005. His insight from this research helped us understand what questions to ask and how we might consider some of the results.

same coin. While these two levels are interdependent, this study argues that there are important aspects to be learned about the motivations for raiding and the causes of violence through a closer examination of these two separate aspects of raids.

To turn first to the question of perspective: from the top-down vantage point of the media and other outsiders, commercial raiding is construed as a network of financiers, transport systems, political involvement and shadowy markets (Mafabi 2008). While these higher level aspects do all exist (though to varying degrees), this top-down analysis misses a critical understanding of how and why raiding has changed at the individual and community level and how these changes do and do not relate to this wider lens of commercialization. From the ground-up perspective, the commercialization of raiding entails, in short, the sale of raided livestock in order to acquire personal or household goods or services. The purchased or in-kind acquisitions may be essential items (such as food or medical care), status symbols (cell phones, shoes or clothes, jewelry), livelihood capital (transportation to another area, shop inventory, a *boda boda*[26]), or investments in social networks (beer for age-mates, contributions to a friend's or relative's bridewealth). The overlap between these two perspectives on commercial raiding occurs in the cash transaction; through sale of raided livestock the individual is participating in and fueling the larger system and network. However, when viewed from a purely *motivational* standpoint, this individual is engaging in a small-scale and personal transaction, not an interaction taken in support of a broader system of commercial raiding. As such, these generalized top-down and bottom-up roles are similar to those in any market system whereby the individual actor plays a minute part in a much more complex operation. However, over the course of the research for this study, it became apparent that the

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[26] *Boda boda* refers to a bicycle or motorcycle with a seat on the back used for public transportation.

vantage point and motivations of the specific individuals engaged in these commercial exchanges were not only often subsumed and easily overlooked by the more standard analysis and explanations of commercial raiding, but also that there was a great deal to learn about the present violence in the region by understanding this local level perspective. The following sub-sections explore different ways of conceiving of these different types of raiding.

"Raids" versus "thefts"

As discussed in the literature review, other authors have distinguished between traditional *redistributive* and more modern *predatory* raiding (Hendrickson, Armon, and Mearns 1998). While not disagreeing with this distinction, this study posits that to understand modern raiding as strictly "predatory" is to misconstrue the motivations of many (though not all) of those who engage in raiding. This study posits that the more relevant distinction is between the different levels of commercial raiding as understood through an analysis of underlying causes behind these actions. Respondents for this study repeatedly pointed to variations in the seizure of cattle, namely the difference between "raids" and "thefts." Both of these forms of livestock seizure involve turning stolen cattle directly into cash, as opposed to the traditional redistributive raids which would have included repayment of horizontal loans, use of cattle for bridewealth, making tributes to elders, or incorporating stolen animals directly into one's own herd to make up for losses from drought, disease, raids or simply to expand the herd. Although both "raids" and "thefts" have the end result of bringing cash into the hands of the individual or his household, there is a categorical difference in how we understand commercialization in these two models.

Respondents in the study population discussed "raids" as normally being large-scale, well-organized (with or without the involvement or consent of the elders) and most often occurring in locations where attackers could expect a large concentration of available animals, such as grazing areas or, more recently, protected kraals. (For context purposes, Dyson-Hudson (1966) describes Karimojong raids in the 1950s as involving as many as 600 men and the cattle seized at times numbering several thousand or more). In contrast, "thefts" were usually opportunistic and perpetrated by only a few men or even an individual. Thefts could take place at any time and in any location, and were thought to often be unplanned. Animals taken in such thefts were almost always exchanged for cash as quickly as possible: for the purpose of this analysis, this form of raiding can thus best be understood as *asset-to-cash*. These stolen animals have special name at the livestock markets – *Namorat* cows—indicating the low prices that the sellers were willing to accept (Mkutu 2010).[27] *Namorat* cows were so common on some markets that they would drive down the prices for all animals being sold in a given day (Akabwai and Ateyo 2007).

The prevalence of livestock thefts (as opposed to raids) and asset-to-cash exchanges correlates closely to poverty. The analysis of the data for this study indicates that while there was a range of answers to the question "why do men raid?", by far the most common response was "hunger." Tellingly, this answers was most common *both* in discussions about motivations driving raids (i.e., "why do people from this area raid?") *and* in discussions about experiences as the victims of raids (i.e., "why do your enemies raid you?"). The explanation of material need might be an expected justification for

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[27] According to a key informant, the word *Namorat* shares a root with the Ngakaramojong word *akimor,* meaning "to share." The animal is called a *Namorat* cow because the youth divide the money accruing from the sale of the stolen animal. Written correspondence with Key Informant No. 1, July 21, 2007

violent action by perpetrators, but the frequency of this response among those who were

bearing the brunt of regular attacks is surprising and indicates empathy—or at least

understanding—for the widespread factors driving this form of asset stripping.

Grey literature also makes note of these distinctions in raiding that correlates to

individual versus network analyses, as per a 2011 conflict and market assessment

conducted by Mercy Corps. The report reads:

> Cattle raiding today is predominantly driven by economic interests and falls into
> two major categories:
>> 1. Raids planned and conducted by youth to obtain cattle they can sell for
>> cash or keep to meet their own and their families' needs
>> 2. Commercial cattle raiding, which may involve not only the youth who
>> conduct the raids but businessmen, traditional leaders, and alleged
>> elements within the government, the UPDF, and the police. (2011, 4-5)

Several pages later the report provides quotations from focus group discussions on topics

such as coordination between raiders and buyers, the organization of cattle raids, and the

sale and recovery of raided cattle. The authors preface this information by explaining

that "The contradictory insights on commercial cattle raiding offered by focus groups and

key informants indicate that the degree of organization and the involvement of different

actors varies widely" (Mercy Corps 2011, 8) These apparent contradictions are in fact

more likely clear distinctions in line with the two major categories of raiding outlined a

few pages earlier in the report. For instance, on coordination between raiders and buyers,

focus group respondents in the Mercy Corps study said, "The raiders coordinate with

buyers" but they also said, "There is no coordination with businessmen. [Raiding] is out

of individual initiative." And, on sale of raided cattle, groups said, "Businessmen may

buy large numbers of raided cows and transport them in a lorry. These cows may go to

Mbale, Kitgum, and Lira," but also, "People from the neighboring communities buy the

stolen cows" (ibid). These distinctions likely illustrate that the data for the Mercy Corps

study reference *different types of cattle raiding*—the cash-for-asset or theft model perpetrated by lone actors or small groups versus the much more organized commercial variety in which the most substantial benefits accrue not to the individual raider but to the traders and investors.

By conceptualizing small-scale attacks not as raids but as thefts it appears that the nature of the asset (e.g., cattle) itself has actually become irrelevant. Most men are not engaging in oft-violent theft for prestige, to generate bridewealth, or to demonstrate their power as big men (or warlords). In contrast to a top-down understanding, young men are not organizing these attacks with their recently acquired mobile phones or linking to traders and lorries or liaising with local politicians or businessmen to arrange the division of the loot. It is not the asset itself that matters, but rather the *function* of the asset that is important. Given that this type of theft is directly linked to poverty and food insecurity, this function might be for cash to meet immediate needs, or for exchange for food, or to replace essential household items that were themselves stolen. This means that while animals are ideal targets based on their high value and near guarantee of sale at livestock markets, other saleable commodities will also suffice (including cooking or farming implements, clothes, shoes, or even a woman's firewood bundle). Understanding this connection between asset theft and the acquisition of basic needs helps to explain the individual motivations behind commercialization and the nature of shifting insecurity in the region as discussed earlier: attacks within homes have been rising even with the decrease in available cattle and the greater protection of animals by the military. With the knowledge that these attacks are survival-based, the reasons for their continuing prevalence as well as their increased occurrence within people's homes—as this is where

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the available assets are most likely to be found—becomes apparent. This acquisition and exchange of assets (livestock or otherwise) fuels the broader commercial networks.

Prestige- versus Survival-Based Raids

Critical differences exist in the benefits accrued to young men from the two different types of commercial raiding/theft. An analysis of these differences sheds light on the current nature of violence in southern Karamoja. This study theorizes that the larger scale networked type of commercial raiding is *prestige-based* whereas the smaller scale individual theft is *survival-based.* Prestige-based raids aim to generate wealth and status for the men involved in these actions. Acquiring prestige through raiding is part of a logical trajectory that emerged from the need of young men to establish status amongst their peers in the absence of top-down political and social recognition based on initiation and advancement through the normative power structure in the region. As such, prestige became increasingly horizontal, whereas, previously, respect and authority was something conferred through seniority and status as an elder. With the spread of the cash economy in the region and the eventual involvement of external investors and/or eager buyers, adding the commercial element to the pre-existing pattern of large scale raids was an obvious step for men already operating outside of the traditional chain of sanction and approbation. Engaging in large-scale commercial raiding allowed the perpetrators to have not only the prowess of a successful raider, but also the cash wealth needed to accrue the trappings of status in a new economic system. In marked contrast, the primary goal of those who engage in survival-based theft is basic survival from one day to the next. This is supported by "hunger" being the most common reason cited for raiding by respondents across this study. The Mercy Corps report had similar findings, with

"hunger" as the most commonly listed reason for raids, followed by "poverty" and "brideprice" (2011, 6).[28]

Whether aimed at building prestige or wealth, the raids/thefts under discussion normally entail violence or intimidation with the threat of violence. However, this study finds that the large-scale prestige-based raids were a key driver of the increase in violence in the southern Karamoja region through the 1980s and 1990s and continued to be so until the combined impacts of drought and disarmament altered the landscape. Today, the survival-based thefts are much more common and reflect both the nature of violence that is occurring (i.e., increasingly within homes or in the bush, targeting a wider swathe of victims, and more commonly including sexual violence) and the motivation (hunger and poverty) for these attacks.

The difference between prestige and survival-based criminal activity sheds additional light on the discussion of raids versus thefts. Responses on this topic often include a time component, as evident in the following, "We used to have raids; now we have only thefts," which is as expected due to the increase in the small-scale survival-based seizures of assets. Further evidence of the move away from the traditional prestige-based raiding is the new pattern of thefts that take place *within* communities. Stealing from within your own community brings no prestige, only condemnation and shame. Internal theft was reported in select locations in Nakapiripirit as discussed earlier, and was more generally

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[28] The relatively high position of brideprice (noting the bridewealth would be the more correct term) as a reason for raiding as found by the Mercy Corps report implies several things. First, it is not clear from the report if the interviewers specified a time period to which they were referring, i.e., raids in previous years or raids in the present day. As discussed in this study, if the respondents were referencing raids that took place in an earlier period then the relatively high response relating to marriage is as expected. Second, the Mercy Corps report picks up on both types of raiding—that based on survival and that based on prestige. Although this study finds that survival-based raiding is the most common form of violence today, bridewealth may still be a component of prestige-based raiding.

apparent in the widespread reports of the *lonetia,* a term currently and widely used for those who engage in opportunistic theft. Loosely translated as "thug," the origins of the term lie in the widespread theft of mosquito nets (hence *lo*net*ia*) following a 2009 distribution. In marked contrast to the disdain and general annoyance aimed at the *lonetia* is the reverence for the 'sharp shooters' of earlier generations. As discussed in more depth in the next chapter, these young men were also engaged in criminal and highly violent activities, but they are frequently referenced and heralded, with key actions—their successes, investments, deaths—commonly used as markers in the passage of time.

Summary of the Commercialization of Raiding

To return to the question of the relevance of commercial raiding for understanding the violence in Karamoja, this study finds that the phrase "commercial raiding" is normally taken to be an explanation in and of itself. When used as such, the commercial label implies the existence of free-standing networks of criminals and power-brokers, and includes the assumption that an individual male would make a choice to either be involved or uninvolved in such an activity. When viewed from the individual perspective, however, we see that the individual involvement in the "commercial" aspect is not where the choice lies. Once an individual has raided or stolen livestock or goods, the reality of the market economy in the region combined with the urgency of meeting basic needs plus fear of detection means there is no option other than the sale of the loot. As such, the aspect of 'choice' comes not within whether or not to have raiding be *commercial,* but, rather, whether or not to raid at all. Once the individual motivation for what is commonly termed "commercial raiding" is understood as asset stripping for survival purposes (though of course still criminal), we can start to understand the ways in

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which the specific livelihood dynamics within Karamoja have coalesced to make this a widely used survival strategy. As discussed in more depth in the next chapter, a confluence of factors including food insecurity and pressure on males to provide for their families leads many respondents to feel there are few livelihood options outside this form of criminal behavior. Understanding the survival-based aspects and the individual motivations also helps to explain why this practice continues today even in the face of more limited weapons due to disarmament and greater security for livestock through the protected kraal system.

The focus in this chapter on individual motivation and the more local level of commercial raiding does not mean that the broader network of commercialized raiding does not exist or is not a factor of violence in the region. As David Eaton (2010a) points out, the rise of local entrepreneurs who engage in *both* raiding and trading means much less work for the larger commercial suppliers. David Eaton also stresses the importance of recognizing the role of local players in order to broaden the understanding of how the commercial system functions. Eaton coins the term "traiders" in reference to livestock traders who are themselves also raiders or are using their connections with raiders to purchase animals from thieves immediately following attacks (2010a, 107). These connections and access to inside information allow the "traiders" to purchase animals for a lower price than they would pay in an established livestock market and allow thieves to move the animals out of their hands very quickly. According to Eaton, the "traiders" regularly purchase the stolen livestock from multi-ethnic gangs of thieves who are able to operate largely with impunity—a description which closely resembles the characterizations of *lonetia* in this study. Eaton's analysis of these lower-rung middle men who bridge the gap between commercial livestock traders and raiders offers important insight into the workings of the

system. This dissertation takes this analysis one step further down the chain, to examine

the motivations and pressures of Eaton's "independent thieves." As Eaton points out, it is

the involvement of many individuals at the bottom rung of the system that essentially

allows those at a higher level to sit back and relax:

> Due to the low risks and high rewards involved, independent thieves will provide a constant supply to the market and contribute to lower cattle prices across Karamoja. The large-scale traders are thus able to purchase laundered animals cheaply at no risk to themselves in places like Amudat, Moroto and Namalu, and sell them in Mbale, Soroti or Kampala. (2010a, 113)

Eaton is correct in his point that these individual thieves are feeding the broader networks

through their sales of stolen animals (and, as this study argues, other essential and

household commodities), but most of these individuals are not seeking to get rich quick

or to fill a market niche the way his "traiders" are. Regardless of personal motivations,

however, the widespread and continuing sales that occur at the local level are both

feeding into the larger system and making the job of those at the higher echelons that

much easier. The decreased prevalence of large-scale organized raids is thus due to both

the increased availability of cheap stolen livestock on the market and the crackdown on

such activities by the military. This helps to explain one of the factors behind the shift in

violence in the region since the mid 2000s. Large-scale raids with concurrent levels of

violence are no longer necessary when there are already animals moving cheaply through

the markets due to distress sales. In addition, these large-scale raids are much more

difficult to execute due to widespread disarmament and the pervasive presence of the

military in the region. However, the tactics to acquire these individual animals, which

are now protected more thoroughly and hidden more carefully, have resulted in the

expansion of violence as experienced by individual victims. This explains in part both

why attacks are increasingly taking place within homes (as attackers hope to find the

sequestered calf or milking cow that is not in the protected kraals) and why women are increasingly attacked in the bush—in hopes that they will divulge the location of animals.

The individuals engaged in livestock theft and *lonetia* activities, whether to provide for their households or increase personal status and prestige are, ultimately, feeding a larger and more nefarious commercial market. It is this larger market and network system, which operates with the reported involvement of a range of investors, traders, and politicians, that continues to draw more attention from media as well as national and international actors and thus remains the primary face of cattle raiding in the region. This chapter argues that while the commercialization of cattle raiding is an important element in understanding the expansion and transformation of male violence in the region over the past thirty years, the near exclusive top-down focus on the causal and driving factor behind this violence has resulted in a failure to understand critical distinctions and motivations influencing violence in the region and the involvement of young men in this violence.

The Retaliation Theory and the Collapse of the Three Stones

The final section of this chapter investigates a corollary thesis to the commercial raiding hypothesis, put forth by David Eaton and hereafter called the retaliation theory. David Eaton's work has been influential in its efforts to explain (or explain away) causes of violence in the Karamoja region. In Eaton's most widely cited piece, a 2008 article titled "The Business of Peace: Raiding and Peace Work Along the Uganda-Kenya Border," he takes a programmatic perspective and argues that the actors trying to promote peace in the region have too long assumed that the "root causes" behind the violence were

"omnicausal," an approach which was used to justify any and all responses in the name of peacebuilding. He posits that "The frequent recitation of the same issues has led many researchers to take for granted that arms proliferation, poverty and resource scarcity cause cattle raiding in the North Rift" (2008, 92). Eaton's analysis, in turn, is that it is in fact calculated, rational and careful acts of revenge and retaliation that lead to raiding and violence, and these actions are met by further similar actions, causing cycles of vicious violence: "in almost all cases, the root cause of a raid can be found in an obscure livestock theft" (ibid., 106).

Eaton's analysis on the nature of raiding is worth discussing for two main reasons. First, Eaton's argument that the problem in the region stemmed from revenge was influential in certain circles. His 2008 article was frequently (and occasionally somewhat eagerly) referenced by policy makers and programmers in Kampala in what appeared to be a sort of hand-washing of responsibility for the bloodshed in Karamoja.[29] If, by Eaton's argument, both the cause and continuation of violence are due to internal factors and a long-standing culture of an eye for an eye, then it stands to reason that there is little that can be done by outsiders to mitigate the conflict. However, there are several key problems with Eaton's main hypothesis. Secondly and notwithstanding the previous point, Eaton's analysis does support the findings of this dissertation in a key way, and aspects of his argument help to explain both the pattern of increased violence over the last few decades and the specific challenges for peace posed by the nature of violence today. The problems and strengths of Eaton's analysis are discussed in brief below and

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[29] Informal conversations between the author and colleagues at WFP, IOM, and USAID in February, April and May 2009.

applied to the break-up of the Three Stones, a critical event in the trajectory of violence and upheaval in the region.

Problems with the Retaliation Theory

There are several problems with Eaton's retaliation theory. Eaton claims that few researchers "bother to examine 'tit-for-tat' violence more closely" (2008, 92). Thoroughly examining this violence would require removing all the environmental factors, including weapons, poverty, hunger, the quest for bridewealth, etc. Once these factors had been somehow controlled for, there would have to be a situation in which someone committed the first violent raid or theft just for its own sake in order to start this cycle. As such, it is difficult to explain the rationally behind the *initial* act that starts the maelstrom of violent retaliation.

The process through which Eaton reaches his conclusion as to the central role of revenge seems to be to ask people 'What causes raiding?' He acknowledges that "[t]he answer to the first [question] was almost universally hunger or poverty…" (ibid., 102)—a nearly universal answer which he apparently disregards. He does not, however, explain the process through which he was able to drill down to the "real" answer (revenge) with his respondents. He does acknowledge that each interview is a delicate process and that while people are willing to talk about raids, they are often pushing a specific agenda rather than accurately recounting event.[30]

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[30] As discussed in the methodology section of this thesis, people will very rarely talk about raids in the first person, making it difficult to ascribe clear motives for the acts of individuals. While the reasons behind the avoidance of the first person pronoun are somewhat context/time specific (for instance, due to fear of attracting UPDF attention), Eaton does not tell us the time period in which his own data were collected (his interview citations indicate that his 212 interviews were conducted between early October 2005 and mid-May 2006; i.e., before the most violent and terrorizing portion of the disarmament campaign that began in May 2006 was fully underway, but the way that Eaton recounts the question "what causes raiding?" implies that he

Eaton attempts to address the lack of clear motivation for initial violence by explaining that while ethnicity (or group identity) is not in and of itself a divisive issue, allegiances among groups can be slippery and transitory. He posits that jealousy is inherent in group relations and comes to the fore if one group tries to make peace with two separate others, which will lead to one of these two groups attacking the other in small and niggling ways. "Thieves are used as a weapon by the weakest ethnic group to try to break up any lasting peace between the other two" (ibid., 108). These thefts often ultimately succeed in undermining the peace as the initial peace broker is left in the unenviable position of defending the acts of the instigating group. There are two problems here. First, this does not explain *why* the weakest ethnic group—which has the potential to benefit from the stability, shared resource access, and protection brought by a three-way allegiance with stronger parties—would want to start raids. Eaton says that certain elements within the group "felt threatened," but does not explain these threats. Second, in explaining the specific example of this three-way relationship, he says "the dynamics between the Pokot, Pian and Matheniko are extremely complicated" (ibid., 108). This explanation acknowledges the importance of the very same complicated omnicausal factors he set out to dispute—i.e., that a range of external and internal factors contribute to peace and/or conflict among groups, and that, as such, we cannot attribute any one aspect to being the source for the violence.

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faced the same investigatory hurdle, as otherwise he would presumably have asked "why do you raid?" or, at the very least, "why do men in this community raid?"

Contributions of the Retaliation Theory

Although Eaton's attempt to pare down the conflict in Karamoja to one simple cause is problematic, his analysis of the role of retaliation supports some of the findings of this study. As described in more depth in the next chapter, some respondents explained the expansion of the type of violence (to include, for instance, sexual assault and attacks on women, children and the elderly) as motivated by a tit-for-tat mentality of abuses committed. Revenge as a motivation for spiraling violence and subsequent upheaval may also help to explain a key aspect of the historical political dynamics among the Pian, Matheniko and Bokora. The above discussion questioned the rationale behind an initial act of violence committed by an individual in the absence of broader contextual (complex) factors. Although questioning Eaton's lack of explanation as to the nature of such an initial act, it is certainly the case that a certain number of people within any group will engage in bad behavior—in this case, stealing—to be rebellious or simply because they can. Consider this the "bad apple" theory. Most violence is functional or rational, but there are instances in which these aspects are either non-existent or deeply personal and whereby actions are taken out of anger, grief, frustration, etc. The data from this study show that small-scale unauthorized thefts whittle away at mutually beneficial alliances (such as to access natural resources) and wider peace agreements. In taking this bad apple theory and applying revenge, it becomes apparent how isolated bad apple attacks lead to revenge attacks, which beget more revenge attacks, and so forth. Eventually there is a series of incidents that culminate in more widespread insecurity which has the power to undermine allegiances and peace agreements.

Understanding the Collapse of the Three Stones Alliance

This combination of the bad apple theory and the retaliation theory may be key to understanding the breakup of the Three Stones. When asked how and why this shared entity collapsed, numerous respondents explained that "it started with small thefts…" However, reflecting back on the problems within Eaton's argument, even if we accept the expansion from these minor incidents to the upheaval that led to the demise of a common identity, it was the broader context and a range of contributing factors that created the environment in which such small-scale thefts would have been *allowed* to escalate to this extent. These small-scale thefts would *always* have existed between and among the groups, but the reasons that they escalated when and how they did, ultimately leading to the breakup of the Three Stones, were due to omnicausal aspects. These would have included a breakdown in communication between the three groups, brought in part by decreased mobility that limited interaction in shared grazing lands and watering points; the diminished power of the elders to sanction and punish recalcitrant youth; and the increased ability of the youth to operate outside the traditional social and political parameters brought, in part, by their independent access to weapons and their personal use of the fruits of raids. The key question is, ultimately, as the small-scale and typical skirmishes among the Karimojong groups began to coalesce into something more serious, why didn't the elders intervene to stop this demise? This study theorizes that the inability of the elders to take action at the critical juncture when the collapse of the Three Stones alliance could have been prevented was due to the timing of events and the profound vulnerability of the social and political institutions of the Karimojong that began in the 1970s and culminated in the early 1980s—the exact time period in which strong leadership and restorative action might have prevented this very demise.

Lautze and Raven-Roberts (2006) show that vulnerability caused by violence and protracted conflict is not limited to individuals, households or communities, but extends to the very institutions, policies and processes that determine the ways in which these individuals and households are able to go about their lives. In the case of Karamoja, the drought, violence and social upheaval throughout the 1970s weakened not only human resilience to food insecurity, but also stressed the capacity of the governing bodies to respond to these events. These factors culminated in the 1980-81 famine and humanitarian disaster which resulted in the death of more than 20% of the population (Biellik and Henderson 1981, 1333) and female fertility dropped to zero (Alnwick 1985; Gray et al. 2003). Already weakened by the earlier chain of events and unable to manage the insecurity that had gripped the area, the traditional leadership structures and social systems of the Karimojong were stretched beyond their capacity when the famine hit. Violence worsened in the aftermath, and the elders had limited capabilities to render judgments in cases of misconduct by the youth, follow-up with punitive measures, or mitigate damage to political allegiances. As discussed in earlier chapters, this study posits that the vulnerability of these traditional governance mechanisms created a vacuum in which the youth began to establish their own institutions which were more inward looking and less focused on maintaining diplomatic ties with the other groups.

Understanding the Impacts of Violence from a Livelihoods Perspective

As shown throughout this chapter and dissertation, insecurity caused by violent raiding has extensive and inter-related spillover effects, including being a central cause of the devastating famine, undermining the Three Stones alliance, contributing to the erosion of traditional animal-based livelihood strategies, and eroding the traditional institutions that governed the region. The impacts on institutions also occur at the local level, including

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negative impacts on markets and the already limited social services in the area. The work

of Helen Young and colleagues on livelihoods in Darfur shows that direct asset

stripping—such as theft and looting of productive and essential assets—has an immediate

and obvious effect on household well-being and resilience to shock and upheaval. They

also examine violent conflict's less immediate impacts, which can be thought of as

indirect asset stripping, whereby insecurity leads to erosion of the broader asset base and

market system throughout a region, with impacts on market prices and systems, trade

routes, overall access to resources, goods and services, and systems of governance

(Young et al. 2005; Young and Osman 2006). Many of the factors behind the conflict-

related indirect asset stripping in Darfur are also present in Karamoja, including

insecurity affecting mobility and access, environmental degradation, erosion of local

governance systems, marginalization, and restrictions on markets (including access)

caused by the conflict (Young and Osman 2006).

A livelihoods analysis of the collapse of the Karimojong alliance highlights the impacts

of insecurity on social and political capital. At the household level, the erosion of social

capital has had a profound impact on household livelihood strategies. Horizontal

transfers of livestock and the systems of reciprocity and support that served to smooth

consumption and mitigate vulnerability are damaged when insecurity limits movement of

people and animals and when distrust permeates relations between previously friendly

groups. Repeated years of insecurity eventually eroded the long-standing stock-associate

relationships that had guaranteed dry season grazing access. The stock associate

households were also an important sending location for children or other household

members to work in lean periods (Stites, Mazurana, and Akabwai 2007). As discussed in

chapter two, the effects over time on the institution and process of marriage has had far-

reaching impacts on the social relations associated with matrimony, including relations among families, between generations, and the gender roles for men and women traditionally associated with marriage.

The work of medical anthropologists such as Sandra Gray and Mary Sundal illustrates the extent of the impact of prolonged insecurity on human capital in the form of health. Gray, Sundal et al. (2003) show the impact of insecurity on mortality, particularly for males who were in their prime reproductive and economically productive years at the height of insecurity in the 1980s and 1990s, as well as the links between insecurity and poor outcomes for child survival and female fertility. Drawing on the same field data, Gray and her colleagues illustrate the impacts on breastfeeding and weaning practices (Gray, Akol, and Sundal 2008), as well as on the growth of Karimojong children into adolescence (Gray, Akol, and Sundal 2009; Gray, Wiebusch, and Akol 2004). For both infants and older children, the combined environmental and social causes leading to poor growth and health outcomes are exacerbated by insecurity. Maternal stress led to poor outcomes for infants following weaning, while the growth of older children was highly variable depending on the specific circumstances by location and time period. Using baseline data from the 1960s, Gray et al. concluded that the physical well-being of Karimojong infants and children "had deteriorated substantially in the decades since the 1960s," due primarily to "increased exposure to infection and the experience of chronic physical and emotional stress" (2008, 501). Human capital in the form of education in Karamoja has long been below the national average, and the conflict and its corollary impacts have repeatedly disrupted education for those few households who did opt to enroll children in school.

Conclusion

This chapter's examination of the transformation of raiding has attempted to illustrate the ways in which raiding has changed in the past several decades and also to explain the nature of raiding and related behavior in the region today. Raiding has been shown to have profound impacts upon social, political and human capital and livelihood strategies, with a pattern of erosion over time of many aspects of the asset base. The trajectory of the nature of raiding is not, however, strictly linear or entirely negative in its developments, and there are variations in the both the research data and the secondary literature on the subjective question of whether life in a culture of raiding was "better" in the past than today. Eaton quotes a respondent, for instance, who feels that the introduction of guns was a positive development because the sound of gunshots at the start of a raid serves as a warning to those nearby, who can then attempt to flee, keeping casualties to a minimum. Raids with spears, on the other hand, were silent (2008, 104). Data collected from Jie women at a kraal in Kotido on raids perpetrated by Bokora, Matheniko and Dodoth enemies illustrate that while women and children were largely considered free from harm when in manyattas in previous decades, this did not hold true for those found in kraals. A group of young women discussed these factors of change over time:

> *How is the security here at home [manyatta]?*
>
> There is insecurity here. The enemies come and climb the fences and come inside. They take whatever they want, food, relief, chickens, etc.
>
> This did not used to happen because we were armed. In the past the enemies would always be outside—the fighting was far from here, and it was over animals. This fighting mostly affected men—they were the ones killed outside of the home. The women were in danger only if they came outside the home to relieve themselves and found that the enemy was hiding outside. Then you would be killed. This mostly happened to women as opposed to children.

What about threats when you were at the kraals in the past?

At the kraals we would all be affected by raids. They enemies would even throw children into the fires. [*Why*?] They do this because they know the children will be a problem in the future if they are allowed to grow up.

They have no sympathy even for the children, as they will be tomorrow's warriors! Women should suffer because they have produced these children.[31]

On a broader level, the discussion of different types of raiding—whether these types be categorized as predatory versus distributive raiding , thefts versus raids, or survival versus prestige-based actions—might seem to imply that one type of raiding is qualitatively better, less destructive, or more justifiable than another type. From the experience of the victims of raids, however, these distinctions have no value: the loss of one's livelihood assets and, in some cases, the injury or death of oneself or family members is a devastating blow regardless of whether the perpetrator is motivated by hunger, pressure to accrue bridewealth, or the need to prove his courage. Herds underpin not only financial stability but also prestige and social equity; the sudden loss of a sizeable portion or entirety of a herd is a profound blow to both status and resilience. Ultimately, however, while these distinctions may warrant different labels by outside observers and researchers, the experience of the individual household or community is traumatic regardless of where the raid falls in this typology. This chapter illustrates the ways violence has changed over time from the perspective of both perpetrator and victim and finds that only by understanding violence, vulnerability and basic needs from a multi-causal perspective can we begin to understand the drivers and causes of this violence.

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[31] Interview No. 193, Jie young women, Kacheri, Kotido, April 7, 2009. The memory of children being thrown into fires at the kraals was repeated a separate location in the same sub-county. Interview No. 192, Jie young women, Kacheri, Kotido, April 8, 2009.

This chapter examines the validity of the widely-accepted hypothesis that the commercialization of raiding is behind the transformation and intensification of violence in the region over the past thirty years. This study argues that the commercial raiding hypothesis as it is normally understood—as a widely networked system involving participation and collusion from a range of actors—fails to capture the more nuanced factors behind the sale of livestock at the individual level. This study finds that by understanding commercialization as part of a broader process in the region—a process with links to modernization, commoditization, and the gradual erosion of livelihoods based on systems of non-monetary exchange—and by examining not only the top-down but also the bottom-up involvement of multiple stakeholders in the commercialization process, we reach a more thorough and nuanced explanation of how the cash economy has changed the nature of violence. Once the motivations of individuals within this system are understood it becomes possible to understand some of the motivations for violence as perpetrated by these individuals. The next and final chapter in this dissertation returns to these specific individuals—young men—and applies the combined findings from this study towards their experiences as perpetrators of violence.

CHAPTER SIX: TO BE A MAN

Overview

This dissertation has examined the prevailing hypotheses for the increase of violence in Karamoja since the 1980s. The actions of young men, as the perpetrators of raids, have been at the center of this story, but the identities, desires, and experiences of these male youth remain largely absent in these theories. This study posits that in order to understand fully the trajectory and causes of violence we must place the individual experiences and aspirations of young men and the social, political and economic pressures that shape and influence their aspirations at the center of the story. This is most effectively done through the combined use of a gender analysis and livelihoods framework. As will be shown through a discussion of the expectations of normative masculinity, the ways in which young men have sought to achieve and maintain manhood relate directly to the worsening and perpetuation of violence over the past three decades. The addition of a livelihoods lens adds the economic and household analysis which is lacking in much of the theories on male violence in the region. Importantly, introducing the livelihoods analysis allows for a critical link to be made back to both the conflict dynamics and the quest for a (gendered) identity. The livelihoods-conflict cycle illustrates the ways in which the livelihoods pursued by young men have become maladaptive and, in turn, how these maladaptive livelihoods have undermined the quest for a recognized and supported masculine identity and also caused the erosion and weakening of livelihood strategies across the southern Karamoja region. The combination of a gendered and livelihood perspective allows for an examination of how

males seek to realize and maintain their individual, group and community identity while also providing for themselves and their families within a culture and society that has experienced rapid and profound change.

Ultimately, this concluding chapter argues that the push for bridewealth, the stagnation of traditional authority systems, loss of confidence in and efficacy of customary governance, and the transformation of raiding within a monetized system all contributed to the more intimate narrative of male youth's quest for identity and status. This specific narrative and quest establish the thread that provides the clearest explanation of violence and the trajectory of violence over time. In short, the past thirty years saw the gradual decay of the external parameters and systems through which males in Karamoja had been able to establish and maintain their position as adult men. The rites of passage once provided through initiation and succession became closed off, rates of official marriage diminished and became increasingly obsolete, and the lauded warrior status once bestowed by communities eroded as raiding became more individualized, violence became more endemic, and the combined impact heightened suffering for local communities. Each cohort of men hence faced fewer options for proving themselves as real men, and watched as the cohorts above them struggled with the same issues. As the communal and sanctioned options for establishing adulthood narrowed, male youth increasingly turned inward to their peer group in search of status, support, identity and recognition of their position as men. This dissertation argues that it is this process of turning towards peer group recognition and the mechanisms required to maintain status within this group that goes the furthest in explaining the evolution and continuation of violence in Karamoja.

This chapter starts by reviewing the trajectory of violence in Karamoja and illustrating the linkages between violence in various forms, including road ambushes, thefts, and violence perpetrated by the state. The next section explores the ways in which the hypotheses on pastoral violence take gender into account, and the following section examines how violence, livelihoods and identity are directly linked to the establishment and maintenance of masculine identity and the process of becoming a man in Karimojong society. This discussion demonstrates that the transformation and evolution of violence can best be understood as a quest for peer group status and identity on the part of young men, but that the violence that is both a means and an end within this process has further undermined livelihood strategies essential to the very roles and identities of young men. This leads to a discussion of the conflict-livelihoods cycle and maladaptive livelihood strategies in the context of Karamoja. The chapter then turns to how the external process of disarmament has impacted livelihoods, masculinity, identity and violence before offering conclusions for this dissertation.

The Trajectory and Evolution of Linked Forms of Violence

As discussed in the first chapter and highlighted throughout this thesis, violence in Karamoja is multifaceted and has become, for many respondents, an inevitable fact of life. Men and in particular young men are the main perpetrators of violence in the region. This study is primarily interested in the violence traditionally associated with cattle raiding, but a closer examination of raiding violence makes clear that no one form of violence in Karamoja can be viewed in isolation, and that the different types and manifestations of violence are linked and influence each other. This section looks at how raiding violence has influenced and is linked to road ambushes, thefts, and violence

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perpetrated by the state and the implications of these linkages for how violence is experienced today.

Road Ambushes

As discussed in the literature review and illustrated in chapter five, cattle raiding that was once largely redistributive in nature, community-driven and aimed at traditional enemies changed over time to become more internally targeted, individually-driven and linked to the cash economy. Importantly, livestock assets that had once more or less circulated within the region (the "redistributive" aspect) through a system of raids, counter-raids and social and ritual exchanges, were increasingly leaving the economic system, leading to increased inequity in livestock ownership and direct and indirect asset stripping. In parallel to this change in cattle raiding a new form of violence gradually emerged through the 1980s and 1990s: road ambushes. The growing inequity in wealth and the reinforcement of herd protection strategies made it increasingly difficult for young men to secure the assets they desired through raiding. The simultaneous expansion of the cash economy increased the liquidity and attractiveness of non-cattle assets (such as cash and cell phones). Groups of young men who were unsuccessful in raids were reportedly the most likely to engage in road ambushes, in which the perpetrators fire upon vehicles, killing the driver or all passengers and looting the portable assets (Akabwai and Ateyo 2007) or forcing all occupants to hand over valuables at gunpoint.[1] In contrast to the varying degrees of sanction and support given to cattle raiders, respondents were clear that road ambushes would likely never have been sanctioned either by elders or by

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[1] Interview with Denis Kotol, Senior Program Officer, IRC, Moroto, November 23 and 24, 2011.

members of the broader community,[2] and women expressed dismay at learning that their male relatives had taken part in ambushes.[3]

Unlike cattle raiding, road ambushes appear to have no links to historical or traditional processes; respondents find themselves at a loss to explain ambushes as anything other than purely criminal. The emergence of road ambushes and their increased prevalence throughout the 1980s and 1990s can be understood, however, as a process emerging out of the transformation of cattle raiding. Cattle raiding entails the forced removal of assets; this process is an inherently violent one, regardless of whether individuals experience bodily harm in a particular attack. As weapons become more readily accessible and the systems of influence and deference that had governed relations among generations of men and hence the behaviors of male youth broke down, it was a relatively simple transition for the increasingly individually-driven use of violence in cattle raids to expand into slightly different forms of individually-driven manifestations of violence.[4] This shift was only possible in parallel to the growing interest in alternative forms of assets as bounty from attacks. Road ambushes would only net livestock when the transport vehicle of a livestock trader was attacked (which did occur, according to Akabwai and Ateyo 2007); more commonly the loot was in the form of cash and other readily transferable assets. Although ambushes were linked to cattle raids—or the failure of cattle raids—in their emergence, the differences between these two forms of violence was presumably part of the appeal for the young men who engaged in such actions. Road ambushes were

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[2] Interview with Philip Limlim, Program Officer, UNICEF, Matany Town, Moroto, July 13, 2008.
[3] Interview No. 157, Pian elderly woman, Nabilatuk sub-county, Nakapiripirit District, February 28, 2008.
[4] Although data is not thought to exist on the topic, it can be assumed that domestic and other forms of interpersonal violence also increased in this period. It is known that violence as used against neighboring groups in the Teso, Lango and Acholi regions spiked in the late 1980s, but this can be ascribed to a number of factors, not least of which is the expansion of "traditional" cattle raids into these regions as a result of the security vacuum and upheaval following the NRA takeover.

largely anonymous with relatively little chance of detection or follow-up, in contrast to cattle raids in which raiders might be recognized by some of their victims and tracking was relatively easy by following the animals' hoof prints. Road ambushes required little planning and were relatively easy to execute, with few and weapons men required. And while it was often a gamble as to the type and amount of loot that might be found in a given vehicle, attackers would only steal assets in a form that was readily exchangeable and untraceable on the local markets (e.g., cash or phones, not computers or cameras).

As a form of violence, road ambushes were both functional and specific (Lautze and Raven-Roberts 2006). The ambushes were socially specific in that they were perpetrated exclusively by young (and reportedly frustrated) men who found such attacks to be more efficient than cattle raiding. As discussed in more detail in the following section, the road ambushes also allowed young men to build upon and refine their social personas within their peer groups as courageous risk-takers able to acquire (and perhaps share) material status symbols. From an economic perspective, road ambushes entailed the intentional targeting of vehicles believed to be carrying easily portable and exchangeable assets that would allow young men to acquire the items they sought. Such assets had the added economic benefit of not carrying the expectation for sharing or transferring up the social ladder to the elders.

Functional violence as understood in the context of war (Richards 1996; Das, Ramphele, and Reynolds 1997) normally entails a greater level of organization and meditation than would have existed among loose groups of armed young men acting opportunistically to attack vehicles, but the functionality of ambushes is visible, even if such outcomes were not premeditated. The banditry on roads sowed terror among all who might use the road

network, including traders, national and international agencies, public transportation companies, social service providers, academic researchers, etc. Suppressing such potential services and investments did not necessarily serve the direct ends of the young men engaged in raiding, but did boost their reputation and clout as fearsome bandits with the ability to exert influence over many aspects of life in Karamoja. Even when actual acts of violence may not have affected large numbers of people, influence and reputation can go a long way in the absence of other tangible forms of power (Howell 2007).

Raids to Thefts

As discussed in chapter five, the emergence of smaller scale thefts is one way in which raiding has changed over the past three decades. Violence associated with such thefts was at least as common as violence from raids as experienced by the study population by the end of the field work and is today (2012) the most common form of violence in the region (and as such it is worth referencing more recent data to discuss this trend). These thefts are reportedly carried out exclusively by young men who are described as "thugs" by community members or as *lonetia*, a term that reportedly came into use following widespread thefts of mosquito nets after an NGO distribution (Carlson et al. 2012). Recent fieldwork indicates that young men are increasingly willing to identify as *lonetia* and that, while their actions do not receive support from community members, people do express empathy for thefts motivated by hunger and desperation (Richards 2012). Stolen assets include essential and productive household items, including cooking implements, clothing, bedding and food. Importantly, male youth report that the *lonetia* consist of men of mixed ethnic and territorial groups who work in concert, at times even attacking their own communities or granting their friends access to their own communities.

The inter-group participation in *lonetia* is a striking new development, but has its logical roots in the evolution of raiding from an activity that brought benefits for the whole community to one that benefitted the individual and his peers. As covered in more detail below, once peer group social links became more important than the broader community network for young men, it was a relatively easy step for young men to form bonds across traditional group divisions.

The shift in the location of violence from grazing areas to homesteads is linked to the evolution from raids to thefts as well as the emergence of the *lonetia*. Direct and indirect asset stripping undermined the availability and value of livestock throughout southern Karamoja, and household and productive assets that were previously of no interest to thieves became much more attractive. Disarmament simultaneously removed weapons (through direct seizure or because they were hidden in remote locations for safekeeping) from most homesteads, effectively opening the door to attack by those who were still in active possession of small arms. In addition, insecurity (or the threat of insecurity) faced by women collecting natural resources led, in some instances, to the dismantling of homestead and manyatta fencing for firewood for consumption or sale.[5] Thus attacking homesteads became easier at the same time that it began to serve the purpose of asset acquisition.

Violence by the State

This chapter covers disarmament more fully in a later section, but it is important to turn briefly to disarmament *as violence*. As documented elsewhere (Human Rights Watch

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[5] Interview No. 145, Pian women, Lorengedwat Sub-County, Nakapiripirit District, February 18, 2009. This was also raised in 2009 by women in Bokora locations.

2007; Bevan 2008; Knighton 2003), the 2001-2002 and 2006-present disarmament

campaigns have employed brutal methods, including torture, rape, arbitrary detention,

forced disappearances and the disproportional use of force against unarmed or lightly

armed civilians. While most politicians, populations in adjacent districts, and some

residents of Karamoja (particularly those living in towns) perceive the most recent

disarmament campaign as a justifiable and delayed response to armed violence, many of

the residents living in the region view the military campaign as an overt and hostile attack

by an armed warring faction.[6] This perception has more to do with the methods used in

the disarmament process than with the larger goal of removing weapons. Male youth are

particularly likely to express such a view, as they have borne the brunt of the military's

actions and are the most likely to be detained, beaten and tortured.[7]

Direct physical violence perpetrated by the state is not a new experience for residents of

Karamoja, but prior to the 2001 this violence had normally been relatively sporadic and

localized.[8] The 2001-2002 campaign covered a larger area but was short-lived due to the

redeployment of the UPDF to the north; the 2006 disarmament thus marked the shift to a

widespread and sustained use of force with far-reaching consequences. To note, even in

the most brutal initial period of the current disarmament, respondents (including young

men) were careful to stress that they did not object to disarmament *per se,* and many were

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[6] Knighton posits that through its brutal disarmament campaigns the state has taken on the role of another raider: "The state is just another raider. The Karamojong thought the British were just another raider, but in the end they proved not to be so. In 2002 with elements of the UPDF enriching themselves by taking cattle seized by force for their own herds or by selling them for meat, the government has proved to them it is a cattle-raider" (2003, 449).
[7] Views among the local population regarding the disarmament became more favorable from 2010 onwards as improvements in security began to be felt more broadly. This thesis deals primarily with the pre-2010 time frame so these changes will not be discussed in depth, but are important to note.
[8] Examples include the 1972 killings at Nawaikorot by Amin's forces (against Karimojong not willing to wear western clothing), helicopter gunship attacks on kraals and settlements (early 1960s, 1984, 2004) and earlier but relatively short-lived disarmament campaigns.

vocal regarding the extent of the problems caused by small arms violence. For example,

a group of young Matheniko men said:

> Disarmament is good because the gun was taking us backwards. With disarmament we would be free to visit Jie, to visit our relatives in Bokora. Because of the gun we could not do this freely. What the government has done is a good thing.[9]

Respondents are thus not against the concept of giving up weapons, but rather have

serious complaints about the methods through which disarmament has been carried out,

including direct sexual violence against men. This was raised in multiple study sites, but

is put most succinctly by a group of men in Kotido:

> Tell [the government] that what they are doing now is not disarmament. This idea of disarmament has become torture where your testicles are tied. You are released and you look at your wife and you cannot do anything, including producing children.[10]

Returning to the analysis of violence as functional and specific, the Ugandan

government's use of violence is clear in at least one aspect of its functionality: weapons

were taken from the local population in an effort to limit armed force by civilians. By

and large, members of the study population both recognized and supported this function

of disarmament and even the use of force as at times necessary, but did not support the

specific ways in which this force was deployed. The specificity of the military's use of

force is notable both in its deliberateness and in its uniformity across the region. As

discussed later in more detail, the methods of violence specifically targeted warrior

culture, male authority, and masculine identity. These specific methods of disarmament

fed into a second functional aspect of the violence as perpetrated by the government,

namely to cow the population into submission through tactics meant to terrorize,

emasculate and undermine functioning aspects of the system. Although not often framed

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[9] Interview No. 168, Matheniko male youth, Nadunget Sub-County, Moroto District, April 2, 2009.
[10] Interview No. 174, Jie male youth, Panyangara Sub-County, Kotido District, April 6, 2009.

by the population in such a way, it is aspects related to this secondary function of

government violence that raise serious questions regarding the disproportionate use of

force (e.g., helicopter gunships against lightly armed cattle camps) and the gross human

rights violations (e.g., detention without trial, execution, forced disappearances, and

torture). Leaving the necessity and legality of such methods aside, these tactics have

been extremely effective in suppressing the population and reducing the visible use of

violence.

The actions of the military have led many young men in the study population to view

disarmament as an aggressive attack by an external and hostile force. In thinking about

the links between different forms of violence, however, it is important to come back to

the inextricable relationship between violence as perpetrated by male youth and

disarmament. The government of Uganda turned a blind eye to the heavily armed nature

of civilian Karamoja for many decades, with only occasional forays and relatively

ineffective efforts to quell gun violence and the weapons trade. (Multiple other factors

are of course behind this blind eye on the part of the state, including the military focus on

the war in the north, the strategic benefits of an armed buffer zone in a border area, the

political insignificance of the region, and the effective firewall on eastern LRA

expansion.) The 2001 and 2006 disarmament campaigns and, in particular, the sustained

nature of the 2006 to present campaign, had many causal factors, but the increased and

intensified violence, including violence against traders, travelers, missionaries and

government workers (including teachers and health care providers) was certainly at the

forefront of the government's response. In other words, violence associated with raiding

and the spin-off into banditry cannot be disassociated from disarmament: rather, the

disarmament campaign arose at least in part in response to and because of this violence.

<u>Locating Gender in the Analysis</u>

This section briefly revisits the four main hypotheses for violence in pastoral societies discussed in this thesis and illustrates how gender already is or can be located in these theories. In short, although cattle raiding is the primary form of violence studied in pastoral societies, few analyses or hypotheses examine the fact that cattle raiding is entirely *male* in nature and the meaning and implications of this fact. Taking this point to be self-evident but no less important, this section goes a step beyond the male nature of pastoral violence to examine how this violence is important as a part of masculinity within Karimojong society and how the various contributing factors to violence examined in this dissertation to date build upon our understanding of Karimojong masculinity.

Marriage

The literature on the quest for bridewealth as a driving factor in violence does not always directly raise the relevance of gender. However, the importance of gender roles and relations are inherent in an examination and analysis of marital relationships and status. As such, the quest for bridewealth can be seen as closely linked to the quest for masculine status—men want to marry for the benefits (at the personal, familial, and community levels) that accrue specifically *to men* through marriage. In a society in which neither premarital sex nor pregnancy is condemned, men could realize sexual gratification, female companionship, and the status benefits of demonstrated fertility in the absence of marriage. The drive for official marriage even when such benefits are possible in its absence, therefore, can be understood as a quest for achievements and recognition that go beyond the personal. By this logic, official marriage allows a man to

realize status at the community level. This status is about not only wealth in chattel but also about the importance of status *as a man* in the role as patriarch and provider. With other forms of male status and power under threat, the position for men within the family became that much more important. In Karamoja, securing the head of household position in the first place required obtaining a wife or wives through the payment of bridewealth. As such, the role and relevance of gender and specifically masculinity is deeply embedded in the theory of bridewealth as a factor in violence. As this chapter will demonstrate, however, it is the violence inherent in the continuing efforts to maintain this masculine identity that led to the demise of the very system that allowed men to achieve such status.

Authority

Like the literature on the role of bridewealth and violence, the work on the relevance of inter-generational struggles as a factor in violence does not approach this theory from a gender perspective. As with marriage, however, gender lies at the very center of how we understand power among generations of men. The tension over authority and the associated violence—whether this violence is regular and predictable, as argued by Knighton, or extraordinary as posited by Gray and others and backed up by the data for this study—is fundamentally a gendered-power struggle among generations of men. The importance of masculinity identity and the symbolism inherent in realizing an adulthood that is specifically and uniquely male are inextricably linked to this dynamic. Again, however, as violence became the most prevalent characteristic in the struggle for male power, this violence contributed to the stagnation of and permanent damage to the very system (built on cycles of initiation and succession) that would have allowed men to achieve recognized adulthood through these processes.

Competition over Natural Resources

The literature on natural resources and conflict in pastoral areas largely ignores the role

of gender dynamics except in reference to the gendered divisions of labor around specific

resources—i.e., women are largely responsible for food, water and firewood, while men

are in charge of the resources related to animal husbandry, sometimes charcoal (at least

across much of northern Uganda), and large building materials. As illustrated in chapter

four, gender dynamics are highly relevant to natural resources in Karamoja not only in

regard to livelihood strategies at the household level, but also in how gendered livelihood

shifts and their economic repercussions have affected the ability of customary

governance systems to evolve with the changing dynamics in the region.

The shift away from animal husbandry has increased the importance of women's resource

collection within the household economy, which in turn has shifted the economic (and

hence decision making) power away from men. The increased power for women may not

be explicitly acknowledged by men, but the repeated characterizations—by both males

and females—of male "idleness" and "redundancy" are a clear indication of both the

economic and social stagnation experienced by men at present. In addition, this gender-

based livelihoods shift has had far-reaching implications on the effectiveness of the

patriarchal system of governance, as male elders have limited authority and lack basic

systems of management (beyond the punitive) over the foraged resources that are

exploited by females and that have become the main source of household income,

subsistence and survival. As a result, male elders have little involvement or oversight in

not only the daily activities of women (easily dismissed as inconsequential anyway), but,

much more importantly, in the central economic drivers of their communities. At the

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time of the field research, households were – quite literally—staying alive due to the collection and exchange of firewood and wild greens. Male elders have absolutely no control over the collection, production, sale or exchange of these systems—a marked contrast to their role in the system of animal husbandry which was previously responsible for providing for communities. As discussed, this shift in governance capacity is important for its livelihood implications but has implications of equal or greater relevance for the broader authority of elders, including the ways in which elders are able to manage the violence committed by male youth.

The increased female role in household subsistence through natural resource exploitation emerges directly from the demise of the parallel male role. This decrease in the male contribution, brought about by the declining opportunities for engagement in animal husbandry as experienced by the majority of the study population, has critical repercussions for male identity as household providers, and is covered in more depth in a later section.

Transformation of Raiding

Looking broadly at how gender is considered within the literature on raiding, we find passing references to the importance of demonstrating bravery and courage, but these attributes are rarely directly linked to the realization of a certain type of masculinity. The form of masculinity that is celebrated among the Karimojong and in other similar societies emphasizes characteristics central to being a skilled warrior and herdsman: a man must be brave, a good shot, skilled in battle, and able to control, protect, and, if needed, acquire, large numbers of cattle. The standard analyses largely see raiding as means to an end—i.e., amassing cattle. When a gendered lens is applied, we see that

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raiding is also an end in and of itself, through which men demonstrate not only bravery and courage, but also daringness, independence from traditional authority structures, fierceness, and self-sufficiency.

A gender analysis is also usually absent from the literature on the commercialization of raiding, but the individualization inherent in commercial raiding is closely linked to gender identity. Once rapid cash sales for raided animals became an aspect of the cattle market, men were able to use the bounty from raiding for purposes linked entirely to their own personal status and their standing among their peers. As will be demonstrated below, this was done through the acquisition of personal adornments and symbols of prosperity (e.g., jewelry and cell phones) and through reinforcing social relations within the male peer group though purchase and sharing of beer and liquor. However, as raiding became more virulent and widespread it brought the demise of animal-based livelihoods through asset stripping. Raiding for commercial purposes gradually evolved from being purely prestige-based to being a strategy, for many men, of survival. At first glance, survival-based raiding appears to lack a connection to establishing masculine status and prestige. However, when the context in which these survival-based raids take place is understood—an environment in which assets have been stripped, available livelihood strategies are limited (particularly for men), and effective governance is lacking in most respects from either the formal or informal system—it becomes apparent that strategies aimed at basic provision are at the core of a man's identity. A man is able to establish dominion over and insist on respect from his family when he is able to provide for, support, and protect his household. This in turn influences his position and standing within the community. As such, we see the centrality of a gender analysis in understanding both raiding and the commercialization thereof.

The next section examines how the process of establishing and maintaining a certain type of masculine identity contributed to the violence that ultimately undermined pastoral livelihoods in Karamoja. This section takes a step away from the previously discussed hypotheses and brings the analysis back to the experiences, perceptions and struggles of young men themselves as illustrated through the data and analysis for this dissertation.

To Be a Man: The Struggle for (and against) Masculine Identity in Karamoja

In examining the experience of young men in Karimojong society, we see that—as for men in all societies—there is a socially accepted and recognized version of what it means to be a man and what a man must do to uphold this role. The commonly expected roles and responsibilities of men within pastoral societies as discussed in the preceding chapters have provided additional detail as to the social and political parameters within which men start families, pursue livelihood strategies, find their place within the community, and, for some, engage in violence. As in many societies, the accepted roles and social expectations for men in southern Karamoja fall within relatively narrow parameters; this narrow window can be thought of as normative hegemonic masculinity (Connell 1987; Connell and Messerschmidt 2005), and this masculinity must be both achieved and socially recognized (Barker and Ricardo 2006). This dissertation asserts that this status must also be continuously and carefully maintained. This section details the efforts and struggles of young Karimojong men to achieve and maintain a masculine status which falls within the realm of hegemonic masculinity, while also demonstrating how the parameters of the desired masculine identity have shifted over time due to the

changing power relations and the realization by young men as to what is and what is not attainable within their own lives.

An analysis of masculine identity provides a means of understanding the violence in Karamoja over the past several decades. Young men have attempted to establish and maintain their male identity in the context of a changing and challenging political, social and economic order. Raids initially played a central role in this process as a means of acquiring bridewealth, which in turn enabled men to realize a *de facto* form of adulthood through official marriage. As this violence, driven in part by the quest for bridewealth, intensified throughout the 1980s and 1990s, however, it undermined both the process and institution of marriage, ultimately revoking the ritual and social significance previously bestowed through official matrimony. By the early to mid 2000s most young men found that they were unable to marry and were still without prospects for initiation. This dissertation posits that these young men turned increasingly to their own peer groups for the recognition and identity that they were no longer able to achieve through socially and politically recognized processes within their households or communities. The next sections of this chapter analyze i) male violence in the form of cattle raids as an effort to achieve and maintain an alternative but still socially recognized masculinity through the process of marriage; ii) how violence served to undermine this same process while also further increasing vulnerability and eroding livelihood strategies; and iii) the increased emphasis and focus on social status within the male peer group.

Achieving and Maintaining Masculinity

Achieving and maintaining recognized manhood has social, political and economic components. In age-set authority systems such as Karamoja, the path to politically

recognized manhood is through initiation into the male order; these rites of passage

herald adulthood and recognition as a man. Initiation brings the political recognition

within the male hierarchy, but, as in many societies, the additional rites of marriage and

fatherhood are important for social recognition and standing. Economic aspects emerge

from these social roles: an adult man is expected to have financial independence and to

be able to adequately provide for his family. The role of able-bodied protector is also

central to the identity of the male provider, and the importance of this role is particularly

relevant in a society plagued by physical insecurity. Philippe Bourgois discussed the

importance of the role of masculine status within households and the challenges of

upholding this position in his examination of material and political powerless in East

Harlem in the late 1980s:

> Transformations in the relationship between masculine identity and household
> composition also involve the loss of the kin-based, age-graded, and gender-
> hierarchized community that formerly acted almost as an extended family that
> socialized and controlled women and children. The traditional definitions of
> masculinity with their ideal of the large, stable household involved a slew of
> cultural institutions and values buttressing the power of the patriarch. Male
> heads of households, however, were obliged to provide economically for their
> families despite the bitter poverty of the rural and the plantation economies of
> Puerto Rico in the nineteenth through mid-twentieth centuries. (1996, 296)

Puerto Rican men faced challenges in maintaining their role as patriarchal provider both

before and after immigration, but most of the male migrants in Bourgois' study had

eventually abandoned their efforts to maintain this provider status and were instead

seeking respect and status through new and increasingly individualistic means. The

works of Barker and others on masculinity in situations of high stress and conflict, such

as inner-city America and the slums of Rio de Janeiro, illustrate the challenges that men

face when they find themselves unable to effectively realize these roles as protector and

provider, particularly in the face of structural obstacles and inequities beyond their

control (Barker 2005; Barker and Ricardo 2006). As these works and the research for

this study show, however, and contrary to stereotypes of the dangers of idle male youth (Kaplan 1994; Urdal 2004), most men in these situations do actively seek to establish alternative male identities that provide a sense of meaning and belonging.

As discussed earlier, the historical standard for achieving socially recognized manhood in Karamoja was through initiation, or *asapan*, marking entrance into manhood. Initiation requires an open and available age-set, a process which was ensured through the cyclical succession from the senior to the junior order of adult men and the regular opening of age-sets to allow cohorts of males to initiate. However, at the time of writing the last hand-over of power from the senior to the junior generation-set was in the late 1950s, meaning that by the early 1980s there would have been rumblings of discontent among the younger generations as part of the push for succession, as illustrated in chapter three and discussed by Knighton (2005). As a growing number of men reached biological maturity without initiation, the pressures on alternative or parallel (though by definition, secondary in importance to initiation) means of establishing adulthood increased. Marriage through the exchange of bridewealth filled such a role. Thus it is important to briefly revisit the evolution of men's role within the process and institution of marriage and familial life and how these changes, in turn, increased pressures on masculinity that may have contributed to the perpetration of violence.

Marriage as an Alternate Means of Status

In the 1980s and 1990s, raiding allowed men to accrue bridewealth and hence to marry. In the absence of initiation, marriage brought social status and recognition, if not within the gerontocratic system, then at least within a man's own age group, with women, and within the smaller social order of the individual man's family. From the perspective of

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needing to achieve masculine identity, marriage met two critical goals: it allowed men to establish a household and family (including demonstrating fertility and extending rights over women and children) and it allowed men to take on the role of protector of these assets (women and children). A man's wife (or wives) and children joined his clan upon official marriage, thereby expanding the size and wealth of the clan and bringing further social benefits and status for the man as a result, including the promise of future social reciprocity and exchange (of daughters and cattle) with other clan members and linked associates.

Raiding for bridewealth had once been condoned when perpetrated against traditional enemies—e.g., the Karimojong raided the Jie and Pokot and vice versa. Small scale skirmishes among the Karimojong groups were relatively common but manageable. As the ranks of discontented young men unable to break into official adulthood increased, raids close to home became more prevalent and serious—as per both this dissertation's bad apple theory and relevant elements of Eaton's revenge theory discussed in chapter five. Raiding for bridewealth began to take place internally among the Karimojong, and this violence beget more violence, led to increased asset stripping, growing animosity between communities, and the expansion of violence to a broader range of victims. Alliances began to erode and access to shared resources based on peace agreements was upended.

Violence, Bridewealth, the Demise of Official Marriage and Implications for Masculinity
Initiations had largely ground to a halt, and men increasingly turned to official marriage through the payment of bridewealth as a means of obtaining a form of recognized adulthood. As shown in this section, however, the violence inherent in the acquisition of

bridewealth undermined various aspects of the social and economic order and ultimately

hastened the demise of official marriage as a means of achieving and maintaining the

normative masculine role.

Collapse of Stock Associate Relationships

Violence across internal and international borders, caused in part through raids for

bridewealth, undermined relationships between stock associates. The late 1980s were a

time of massive livestock raids by the Karimojong on the neighboring districts in

northern Uganda, leading to the complete decimation of livestock herds in these areas

with profound implications for livelihood strategies (Gersony 1997; Ocan 1994).[11]

Although an individual would have been unlikely to participate in a raid against his own

family's stock associate, the intensity and frequency of raids from Karamoja seriously

undermined these larger networks of trust. [12]

As discussed in chapter one, stock associate relationships had been central to pastoral

livelihoods, allowing for both access to critical natural resources in dry seasons and

symbiotic benefits for both parties (through fertilization of fields, trade and exchange,

etc) as well as the management of vulnerability by sending family members to live or

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[11] Quality longitudinal data for livestock populations is very difficult to come by due to poor record keeping and different sources and censuses. Gersony references veterinary references and says that the estimated combined cattle herds of Gulu and Kitgum districts was 285,000 in 1985, but had fallen to a mere 5,000 by 1997, a shift he blames on the raids from Karamoja in the late 1980s (1997, 25). It can be assumed that other, though related, causes were also at work in decimating the cattle herds in this period, including sale of remaining livestock assets to prevent them from being raided, human displacement as the LRA conflict expanded, and decrease in animal health due to epidemics and poor access to grazing due to insecurity. Ocan says that the agropastoralist Teso lost "one million head of cattle in just the few years from 1984 to 1988" (1994, 129).

[12] Key informant #1, Dartmouth, Massachusetts, May 16, 2008. Karimojong communities had had specific relationships with communities in the neighboring districts. For instance, a group of Pian from Namalu sub-county may have spent much of each dry season in a specific sub-county with Teso households in Soroti. The guests would not have raided their own hosts, but populations in Soroti and elsewhere were frequently subjected to raids by the larger group (in this case, Namalu Pian), particularly as the Karimojong returned to Karamoja at the end of the dry season.

work in these locations, splitting herds in times of disease or insecurity, and a refuge in the case of violence (Lind 2013). Even if the stock associate relationships survived the violence and pillaging, external political pressures arising out of exasperation with the incessant Karimojong raids in neighboring areas soon led to the closure of borders to livestock movements. Over time the multi-generational networks were damaged and frayed, due to absence of up-keep if nothing else, and reports from the field indicate that only the elder Karimojong remember the names of their family's traditional stock associates today.[13]

Stock associate relationships had also been central to the acquisition of bridewealth for marriage. These long-standing relationships allowed for systems of exchanges and loans, often with no set time period for repayment. A man would be familiar with his stock associate's herds and economic position, and could ask his stock associate for a gift or loan in cattle. The stock associate knew that he could ask for the same at a future point. In addition, this system of extended loans could help reduce the liability of herd ownership: a stock associate who gave out a dozen animals on long-term loan could call in the favor at a time of greater stability, thereby reducing his risk of animal loss in the interim period. Hence a man in need of cattle for his bridewealth or that of one of his sons could rely on his stock associates for assistance. The endemic violence broke down this source of bridewealth and avenue of exchange as well as the protection provided by splitting herds.

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[13] Phone conversation with Karol Czuba, IOM Moroto, May 23, 2012. Czuba was trying to understand the process of out-migration of children from the region and had been investigating, at the author's suggestion, the change in patterns of sending children to stock associates. His field team found that only elderly informants could describe the stock associate system.

Shift to Internal Raiding

With dwindling access to external resources through border closures and the collapse of the stock associate network by the late 1980s, pressures on internal resources increased with negative repercussions for bridewealth acquisition. Livestock became increasingly unhealthy due to lack of quality dry-season pasture. As mobility decreased, so did the range in which raiding took place, and violence and asset stripping expanded internally. This was both compounded by and further exacerbated the waning influence of the elders, which was itself a factor of both the stagnation of authority and the shift in economic power into the hands of the youth through the acquisition of guns and expansion of individualized raiding. The senior elders of the Pian, Bokora and Matheniko would have known each other well and have closely knit systems of exchange and management, but the growing internal violence as perpetrated by the youth would have caused major strains in these relationships by the early 1990s. Irreverence among the youth for the elders' power increased and fed into the perception of the inefficacy of elders' authority. The governance systems that had previously allowed for the management of the unpredictable ecological conditions in the region (Ellis and Swift 1988) were stressed and less effective. At the same time, the strategies for coping with risks associated with pastoral livelihoods were proving difficult to maintain as insecurity and limited mobility undermined transhumance routes, prevented the splitting of herds, and brought the collapse of social and economic exchanges with stock associates and other allies.

The demise of the Three Stones alliance and spread of violence would very likely have had negative repercussions for bridewealth acquisition through peaceful means. The social ties and relationships within the Karimojong alliance would in turn likely have

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become even more important to systems of herd management and exchange than those with the external stock associates discussed above (Dyson-Hudson 1966). Bokora, Pian and Matheniko met regularly at watering points, in dry season grazing areas (particularly in the eastern hills), for shared ceremonies and while engaging in trade in town. Intermarriage was also relatively common across the groups, building further ties and ensuring regular and cyclical distribution of cattle wealth. While options for accruing bridewealth through such exchanges likely still existed in some individual relationships, the data from this study indicate that internal violence by and large eroded this option for most Karimojong men. Once again, as cattle for bridewealth through legitimate and peaceful means became more difficult to acquire, reliance on violence as a means of acquisition only increased.

The Demise of Marriage

With the gradual demise in cattle herds due to raiding, loss of avenues for social exchange, restrictions on mobility, limited access to grazing lands and associated poor herd quality (Ocan 1994), men became increasingly unable to pay the levels of bridewealth required for marriage and, in many areas, also unable to make the surety (*akirop*) and pregnancy (*ekicul*) payments. By the early 2000s, the number of marriages that reached official completion with the full exchange of bridewealth had waned. Courtship periods during which the man was a visitor in the woman's home at her (and her parents') discretion became longer and longer until this arrangement became the norm. Multiple children were born out of these informal and remote unions, as opposed to the one or two offspring that might have been produced prior to the finalization of the marriage contract in the past. By the start of the field research for this study in 2006, people were talking about the demise of official marriage and the rarity of formal unions.

Women no longer expected to move to their husbands' homes or to become part of their husbands' clans. Men found that they had no claim to their female partners and no rights over their children, including claims to their women's or children's labor. This made it more difficult for men to build their own household basis and livelihoods, and they remained dependents within their fathers' households.

The relationship between male status and official marriage is a two-way street. Marriage with cattle was an important means of obtaining status in the absence of initiation. However, as marriage with cattle itself became increasingly rare, it started to wane in importance as a viable social mechanism. Simultaneously, acquiring livestock for any marriage related purposes other than an incremental and prolonged transfer to the woman's family became nearly impossible. These transfers, therefore, would have become largely symbolic and perfunctory, with less social resonance than in previous time periods. Put another way, a ritual process needs to occur with enough frequency to have resonance and meaning within a community in order to retain its social relevance. Once these rituals cease to occur, their significance and meaning over time also starts to wane (Driver 1991).

Implications for Male Providers and Protectors

Loss of access to herds affected not only bridewealth acquisition and marriage, but also undermined the most fundamental aspects of pastoral livelihood strategies. Young men who were the central economic actors (charged with herding and caring for the animals, managing the kraals, taking animals to markets, making decisions about sales, and doing the extensive physical labor required) within the pastoral system found it increasingly difficult to provide for their families. In the absence of initiation for most of these men,

the role of father and husband was central to their efforts to achieve and maintain a socially recognized masculine identity. These young men in their prime years were defining themselves through their herds, their virility, and their ability to attract and acquire wives. But this status and position could not be maintained if they were unable to uphold their responsibilities as providers. The pressure to provide increased in accordance with the difficulty of doing so, and men faced dissent and dissatisfaction from their wives. If bridewealth was not paid in full (and an extended payment period was increasingly common due to the growing pressures on herds and collapse of horizontal and vertical transfers) the woman and her family might threaten to find another suitor who was better able to provide. Similar to the findings of Paul Richards (2006) in his work on Sierra Leone and Liberia, such a suitor was likely to be an older man with more resources. This competition between older and younger men for the same women created further tensions between male generations (Spencer 1976).

As part of the increased pressure to provide and to secure a wife or risk losing her (and any children from the union) to another man, the act of raiding—previously used primarily for a specific end such as bridewealth, recovery from livestock loss, or retaliation—became embedded in the livelihood strategies of male youth. The increased difficulty in acquiring animals (due to shrinking herds, growing inequity of ownership, off-sales and better protection) resulted in the increased use of violence to acquire the same amount of assets. Violence associated with these raids soon became part of the social and economic currency; when an animal was needed for a ritual, for sale, or for part of a bridewealth payment it was stolen. In the absence of initiation as the traditional and ultimate rite of passage, male identity rested on maintaining a fine balance of control

over the assets cattle, women and children. The use of violence became part and parcel of the means to secure these assets and to maintain the role of protector and provider.

The increased prevalence and intensification of violence in Karamoja by the 1990s had serious implications for men's ability to protect their families. Women and children were increasingly the victims of attacks that took place closer to homesteads (and within homesteads by the mid-2000s) and aimed at an expanded list of assets. The role of protector was central to the image of the idealized man within highly militarized Karimojong society. Undermining men's ability to live up to these expectations dealt a serious blow to masculine identity, particularly when combined with the increased difficulties in fulfilling one's role as provider.

Seeking Status and Recognition within the Peer Group

By the early 2000s the ability to acquire bridewealth had decreased with the growing scarcity of cattle and increased protective mechanisms taken by those who still had herds. The ratio of official to unofficial marriages began to change in accordance, and the relevance of official marriage as a means of establishing socially recognized manhood also decreased. Succession still had not occurred, frustrations were rising, and more and more men were achieving biological adulthood without being initiated. Thus at the same time that the political (in the form of initiation) avenue to adulthood was blocked, the social avenue (in the form of marriage) was being eroded. As a result, the audience of those who recognized these young men as adults was shrinking. The younger generations of men were recalcitrant trouble-makers in the eyes of their elders, boyfriends who could be spurned or welcomed at will in the eyes of their women, and unpromising suitors in

the eyes of their prospective in-laws. At the same time, the gradual decline in animal-

based livelihoods meant that it was increasingly difficult for men who had long relied on

herding to play an active economic role within their households, regardless of whether

their marriages were official or unofficial.

With diminished hope of achieving socially, politically or economically recognized

masculine status among the wider community, young men's status and recognition within

their own peer groups became much more important. This dissertation theorizes that peer

groups became the fora in which men could prove their worth and could distinguish

themselves from their peers; the age cohort was the group in which men could build a

reputation and name for themselves, even if this reputation was not acknowledged (or not

acknowledged in a positive way) in wider circles. A key informant discussed some of the

factors leading to this push to establish a separate and unique identity:

> Most people who had been in school up to this time left school because they saw
> the power and wealth they could be achieved by raiding….In the past the youth
> would have turned all their animals over the patriarch, but now with this new and
> easy wealth the young men began to split from their fathers and start their own
> households. They all saw how readily available this was due to access to guns.[14]

This increasingly inward focus within a specific age and gender cohort – as opposed to

engagement in the wider community through marriage—had important repercussions for

social interaction, the nature of violence, and version of masculinity that was achieved

and maintained. Bourgois details a parallel insular move among young men in East

Harlem in the 1980s. He says:

> The anguish of growing up poor in the richest city in the world is compounded
> by the cultural assault that El Barrio youths often face when they venture out of
> their neighborhood. This has spawned what I call "inner-city street culture": a
> complex and conflictual web of beliefs, symbols, modes of interaction, values,
> and ideologies that have emerged in opposition to exclusion from mainstream

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[14] Key informant no. 9, Nakapiripirit town, May 8, 2009.

> society. Street culture offers an alternative forum for autonomous personal
> dignity. (1996, 8)

Male youth in Karamoja don't have to leave their neighborhood to see the prospects they

will never realize (although this does happen for those who migrate). Within their own

communities—cultural systems that once offered clear and predictable paths to manhood,

wealth and status—young men today see little if any chance of initiation in their

lifetimes, no avenues through which to officially secure, provide for or protect a family,

and few livelihood opportunities. While the nature and importance of these hallmarks

and institutions are likely to themselves shift and evolve over time, in the interim young

men have established a complex and at times conflictual set of rites and processes that

allows them to achieve the respect and identity they are not finding elsewhere. The

remainder of this section discusses the key aspect of this process in Karamoja and in

other contexts where solidarity among young men brought at least a degree of respect and

prowess.

Male peer groups within specific communities have always played an important role

within Karimojong culture as a sub-set of the age-set that males expect to eventually

initiated into. A boy would be aware of the other members of his shared peer group from

a young age, and would associate closely with these other boys, engaging in shared

activities such as hunting small game, tending flocks, and stick fighting.[15] Close-knit

relations among males of the same age have thus been an important part of the male

social dynamic for generations, and these groups would allow boys and youth to test and

explore their gender identity (e.g., what it means to be a boy, what it means to be a young

adolescent, etc) within the safe confines of this set of friends. This thesis theorizes,

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[15] Key informant no. 7, Moroto town, April 3, 2009.

however, that what has newly emerged over the past thirty years is the emphasis placed upon relations within these groups as the *primary* source of status and recognition of manhood for young men. Uninitiated young men would continue to all hold the same rank in the eyes of the broader community, and hence the peer group became the central locale for expressing, achieving and maintaining a recognized social status and masculine identity. In short, the importance of the peer group increased as external sources of social and political recognition dwindled.

Male peer groups had existed as an important source of social identity for men for a long time, but status and position within the group would still need to be contested and negotiated. In fact, with other avenues for recognition closed off, the process of achieving and maintaining normative masculinity within the peer group would likely have become increasingly important, as opposed to an earlier situation in which membership alone was enough to confer status (Jankowski 1991). The failure to meet societal norms and expectations in any context normally leads to a growing sense of social alienation and exclusion (Sommers 2006; Barker 2005; Parker 1974), which in turn strengthens the need for internal group cohesion with markers and signifiers of respect and status (Etter 1998). These markers do not always entail the use of violence, but, combined with a context in which certain young men are socially marginalized (Kurtenbach 2008), face limited educational and livelihood opportunities (Jefthas and Artz 2007), and have witnessed violence throughout their formative years (Dahlberg 1998), the stage is set for violent enactments born out of both frustration and attempts to secure an alternative identity. David Bruce's work on violence in post-apartheid South Africa indicates that "status insecurity" – defined as an "internal uncertainty or doubt about one's ability" to achieve standing or acceptance among one's family, peer group or

community—plays an important role in violence and crime as committed by young men (2007, 60). Jefthas and Artz argue that joining a gang "provides young men with 'companionship, support and an alternative source of income and dignity'" in a culture where they otherwise have little in the way of power or opportunity (2007, 46, citing Delius and Glaser 2002, 44). Although male peer groups among age mates in Karamoja are very different from urban gangs, there are important parallels in efforts to obtain solidarity and status, in particular through the use of strength, violence and daring to demonstrate manhood.

Some of the avenues to achieving status and identity within the peer group would overlap with those that existed in broader Karimojong society—for instance, a man who had a large herd, was initiated, or was married would certainly have a leg-up and advantage in social standing among his age mates. As shown in the analysis for this study, however, realizing these normative milestones was increasingly difficult. This dissertation theorizes that once men found that they were unable to achieve a socially recognized form of masculinity within broader society, they strived to promote and uphold the form of masculinity that was best recognized and lauded within their more localized peer group context. This theory is supported by the work of Willman and Marcelin on violence by young men in Cite Soleil, Haiti, who found that young men viewed violence as an effective means of acquiring respect, opportunity and material benefits—all things that they felt were denied to them by society—and that they felt bound to each other even as they were excluded as individuals from the rest of society. The authors explain:

> On the one hand, there is the idea that their desperation and marginalization justifies an individual, egocentric stance in their world—i.e., this extreme individualism, even at the expense of others, be they friends or family members….On the other hand, there is also a sense of solidarity with others in the same circumstances….Violence and aggression among these youth, is *both* an

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expression of their frustration *and* a tool for redressing their marginalization. (2010, 529, original emphasis)

The literature on gangs in predominantly western and urban contexts and on masculinity in Southern Africa illustrates that status within peer groups must be maintained through specific acts and processes that are unique to the context and culture of the group.[16] In the case of male youth in Karamoja, this status was achieved and maintained through demonstrations of skill and bravery and through horizontal exchanges and sharing within the group. Acts to demonstrate skill, courage and daring are important means of establishing status for men in many cultures (Nilan, Demartoto, and Wibowo 2011), particularly when traditional avenues for proving manhood are closed off (Messerschmidt 1993; Barker 2005). The lifestyle and environment of Karamoja offers many opportunities for such behavior. Most such acts would not have entailed the use of violence or force against other people, and would include hunting prowess, the ability to walk great distances with little food or water, skilled use of a bow and arrow, dancing, and jousting with sticks. Gender-specific livelihood skills were also valued, including talented granary construction, crocheting hats, and wood carving.[17] While numerous non-violent options exist to showcase bravery and prowess, acts of violence and/or illicit activities seem to receive the most attention and discussion by both young men and observers. This study theorizes that understanding violence or the threat of violence as used by young men as a means to achieve identity and status offers a convincing if not

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[16] Unlike many gangs in urban western environments, the use of interpersonal violence within groups of young Karimojong men is not particularly common, with an important exception being *ameto,* the communal beating mandated by elders and carried out by youth to punish transgressions. It is notable that *ameto* is externally driven, as opposed to a form of punishment chosen and initiated by the youth themselves (Carlson, Proctor et al. 2012).
[17] These observations are from multiple interviews and informal conversations with young men within manyattas and town centers as we discussed their pastimes, dances, game playing, and forms of income generation or contributions to their communities.

absolute explanation for the violence in the region in the past ten years. The following

sections discuss examples of and perspectives on this process in more detail.

Road Ambushes: A Means and an End

One of the clearest examples of violence in Karamoja as an effort to establish and

maintain a socially recognized masculinity within the peer group is in the form of road

ambushes. As discussed briefly above, ambushes reportedly began in the early 1980s,

with local sources citing a 1982 attack on a vehicle carrying two nuns at Kamusula on the

Moroto-Nakapiripirit road as the first ambush.[18] Ambushes continued sporadically

throughout the 1980s and intensified in the early 1990s, resulting in the deaths of various

prominent religious leaders, humanitarian workers and district officials.[19] These

ambushes offered men a new form of daring behavior that took place entirely outside the

parameters and constraints of traditional authority. This dissertation argues that this new

type of attack emerged from the quest of young men to use reckless and risky behavior to

demonstrate and establish their reputation among their peers. Road ambushes had the

added potential benefit of bringing in loot. Ambushes therefore served as both a means

to demonstrate courage, marksmanship, and willingness to take risks and as a means to an

end through the acquisition of readily exchangeable assets. With the decrease in

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[18] Key informant no. 10, email correspondence, November 27, 2012. The key informant reported that some of his colleagues argued that this was an isolated incident, and that road ambushes only really began after the 1986 take-over by Museveni and the flight of the previous regime's soldiers. Ambushes by young men on fleeing soldiers in Kotido and Nakapiripirit were reportedly motivated by a desire to steal guns. Key informant no. 1, however, agreed that ambushes had started in the years immediately following the 1979 looting of the Moroto barracks (email correspondence, November 28, 2012).

[19] Key informant 10 writes in email cited above: "The road ambushes were particularly bad in the 1990s. This was the period when prominent people were murdered during such road ambushes. Fr Nyadru, a Catholic priest, was killed on the way between Moroto and Nyakwae/Abim, an Italian humanitarian and a Catholic priest, Don Vitorio, on Moroto-Nakapiripirit road, and Irish Priest Fr Declan O'Toole on Moroto-Kotido road, Son to Bishop of Tororo Grace Gonahasa on Moroto Napak road, District Education Officer, Kotido District between Kotido-Abim road…" Of course, it was only the wealthier and more visible people living in the region who had access to vehicles and road transportation, thereby skewing the set of those killed or injured towards the more prominent. To note, Friar O'Toole was found to have been assassinated by UPDF soldiers who were themselves executed following rapid courts-martial.

community involvement in managing and mitigating violence, ambushes and raids illustrated not only bravery and daring, but also a man's independence and ambition. As such, successful raids and raiding skills became hallmarks of manhood and an important source of pride for young men. When asked why attackers sometimes killed women collecting resources in the bush, a group of women said:

> They kill for pride! To say they have killed! Just yesterday they killed a woman. It is the youth who are looking for this pride…In the past they were fighting with their cultural enemies the Pokot. They cut themselves [scarification] to show they had killed enemies.[20]

Cash began to flow into the social circles of male youth from road ambushes and the sales of livestock acquired through raids and thefts. As discussed in chapter five, the increase in cash in the hands of young men occurred in parallel to the gradual expansion of the market economy into the region, and men soon found they were able to buy clothes, shoes, jewelry, and commercially produced beer and alcohol. Visible adornments of male status that once included feathers, hairstyles, and ritual scarification expanded to include clean and bright wraps, purchased jewelry (earrings, bracelets, necklaces, nose rings, etc), and hats. These items must be purchased in markets, and purchase is only possible with cash or something worth bartering. Such accruements and adornments therefore demonstrate not only male attractiveness and prowess, but also the wherewithal to acquire such assets. This, again, is similar to the often ostentatious adornments and status symbols (including weapons) displayed by young men in western urban gangs. In Karamoja, a young man who is able to showcase such adornments may have received these items through licit means such as gifts from a relative or through engaging in legitimate commerce.[21] Often times, however, ready access to such items

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[20] Interview No. 133, Pian young women, Lorengedwat sub-county, Nakapiripirit District, February 19, 2009.
[21] A young man in Rupa sub-county took *waragi* (distilled alcohol) into Kenya to trade for goats, which he then sold in Moroto town. He used these proceeds to buy food stuffs for his family as well as new clothes

indicates that the man has both the means (i.e., weapons and planning) to carry out raids

or ambushes, and also the skills (courage, marksmanship) to ensure that such attacks

were successful. These identifiers support a man's quest to achieve a recognizable

masculinity within horizontal social circles of other young men, as opposed to seeking

this recognition within the wider community.

The ready access to cash through ambushes and raids in which the animals were quickly

sold allowed men to build and maintain their status within their peer groups through acts

of generosity and largesse. This was commonly done through the purchase of

commercial beer for the group to consume together. Alcohol consumption, particularly

of home brewed beer, was not new, but would normally have been done as part of a

communal ceremony, celebration, or accompanied by a special meal prepared for young

men in gratitude for help with harvesting or other chores (such as making a granary).[22]

Once men were able to acquire their own cash and alcohol through various means,

drinking increasingly became a recreational activity within the narrow circle of male

youth. Fleisher talks about the importance of drinking as a shared activity among young

men looking for peer group solidarity among the Kuria in Tanzania, and believes that

sharing is particularly important in a culture that has long prioritized a form of wealth

that circulates (i.e., cattle) as opposed to accumulates (i.e., ostentatious displays of

monetary wealth):

> All this, coupled with the extreme pressure to share whatever one has with
> others—right now, today, before it can be accumulated—and the evident need for
> the members of cattle raiding groups to continually reinforce and celebrate a kind
> of soldierly camaraderie, to invest in their own solidarity with one another,

and other items personal items. Interview No. 17, Matheniko male youth, Rupa sub-county, Moroto District, December 3, 2006.
[22] Interview No. 129, Pian male youth, Lorengedwat sub-county, Nakapiripirit District, February 18, 2009.

> explains why a good deal of the income earned by cattle raiders is 'invested' in beer drinking. (1999, 253)

The data for this study support Fleisher's observation on sharing, with the caveat that young Karimojong men *are* increasingly displaying material signs of their accumulated wealth in relatively small ways (i.e., cell phones, not Land Rovers), and that there is clear symbolism in the visible show of jewelry, radios, mobile phones and new clothing. As Mirzeler and Young (2000) point out, this type of peer group sharing did not only build solidarity among the young male raiders, but also excluded the male elders, women and children from the wealth and fruits of raids—aspects they would have previously enjoyed as part of communal benefits from sanctioned raids. Mirzeler and Young ascribe this change primarily to the arrival and expanded use of the AK-47; this dissertation finds that while ready access to weapons is certainly a factor, the need to uphold a version of masculine identity reinforced (solely) by the male peer group is the more important determinant.

Beyond the Male Peer Group

With avenues to socially recognized masculinity within the wider society effectively closed off, young men sought to build status and reputation within their peer group. The use of violence to achieve this end is often lamented by other members of society, but a closer analysis of the discourse on this topic within the study data indicates ambivalence in the views and impressions of the wider community regarding the traits that are valued in young men. While young men may have been focusing primarily on peer group identity, it is safe to assume that they were also highly aware of how their actions were perceived and interpreted more broadly. In so doing, they would have likely felt

condemnation, but also a significant (if at times muted) amount of positive reinforcement for their actions.

Analysis of the data indicate that violence committed by young men without community sanction is widely condemned and listed as the cause of multiple social, economic, political and even spiritual ills, including the collapse of marriage, endemic poverty, the refusal of the elders to hand over power, marginalization by the central state, and curses by God upon all residents of Karamoja. On the other hand, several trends in the data indicate that young men receive social recognition and commendation by carrying out successful raids, even when these raids are outside the parameters of accepted and sanctioned behavior.

Women in the study population were more likely than their male counterparts to emphasize the importance of pride for men and how this was linked to raiding behavior.[23] This may indicate that women valued pride in their partners or potential partners, even while many women also castigate raiders and raiding behavior. Both men and women discussed that men who were attractive to women were likely to be well dressed and adorned, to have cattle, and to be able to demonstrate the means to support a family—all aspects that were increasingly accrued through raiding or other acts of banditry.

Even when violent behavior is widely condemned, oral traditions and historical lore continue to celebrate certain traits and venerate those who possess skills inextricably linked to violence. This is perhaps most evident in the oft-repeated stories of "sharp-

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[23] For instance, Interview No. 116, Matheniko women, Katikekile, Moroto District, July 12, 2008. Interview No. 133, Pian young women, Lorengedwat, Nakapiripirit District, February 19, 2009.

shooters," men who are revered for being precise shooters, fearless in battle, and highly

successful raiders. The account of one sharp-shooter, Kete, is indicative of the ambiguity

in the values revered within a community. Kete, a young Bokora warrior in the 1980s

and 1990s, reportedly realized that he could use his raiding skills to fund a business

enterprise. He established the first permanent store in the trading center of Matany, a

building which still bears his name today, and he is credited as the "first warrior to set up

shop" and a pioneer investor in what has since become a bustling market town. This is

not, however, a moral tale about a move away from violence: Kete continued raiding

after he was in business, alleging selling the raided loot out of the shop, until he was

eventually killed in 1999 in a large battle between the Matheniko and Bokora at

Moruarion (Wiens 1999).[24] Ocan (1994) writes that Kete and other young men like him,

such as Alinga (a Bokora) and Apuno (a Matheniko) had political and social power and

influence that greatly surpassed that of their elders. The legends of Kete and other past

and present warriors are deeply embedded in the oral traditions of the Karimojong;

important events in their lives (large scale raids, their eventual deaths, etc) are used as

chronological markers in oral calendars. In addition, the names of these warriors are

often passed down to male children today, illustrating the continued reverence for men

known primarily for violence.[25]

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[24] Key informant no. 1, Moroto Town, July 15, 2008.
[25] Key informant no. 8, email correspondence, November 22, 2012. Nicknames indicating the traits of these individuals are also passed on to children, such as "Good Shooter." The key informant said that such names had raised suspicion by the military, and hence parents are now giving children the Christian name of the original individual in reference to his skills. In other words, if the Christian name of Good Shooter of 1980s was Robert, a child born today would be named Robert in reference to and in reverence of Good Shooter.

Impacts of Continuing Insecurity

By the mid 1990s insecurity on the roads had greatly limited travel and commerce in the

region (Gray et al. 2003). The number of attempted and successful ambushes was of

course much lower than the number of vehicles actually using the roads,[26] but the

arbitrary and violent nature of attacks greatly increased the risk of doing business in the

region. Commodity prices—for food, medicines, animal drugs, durable goods—

increased as a factor of insecurity on the roads. [27] Market volume and diversity was

limited as a factor of distance from secure areas and localized insecurity (Mercy Corps

2011). Respondents and personal observation indicated that goods and produce from

Teso might have been available in the town of Iriri, close to the border, but was unlikely

to be found deeper in the region or in towns that required traveling through one of the

infamous "black spots" where ambushes had taken place (those were deaths occurred

were marked by black crosses[28]). Access to the region by government workers,

missionaries, local politicians, and humanitarian and development agencies came to a

near halt for more than a decade; those who did work in the region stuck close to the

town centers and traveled in convoys when necessary. Members of the small local

professional class such as teachers and nurses were hesitant to take public or private

transport, further limiting the reach and effectiveness of social services in the region.[29]

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[26] It is impossible to quantify the number of road ambushes in the region over the past 30 years, as, due to the non-existence of security forces in Karamoja for much of this time, only those that resulted in death or injury would have been reported, and even these reports would not have been kept in a central location.

[27] Interview No. 52, Bokora male traders, Iriri Town, Moroto, March 7, 2007. Tim Sparkman, Chief of Party- SUSTAIN, Mercy Corps Uganda, personal conversations related to development of Mercy Corps' market support program, August and November 2012.

[28] Key informant no. 10, email correspondence, November 27, 2012.

[29] The psychological impact caused by the frequent road ambushes should not be underestimated, though the extent to which communities learned to live with this violence in their daily lives is also noteworthy. Although road ambushes had decreased by the mid-2000s when this field work started they had not subsided entirely: in March 2007 one of our translators was in an attack on a public bus on her way to meet our team for the first time. Throughout the course of the study, the local members of the study team *always* pointed out locations where notable ambushes had occurred in our travels along roads. While these accounts were

Gray et al. find that the health care sector was particularly hard hit (2003). External

factors, such as the increase in international attention to the Lord's Resistance Army

atrocities in northern Uganda, meant that (many) bilateral donors and government

officials could conveniently turn their focus to regions where the problems appeared less

intractable and where there were fewer security threats for employees.

As discussed earlier, violence linked to raiding had undermined both the

initiation/succession cycle and the marriage process/institution—the two means through

which men had been able to achieve and maintain a form of masculinity that had broad

social recognition. The shift to seeking this status and recognition within the male peer

group furthered the use of violence. In the short to medium term this violence furthered

the processes of asset stripping that already had far-reaching impacts in the region.

Importantly, unlike violence related to bridewealth acquisition, which ultimately

undermined the institution of bridewealth itself, violence as a means to promote and

maintain male status within the peer group was largely self-perpetuating and reinforcing,

as discussed in more depth in the next section.

The colonial government had relegated Karamoja a "closed district" in the first part of the

20th century; by the mid-1990s, the young men of Karamoja had closed Karamoja

through their own actions. Ultimately, the prevalence and persistence of this violence

reversed the trend of disengagement by the central government towards the region, and

led to the sustained and (to date) relatively effective disarmament campaign that began in

nerve-wracking for the author, this repeated story-telling indicates the significance and impact of these events
on the lives of the local population.

2006. The last section of this chapter examines the impacts of disarmament on violence,

gender and livelihoods in more depth.

Maladaptation and Livelihood-Conflict Cycles

The increased importance of achieving a recognized masculine identity within one's peer

group did not alleviate the larger social pressures and expectations on masculinity.

Young men in Brazilian *favelas* strive for shared identity with their peers and engage in

internal rites of passage, but this group allegiance does not fully insulate the youth from

the wider social prejudices that relegate them to a low social position and make it

impossible to find work or support families (Barker 2005). As discussed earlier, the peer

groups (gangs or otherwise) provide support and an important affiliation, but many young

men still aspire to the essential trappings of manhood—financial independence and

providing for and protecting a family. In the case of southern Karamoja, the process

through which young men strengthened their peer group affiliations and achieved status

within this group simultaneously undermined the very processes through which they were

also aiming to provide for and protect their families.

The work of Helen Young on the factors underpinning violent conflict in Darfur point to

the emergence of what Young terms "maladaptive" livelihood strategies. As explained

by Young:

> …in the prevailing context of limited livelihood options and increasing
> vulnerability, livelihood choices can be 'maladaptive'. For people who have
> been forcibly displaced and are living in urban settlements, this may involve the
> over-exploitation of limited resources, such as water, for resale in town or for
> brick-making. For other groups, maladaptive livelihood strategies may be linked
> with violence or coercion, such as military careers and firewood collection.
> Although these provide quick financial returns, they depend on an economy that

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is distorted by conflict, and a captive market of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs). Worse still, these maladaptive strategies exacerbate vulnerability for both victims and perpetrators and threaten Darfur's longer-term recovery. (2009b, 193)

People normally adopt these maladaptive strategies due to limited alternative options and the erosion of their peace-time livelihoods. The conflict environment and the collapse of both customary and official governance systems create an atmosphere in which rent-seeking and often exploitative strategies can bring short-term rewards. These strategies themselves, however, serve to perpetuate the conflict and to reinforce the vulnerability of certain groups through direct and indirect asset stripping and the undermining of broader livelihood systems as well as institutions of governance.

As Young explains, in the case of Darfur, maladaptive livelihood strategies that reinforced the conflict included the increased participation in government-sponsored militias by groups that had experienced specific livelihood threats, including the camel-herding Northern Rizaygat *abbala*, referred to pejoratively as the Janjaweed. With few other options and a history of marginalization by the central state, the *abbala* capitalized on the opportunity for salaried military service and benefitted from the seizure of loot. This decision was both a practical and emotional one, driven by their experience of marginalization, perceived lack of viable alternatives, and their perception that their "survival as a group depended on it."[30] At the same time, however the shift into this highly exploitative and often brutal livelihood strategy had a direct and devastating influence upon broader livelihood strategies in the region, leading to widespread displacement, extensive suffering of other groups, and direct and indirect asset stripping. Young views this shift by the *abbala* as maladaptive in that it exacerbated vulnerability

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[30] Helen Young, personal correspondence, January 16, 2013.

of other groups as well as the very institutions and processes of governance and hence directly perpetuated conflict in the region (Young 2009a).

Sandra Gray et al. have used the term "maladaptive" to refer to the ways in which the local population within Karamoja has responded to stress (Gray et al. 2003, S22). Taking a strict Darwinian approach, Gray et al. argue that although these response strategies may have been adopted in an effort to preserve the cattle wealth that is central to pastoral identity, the inherently violent nature of these strategies —most apparent in the raids with automatic weapons carried out by male youth—threatens the very survival of the culture and population through their impacts upon morbidity and mortality, child survival, and birth and fertility rates. Gray et al. compare the Karimojong to the Turkana, who have experienced similar ecological and environmental conditions, and find that the Turkana communities are overall more resilient to shock and have a greater capacity to recover following a major stress to the system than their Karimojong counterparts. This difference, the authors argue, is due in large part to the much greater prevalence of violent cattle raiding in Karamoja than on the Kenyan side of the border. Lorelle Beth Jabs also refers to the transformation of cattle raiding among the Bokora as a maladaptive process through which the functional nature of cattle raiding for redistributive purposes was transformed into the basis of what is, in her analysis, an intractable conflict (Jabs 2007).

In line with these findings from the literature, the analysis for this study strongly points to the maladaptive nature of raiding within Karimojong society. If we apply Sandra Gray's thinking on the impacts of violent raiding to Helen Young's model in Darfur, we see that not only does violence in Karamoja undermine survival and fertility—the central tenets

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of Darwinian survival—but that it also perpetuates the very loss of livelihoods that coping strategies normally aim to prevent. Livelihoods become more tenuous, leading to greater use of the same maladaptive adaptations as people struggled for survival. Young's explanation of the impact of this in Darfur could just as easily refer to the situation in southern Karamoja:

> There are several extremely serious consequences of such livelihood maladaptations. Firstly, acts of violence and intimidation associated with livelihood maladaptations are an abuse of human rights, and second, livelihood maladaptations negatively affect the livelihoods of others by preventing them from going about their business. Moreover, there is the consequence that the livelihood maladaptations of the Arab *abbala* fuel tensions between them and other groups, generating further polarisation and potentially local conflict and thus reinforcing the livelihood-conflict cycle. Maladaptive livelihood strategies are not only unsustainable in terms of their illicit nature; they are incompatible with localised peace, wider economic recovery and sustainable environmental governance. (2009a, 188)

In Karamoja the violent and maladaptive livelihood strategies undermine customary governance systems broadly; these strategies have weakened the systems of authority and respect that allowed for management of inter-generational relations and interactions with other groups. As in Darfur, the consequences of the maladaptive strategies have polarized groups and ultimately increased pressures on livelihoods by constraining social relations and exchanges that mitigated vulnerability, hindering shared access to water and pasture, and exacerbating physical insecurity, particularly for the women who are now primarily responsible for providing basic household sustenance through natural resource collection.

In Karamoja, strategies with inherently violence components are adopted not only in response to shocks to livelihoods, but also as a means of countering the challenges to masculine identity. The maladaptive nature of these strategies is ultimately apparent in social manifestations, as well as the economic, political and biological ones discussed

above. The cyclical and destructive pattern of a search for respect coupled with violence

is captured in Bourgois' descriptions of the life trajectories of several of the Puerto Rican

immigrants his study follows. Bourgois comments on the powerful appeal of street

culture and its trappings of power and material wealth:

> Illegal enterprise, however, embroils most of its participants in lifestyles of
> violence, substance abuse, and internalized rage. Contradictorily, therefore, the
> street culture of resistance is predicated on the destruction of its participants and
> the community harboring them. In other words, although street culture emerges
> out of a personal search for dignity and a rejection of racism and subjugation, it
> ultimately becomes an active agent in personal degradation and community ruin.
> (1996, 9)

Likewise in southern Karamoja, the violent nature of many of the strategies to establish

identity and respect has eroded the very institutions and processes through which men

have tried to establish and maintain socially recognized manhood. Violence related to the

quest for bridewealth ultimately led to such asset stripping that the process and institution

of marriage have fundamentally changed, leaving men with little standing as husbands,

no rights as fathers, and no authority over their female partners. Relating back to the

impact on livelihood strategies, violence also ruptured the processes through which men

could establish themselves as *protectors* and *providers;* realizing these roles had been an

essential means of reinforcing manhood in the absence of initiation. And, lastly, the

endemic violence eroded relations between generations of men and created an

environment of such chaos that elders were unwilling to herald a new generation-set into

power, as the elders feared that their own legacy would be characterized as one of

extended upheaval.

The cyclical aspect of the livelihoods-conflict cycle is central to understanding the

situation in Karamoja today. The maladaptive strategies that were adopted by young men

in Karamoja were not only violent and exploitative in nature; they ultimately undermined

the pastoral livelihoods base as well as the social processes and institutions that had

created a vibrant social fabric, allowed for access to critical resources, and mitigated

vulnerability for groups and individuals. As illustrated by the works of Young and Gray

and respective colleagues, the larger problem with the maladaptive strategies is that once

established they become embedded within the conflict themselves and hence become

self-perpetuating. As shown throughout this dissertation, in the case of Karamoja the

violence committed by young men not only contributed to the serious weakening of the

pastoral livelihood system with profound repercussions across the region, it also

undermined the very aspects that would have granted men the status, recognition and

acknowledgement they were seeking. Livelihoods-conflict cycles are characterized by

their seeming intractability. Young argues that, in case of Darfur, "Solutions are

possible…but they can only be derived locally by local actors and, if this is to happen, it

must not be undermined or interfered with by external actors" (2009b, 203). This bias

towards internal solutions may not, however, bring effective results when the

protagonists themselves are locked into these dynamics. In his follow-up visits to East

Harlem fifteen years after his initial research, for example, Bourgois found that many of

his former associates *had* in fact managed to break free of the negative cycle (though

many others had not), and that, in most instance, this was due to forceful and at times

harsh external interventions, including increased rates of arrest, incarceration and

punitive actions by New York City authorities upon the families of those who were found

in possession of narcotics. As discussed below, the most recent disarmament in

Karamoja has most certainly been done poorly and with extensive negative repercussions,

including a period of increased insecurity for most respondents in this study. At the time

of writing, however, the most recent data (2010-2012) from the region indicates a marked

decrease in violence from a decade earlier. The long-term impacts of disarmament on

violence committed by young men are of course yet to be seen. The next section examines the process and impacts of disarmament more closely and demonstrates that, at least over the first four to five years of implementation, disarmament has been at least as much of a shock to livelihoods and to the management of vulnerability as the endogenous systems of maladaptive violence.

Disarmament

At the same time that the internal processes discussed above were challenging and reforming the nature of manhood in southern Karamoja, external policies, institutions and processes also impacted both livelihood strategies and masculine identity. The disarmament campaign that began in 2006 is the most important of these external processes, both for the widespread and sustained nature of its impact and as indicative of wider government policy to eradicate pastoral livelihoods to the extent possible. While neither the act of disarmament nor its effects were instantaneous or overnight, the process of disarmament is a hugely important turning point and mile marker in the experiences and narratives of respondents for this study. In some instances the most recent disarmament is conceived of as a stand-alone event referenced with a clear "before" and "after," while in areas that have experienced repeated disarmament activities the process is viewed as continuous and on-going. This thesis has discussed the impacts of disarmament when relevant in the previous chapters; this final section revisits both the intended consequences and the (likely) unexpected externalities of the disarmament campaign and illustrates disarmament's far-reaching impacts on masculine identity, gender roles, and the nature of livelihood strategies.

As shown in the first chapter, disarmament was not a new experience for the people of Karamoja. Somewhat uncharacteristically, the planning for the 2006 campaign took into account some of the lessons from past disarmaments, most particularly complaints from both local and international observers regarding the uneven nature of the 2001-2002 initiative and the subsequent pillaging of those communities who had lost their weapons.[31] The official *Karamoja Integrated Disarmament and Development Programme* (KIDDP) recognized the "need to develop the capacity of the state to protect those who disarm" (Office of the Prime Minister 2007, 11) and efforts were put in place to protect the assets of communities following the removal of weapons.

The protection element with the broadest implications was the establishment of the so-called protected kraals. Although official policy documents or strategy papers are not available, evidence from the study data and from other observers indicate that by late 2006 the military began housing livestock next to established barracks (especially in Moroto and Nakapiripirit) or setting up military outposts in traditional grazing areas (more common in northern Karamoja) (Stites and Akabwai 2010). International attention has primarily been on the human rights abuses associated with the cordon and search component of the disarmament (Human Rights Watch 2007). Many of these tactics directly target masculine identity through violent and abusive means, but this thesis argues that it is the protected kraals that have had the greatest impact on livelihoods and gender roles and identity within the region.

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[31] Interviews with Jeremy England, Regional Manager for Karamoja, UNICEF, June 2006, December 2006 and March 2007.

Impacts of Disarmament on Gender and Livelihoods

The recent disarmament campaign has had repercussions upon masculinity through various means, including both intentional attacks on masculine status and authority as well as what might be considered unintended but, in the eyes of the state, beneficial outcomes of the military strategy.[32] Male and female respondents in the study population were quick to talk about the direct, physical and targeted gender violence that accompanied military action in many areas. This included physical abuse to male genitalia through methods such as twisting the scrotum around a small stick and heavy beatings upon the lower back. Males and females reported that many men were impotent following their experiences in detention.[33] Soldiers also targeted male authority along gender and generational lines as part of cordon and search activities. This included public physical abuse and humiliation of male elders through stripping, beating, and parading them through the villages. Public physical helplessness and abuse of male youth was common, including making all the young men from a community lie naked on their backs in the sun for several hours, sometimes with bricks on their chests. Less direct forms of abuse with impacts on gender identity included making men perform female duties while detained (such as fetching water for the soldiers, most of whom lived with their wives) and rejecting the food brought by the detainees' wives to the barracks. Detention of men (normally without charges and for extended periods) involved an intentional and public transfer of key male roles to women; in particular, women were told to bring a gun (or guns) to the barracks if they wished their male relatives to be released. If the family had no gun (or it had already been removed by the military), the woman had to sell livestock in order to purchase a gun to surrender in exchange for the

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[32] This section draws on Stites and Akabwai 2009 and 2010.
[33] This abuse to the genitals was normally referred to as "castration" and was reported in multiple study sites in fieldwork in early 2009.

man's freedom. Witnessing women in this role (selling livestock as well as handling

weapons) would have brought further humiliation and emasculation for the men.

The direct and often violent assaults on masculinity can be considered intentional aspects

of the disarmament campaign, whether these aspects were rooted in official policies or,

more likely, were the consequences of a power struggle between two groups of armed

young men—the soldiers and the male youth—with the military faction prevailing (in

most but not all cases[34]). Simultaneous impacts on gender roles brought through the

introduction of the protected kraals and related security procedures were probably

unintentional, although ultimately resulted in the erosion of influence and status of male

youth. Male youth were traditionally the economic powerhouses of pastoral society and

had a good deal of agency and autonomy while managing their herds in the grazing areas,

even while taking direction and advice from the elders. With the advent of the protected

kraals, however, the military assumed day-to-day control of the animals. Grazing times

were limited to a few hours of the day, and permits and letters (and payments to get these,

and literate connections) were required to remove an animal from the herd for sale or

slaughter. Adding further insult, respondents in many places reported that they were

forbidden from bleeding their animals, thereby losing both access to a critical source of

animal protein and the right to manage their own herds.

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[34] In some areas and in some instances, the male youth of Karamoja launched organized counter-attacks on soldiers and/or military barracks. This was not reported in any of the study sites for the field work for this dissertation so is not examined in depth here, but did occur in study sites for other studies carried out by the same team, most commonly among the Jie in Kotido. Mkutu has called the interaction between the Jie and the UPDF in 2006 and 2007 an "out-and-out war" (2008, 138). As might be expected, the reaction to such attacks on the part of the UPDF was particularly brutal and normally involved the use of helicopter gunships and the razing or burning of multiple manyattas.

Male youth lost physical access to the animals in protected kraals. Placing animals in such kraals was nominally optional, but communities that did not put their animals under the soldiers' control were assumed to still have guns and hence invited additional disarmament.[35] Young boys, who had worked under the tutelage and supervision of their elder brothers, uncles and other relatives who made up the male youth, were often the only ones allowed to access to protected kraals. This was a set policy at some barracks while in other locations the animosity between the male youth and their military counterparts was enough to keep the young men away. The young boys took the animals out to graze with only minimal protection provided by the soldiers, increasing the vulnerability of such boys as well as the likelihood of animal loss from raids. The soldiers had effectively supplanted the roles of young men in animal husbandry and security, and, to make matters worse, the soldiers did not even perform these roles in a satisfactory manner.

Disarmament and the creation of protected kraals also affected women's roles and responsibilities. Women had always played important parts within pastoral production systems, including roles that related directly to animal husbandry, such as watering and milking animals, caring for the milch herds, and taking care of young animals during the day (Hodgson 2000). Data from all site visits to kraals for this study and from key informant interviews demonstrate that women lived in the kraals for extended periods during dry seasons, where they were in charge of numerous animal and domestic duties. Detention and disappearances of men as part of disarmament brought new short-term roles for women, including responsibilities typically relegated to men, such as handling

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[35] Nahaman Owje, Resident District Coordinator (RDC), Moroto, February 16, 2009.

weapons, selling animals for food, etc. The advent of protected kraals brought more

systemic changes for women within the pastoral economy, as soldiers normally denied

women any extended access to the protected kraals. This not only changed the daily

activities for women and further increased the livestock responsibilities for young boys,

but also resulted (among other factors) in decreased access to milk for households and in

the diets of children (Stites and Mitchard 2011). In addition and as shown throughout

this thesis, changes in the broader economy and livelihood systems in the region meant

that women also took on greatly increased responsibilities for household subsistence and

survival through the collection and sale of natural resources.

Disarmament and, more specifically, the creation of the protected kraal system brought

profound changes for gender-specific livelihood roles, responsibilities and authority

systems of all demographic groups in Karamoja. It can be assumed that these changes

were not an official aim of the disarmament policy as implemented by the state, but

conveniently have had the greatest impact on the identity and autonomy of young men,

the very group most likely to be engaged in armed violence. Once the economic

backbone of their households and communities, male youth watched their household

contributions diminish through the gradual shift in the basis of livelihoods in the region

and the loss of animal based husbandry. These shifts were caused in large part by the

violence committed by the young men themselves, but the external shock of disarmament

was the coup de grace that stripped away the remaining agency of male youth. While

providing for their families and protecting their household members and assets had been

an increasing struggle prior to disarmament, the disarmament campaign removed their

means of protection (weapons) entirely *and* handed this quintessential masculine role

over to the soldiers. And young men were effectively barred from participating in animal

husbandry, or at least from having any decision-making authority within this process, *and* the day-to-day grazing and maintenance roles previously held by young men were handed to young boys overseen by the soldiers. As shown in the next section, disarmament did little to improve security, at least in the short to medium term, further exacerbating the crisis of identity for male youth.

Impacts on Security and Violence

When people in Kampala, Moroto town, and other district centers in Karamoja talk about security in the region they are most often talking about security on the roads—in other words, how violence affects their own safety, businesses, programs, etc. Road ambushes had been the main threat to road travel, and disarmament had an almost immediate and positive impact on road safety. Security as measured by freedom of road travel is, however, very different from the concerns of ordinary citizens of Karamoja, who measure their own safety by the likelihood of experiencing an attack while going about their daily lives.[36] Disarmament brought an overall worsening of local level security over the course of the fieldwork for this study.[37] Protected kraals and soldiers provided protection for livestock herds but not for human settlements. Raiders and thieves thus turned their attention to assets that had previously been relatively unattractive when compared to livestock (i.e., food, household items, natural resources, etc), and a marked increase in insecurity ensued. This new form of insecurity occurred not only in the kraals and grazing areas as previously, but increasingly took place within villages and homesteads.

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[36] This form of more localized insecurity is often ignored in conversations in the towns (and certainly in Kampala), and the study team found that the question of "whose security are you talking about?" was met either with confusion or embarrassment when the urban interviewee realized that we were primarily concerned with the security of communities, not of NGOs or government officials.
[37] Security at the local level does appear to be improving in the 2011-2012 period according to field teams and a review of the data collected for unrelated projects. This trend is important to note, but will not be covered in depth in this discussion as it lies outside the study timeframe.

Women and children were thus much more likely to be victims, and their male relatives

had lost the means to provide protection.

Increased in Attacks within Homesteads

Respondents in all locations reported an additional critical shift corresponding with the

most recent disarmament campaign: attackers are now entering manyattas that have been

disarmed and are stealing household goods (cooking utensils, sheets and clothing,

farming implements), food (including relief food), and any livestock (including chickens)

that might be kept within the confines of the manyatta. Two elderly Pian women

discussed this situation:

> *How is security for women now?*
>
> It's not good. When we go for firewood, even us old women can be undressed and raped. When nighttime comes, we worry because of the problems at night.
>
> *What are these problems?*
>
> The enemy comes and looks inside our homes with a flashlight to loot clothing, sheets, pans, chickens, etc. We fold our good things under the skins on which we sleep, and then sleep naked. If you try to make a sound, they cover your mouth. If you discover them when they are dismantling the fence, you sound an alarm to warn the others, but if they are already inside, you stay quiet. The enemy comes quietly.[38]

The response of an elderly Bokora woman to a similar question illustrates the frequency

with which these incursions are taking place, to the point whereby she says she is no

longer afraid:

> *What insecurities do you have?*
>
> It is the worst at night. In the evening, the enemies come. They speak brazenly and freely, climb fences, come into the house, get our food and take it away. If you have bad luck, they kill. They have taken all our chickens. They look inside

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[38] Interview No. 148, Pian elderly women, Lorengedwat, Nakapiripirit District, February 20, 2009.

with a flashlight, and take anything they want. They come before its very dark –
between 7 and 10 PM. We no longer fear them; we are used to it.[39]

The importance of this shift in place of violence should not be underestimated or

understood purely as the same violence occurring in a different location. The intrusion

into people's homes indicates the transformed nature of violence and protection since

disarmament and, with these changes, major shifts in the identity of homesteads and the

roles of the inhabitants of these homesteads. The quotations above draw attention to

several of these critical changes. For instance, the Pian women's point about the

attackers dismantling the fences points to how the defensive capacity of manyattas and

the defensive ability of men have changed. Manyattas are extremely heavily fortified,

with high and thick wooden fences in multiple concentric rings and tiny doorways sealed

with huge branches of acacia thorns. The main form of defense, however, would be the

presence of armed men inside the homestead. Once these men lost their weapons through

disarmament, the only obstacles for would-be attackers are the wooden fences, which can

be scaled or dismantled with relative ease.[40] These attackers might not necessarily even

have guns (or at least not many guns) of their own—multiple respondents described the

men as "armed with torches [flashlights]"—but the threat of weapons is enough to quell

resistance.[41]

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[39] Interview No. 155, Bokora elderly woman, Lokopo, Moroto District, February 24, 2009.
[40] The efficacy of the wooden fences in deterring attacks has also been compromised in some locations where insecurity prevents women from collecting firewood in the bush. Women in several such locations reported that they had resorted to dismantling their fences to use the wood for either sale or household use. Interview No. 89, Matheniko women, Nadunget, Moroto District, July 11, 2008. Interview No. 145, Pian women, Lorengedwat, Nakapiripirit District, February 18, 2009.
[41] Recent (2012) fieldwork found that young men squeeze and release plastic water bottles in their hands as they approach a homestead for an attack; this sound reportedly replicates muffled gunshots.

Rise in Sexual Violence

The shift in attacks to occurring within homes is also significant due to the apparent

correlation to a rise in the reports of sexual assaults of women and girls in some areas

during the night-time raids.[42] Sexual violence was certainly not unheard of previously,

although some respondents and key informants posit that sexual assaults only emerged

with the expansion and intensification of violence in the 1980s and 1990s. A group of

Matheniko elders explain that this was part of a retaliation mentality that emerged as

internal raiding among the Karimojong worsened:

> In retaliation, the avengers go for women, children, the lame and elderly to pay
> for their lost wives or sisters! That is why even the raping came in. It was a tit-
> for-tat affair as raiders would rape any women they would find on their way in
> revenge for what was done to their manyatta or kraal.[43]

Although revenge may be a contributing factor, data collected in 2005 and 2006 in

neighboring districts of north central Uganda included reports of rape (including gang

rape) by raiders from Karamoja. These attacks were only occasionally related to the theft

of livestock and appeared to be primarily designed to instill terror within the population

(Stites, Mazurana, and Carlson 2006).[44] The present study posits that terror and

intimidation are partially behind the apparent increase in sexual violence committed as

part of attacks in homes, as evident in one woman's account of being gang-raped by five

men in her home in front of her children.[45] The absence of weapons (or many weapons)

means that attackers need to use other forms of terror to ensure acquiescence, and the

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[42] The accounts of sexual violence were not uniform from one location to the next, though, as with any discussion of sexual violence, it is impossible to know the degree to which stigma, shame or fear of retribution may have prevented respondents from mentioning such events.

[43] Interview No. 100, Matheniko elders, Rupa, Moroto District, July 8, 2008.

[44] United Nations officials relayed information on an attack in September 2005 in Karamoja that killed only women and children and may have had similar motives of instilling terror and/or revenge, although it is not known if sexual assault was a component of this attack. Interview with Jeremy England & Thomas Odong, UNICEF Kampala, Kampala, April 4, 2006.

[45] Interview No. 151, Bokora woman, Lotome, Moroto District, February 23, 2009. An elderly woman in the same location reported that her two granddaughters were dragged from the hut and raped during an attack. Interview No. 120, Bokora women, Lotome, Moroto District, February 23, 2009.

threat of sexual attack is one such way to achieve this end. In addition, sexual violence

by intruders into the home emphasizes the inability of the men of the household to protect

their women, homes or assets (Walker 2009). Accounts (and sometimes victims) of

sexual violence are presumably shared with the other members of the thieving party. As

such, the sexual violence that sometimes accompanies attacks on homesteads becomes

part of the continued effort to establish status and reputation within the peer group.

Broader Shifts in Violence as Related to Disarmament

Disarmament has clearly had an impact upon the engagement in cattle raiding and

associated violence by young men. Although households and communities continued to

experience regular attacks during the study period and although this more localized and

intensified form of violence resulted in reports of worsening security in many areas,

incidents of cattle raiding and road ambushes did categorically decrease over the period

of data collection.[46] The exact rates and numbers are impossible to gauge, but it can be

assumed that even if as many young men were engaged in the smaller scale thefts and

lootings of homesteads as were previously involved in cattle raiding, the overall extent of

violence would have decreased due to the drop off in availability and use of weapons.

The data indicate that in most attacks on homesteads, the group of perpetrators may have

one gun among them or simply pretend to be armed. This is in marked contrast to the

period ten years earlier when AK-47s were carried freely and almost as an accessory or

ornament by most young men (Gray 2000). By the end of the study period, those

engaged in violent raids and thefts were much more likely to be operating in small groups

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[46] As reported to the police, local officials, UNDSS, UPDF and also as reported by community leaders
themselves. Such statistics are of course notoriously unreliable, particularly in areas where security
personnel and political leaders are not trusted. That said, these reports combined with the emergence of the
protected kraals (which effectively hindered a large portion of raids) do indicate that the rate of such security
incidents declined.

under the cover of darkness, targeting homesteads as opposed to kraals, quickly selling (or consuming) loot, and working without any community sanction. Hunger was increasingly listed by respondents as one of the primary motivating factors for engagement in violence. The increase of sexual violence as noted above warrants further research, but can be explained, at least in part, by the shift in location of violence to the homesteads. This brought not only opportunities for sexual violence, but also highlighted the vulnerability of the female victims relative to the intruders, as well as the emasculated status of men unable to protect their families.

The ultimate impact of disarmament on violence in the region is yet to be determined. Previous disarmament exercises have often brought a period of relative calm followed by a resurgence in demand for weapons, revitalization of the weapons market, and marked upheaval in the region (Bevan 2008; Mkutu 2008). The 2006-present campaign, however, is more intense, involves many more soldiers, and has been sustained for a much longer period than any previous disarmament exercise. The effective end of the war with the Lord's Resistance Army in northern Uganda means that the UPDF has few distractions at present (aside from plunder in eastern DRC); in addition, it is in President Museveni's political interest to maintain his military and the associated financial support from western donors seeking an ally against the potential spread of Islamic-linked terrorist groups from the Greater Horn. This necessitates keeping the existing military trained and engaged. These strategic considerations, however, may ultimately have relatively little impact at the local level. However, respondents in many study sites speak positively of a post-disarmament era and mindset, as indicated in the following conversation with a group of Matheniko male youth:

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> So let's remove this gun so that we can get other alternative ways of living. The gun is negative and it is a cause of death. We have lost so many relatives because of the gun. It has brought poverty. Instead of sticking with the gun we would be able to develop alternatives. It is bad for the Karamojong to have guns. We have seen this. If there was a government that could remove all the guns from all the people we would even become rich.[47]

Although such sentiments were raised at multiple locations, there remained much dissatisfaction with the process of disarmament in regard to both the violent methods and the belief that the government would not be able to successfully disarm all groups or stem the flow of weapons into the region. Livelihoods and economic recovery are likely to be a determining factor in the ultimate success of this disarmament in bringing peace to the region: will adequate alternative and sustainable livelihood opportunities become available that do not entail maladaptive strategies? If not—or if not rapidly enough to meet the needs of the young male sector of the population—then we are likely to see the revitalization and even expansion of violence into new arenas.[48]

The co-existence of a number of external and internal factors impacting the dynamics in the region may indicate permanent changes in regional livelihood systems and the nature of violence as embedded within these systems. Of primary relevance is the continuing flow of migrants to more urban locations within Karamoja or out of the region entirely. The prolonged and effective suppression by the military, coupled with the erosion of traditional livelihoods, the absence of viable livelihood alternatives for the many people who are no longer able to survive within pastoral production systems, and the continuing pervasive insecurity have led to an increase in out-migration by male (and female) youth. As detailed by Marc Sommers in his work on urban migration of male youth in East

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[47] Interview No. 167, Matheniko young men, Rupa sub-county, Moroto District, April 1, 2009.
[48] Although outside the scope of this research study, anecdotal reports from Mustafa Mirzeler indicate an upsurge in the weapons trade across the Uganda-Kenya border, run primarily by Somali traders. Personal conversation, November 30, 2012.

Africa (2001, 2010), this avenue may allow young men to establish independent identities and to establish a new normative masculinity—with new trapping of status and power—that has been so difficult to obtain within the parameters of rural Karamoja. Struggles with authorities that prevent this from happening are part of the new challenges of urban life,[49] but these obstacles, like those faced by urban migrants in many other areas, are unlikely to prevent new form of livelihoods and definitions of manhood from eventually emerging.

Conclusion

This dissertation finds that drivers behind the violence in Karamoja as perpetrated by male youth over the past three decades are indeed multicausal and complex as well as dynamic and changing over time, even when the transformation in violence itself has not been evident. Each of the theories reviewed in this study makes a major contribution to the understanding of this violence from a particular angle or point in time. The quest for bridewealth was likely the most important factor behind increased raiding violence in the 1980s and into the 1990s as a growing number of young men sought the status and clout brought through official marriage and rights over women and children in the absence of initiation and the stagnation of the process of political succession. The intensification of raiding, however, brought direct and indirect asset stripping that eventually eroded the availability of livestock within the region. The process and institution of marriage evolved as a direct result of this violence and the associated impoverishment until the very status that had been bestowed by matrimony was itself irrelevant. Violence

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[49] Residents of Karamoja are routinely rounded up on the streets of Kampala and Jinja, detained, and forcibly returned to Karamoja. This does not happen to migrants from other regions of the country. (Sundal 2010)

simultaneously became a way to establish independence while applying pressure to the existing gerontocratic authority system, but ultimately this violence further eroded the functionality of the governance system and undermined the likelihood of initiation and succession. Young men found themselves permanently trapped in the status of youth. Unable to secure acknowledgement and recognition of their adulthood and masculinity within the parameters of broader society, they increasingly turned inward to their own peer group.

The focus on part of the youth on fortifying their standing within their own peer group did not occur in a vacuum. The expansion and intensification of violence, rise in market prices, collapse of grazing alliances, and disengagement by national and international actors following the deterioration of the security environment had wide impacts, including on the customary mechanisms that had once censured the behavior of young men. Violence undermined capital and assets in all forms and weakened institutions of governance. The erosion of the customary authority held by the elders made it extremely difficult for communities to reign in the youth who were increasingly acting with autonomy. This erosion of authority was influenced by a range of factors, including a generation gap caused by the stagnation of authority and collapse of the system of respect and deference; the governance gap that emerged with the diversification of livelihoods away from a predominantly animal-based system, which saw the elders lose influence both over the daily economic transactions and over the new livelihoods that women and youth in particular, were moving into; a credibility gap because the elders had lost their main *external* role—i.e., creating and maintaining alliances with neighboring groups, including sharing of the livestock and managing resource access. As result of these factors, male elders lost their ability to manage violence through either negotiation with

other groups or through management of the behavior of male youth. As such, the situation continued to worsen and spiral out of control.

Violence due to both the quest for bridewealth and the erosion of customary authority coincided with the increased availability of small arms in the region and the gradual transformation throughout the 1980s of the communities that were targeted for raids. After decimating herds in neighboring districts (a process that introduced new and deadly strains of tick-borne diseases, thereby weakening existing herds in Karamoja[50]), raiders increasingly looked close to home for access to livestock assets. The upsurge in internal raids brought the demise of the Three Stones alliance with irreparable consequences for access to shared resources and the demise of the long-standing systems of social reciprocity, exchange and support. The collapse of the Three Stones was also a further obstacle to succession proceedings, as custom dictated that succession occur through a collective ceremony of all three territorial groups.   In short, internal violence up-ended the social and political processes that had provided a governing framework and had allowed for both the mitigation of vulnerability and the smooth operation of systems of social exchange (including marriage).

Over time, cohorts of young men found themselves increasingly adrift as a result of these gradual processes and the closure of external avenues of support and recognition. Peer groups were the last stronghold where young men could feel welcomed and valued. Masculine status still had to be achieved and maintained within these groups, and this was done through methods that resonated among young men, namely through physical

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[50] Key informants no. 1, 3 and 4, Moroto town, July 11, 2008.

acts that displayed skill and bravery. In a society marred by generations of endemic violence, these acts were themselves frequently violent.

Male youth livelihood strategies became inseparable from violence over the course of the thirty year period under consideration for this thesis. Each act of violence further undermined the viability of the larger livelihood system, not just for the male youth, but for the population of the region. Struggles to prevent livelihood loss ultimately contributed directly or indirectly to the negative cycle of maladaptive livelihood strategies. Many such livelihood adaptations did not themselves include any violence— such as distress sales of livelihood assets and increased natural resource exploitation— but these strategies served to undermine the wider livelihoods base. Distress sales, for example, weakened market prices and contributed to indirect asset stripping while the shift towards female-driven natural resource exploitation undermined the authority of traditional governance mechanisms that were not adept at managing this sort of livelihood activity. The combined erosion of the existing livelihoods base and the systems of governance exacerbated tense relations between groups and eroded the mechanisms that had once been in place to mitigate conflict. Male youth livelihood strategies became only more violent at the same time that these very strategies were stripping away the sources and institutions that had once provided young men with the recognition they were seeking. Our story ends with the introduction of disarmament, brought on, in large part, by this same violence. The tactics of force and intimidation at the hands of state actors, coupled with development activities designed to promote (or mandate) sedentarization, are highly unlikely to solve the deeper problems in the region, but it remains too early to predict the ultimate outcome.

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