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Resilient Pastoralism

A Cultural Analysis of Navigating Climate Change, Modernity and the Development Industry in Northern Kenya

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Billy Jones

Resilient Pastoralism

A CULTURAL ANALYSIS OF NAVIGATING CLIMATE CHANGE,
MODERNITY AND THE DEVELOPMENT INDUSTRY IN NORTHERN KENYA

RESILIENT PASTORALISM

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A Cultural Analysis of Navigating Climate
Change, Modernity and the Development
Industry in Northern Kenya

BILLY JONES



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And Linn. You have kept me, our family and our lives afloat through the times when all I wanted to do was sink. You are my lifeboat.

Abstract

This thesis offers a cultural analysis of climate change, modernisation and sustainable development in the pastoral landscape of Baringo, Northern Kenya. For the majority of the pastoralists living there, life is defined by crippling poverty, ethnic violence and an increasingly erratic and unpredictable climate. In response, a growing number of people have moved away from the traditional reliance on communal pastures and started intensively farming grass on individual farms. Baringo has also been somewhat of a testbed for International Development projects over the past half century. The majority of these, however, have failed.

This thesis explores the parallel histories of Baringo's marginalisation in the national economy and by International Development organisations. What social, political and ecological processes in Kenya and the global economy have led to this marginalisation? In what ways are people using grass farming to help cope with droughts, flooding and economic insecurity? Why have these local adaptations been overlooked by development organisations? And why have so many projects failed to bring sustainable development to the region? The material to answer these questions has been gathered during fieldwork in Baringo, in collaboration with local researchers, through qualitative research methods including interviews, observations and archival research. It consists of fieldnotes, interviews with pastoralists and historical documents from development organisations. The research has been inspired by cultural theories on cultural landscapes and global cultural flows as well as postcolonial perspectives on modernisation and development.

The main findings demonstrate that modernisation has contributed to increased poverty, land degradation and ethnic clashes in the region. They also show that grass farming is an inherently flexible mode of production

which emerged out of traditional forms of pastoralism as a way to cope with these new hardships. The thesis has also highlighted that pastoralist economic models and ways of thinking have historically been overlooked in global development discourses. As global discourses are translated into tangible projects on the ground in Baringo, they often ignore local solutions, resulting in a landscape littered with abandoned project sites and invasive species.

Abbreviations

AECF	Africa Enterprise Challenge Fund
ASAL	Arid and Semi-arid Lands
CBD	Convention on Biological Diversity
COP	Conference of the Parties
CSD	The United Nations Commission on Sustainable Development
ECOSOC	United Nations Economic and Social Council
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations
GEF	Global Environment Facility
GIZ	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (German Agency for International Cooperation)
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
ILRI	International Livestock Research Institute
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IPBES	Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services
IPCC	Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change
IUCN	International Union for Conservation of Nature
JICA	Japan International Cooperation Agency
KALRO	Kenya Agricultural and Livestock Research Organisation
KDRP	Kenya Rural Development Programme
KEFRI	Kenya Forestry Research Institute

KEPHIS	Kenya Plant Health Inspectorate Service
KRDP	Kenya Rural Development Programme
KVDA	Kerio Valley Development Authority
NDMA	National Drought Management Authority
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
ODA	Overseas Development Assistance
RAE	Rehabilitation of Arid Environments
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SNV	Stichting Nederlandse Vrijwilligers (Foundation of Netherlands Volunteers)
UNCCD	United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification
UNCED	United Nations Conference on Environment and Development
UN DESA	United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNEA	United Nations Environment Assembly
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
WFP	World Food Programme
WHO	World Health Organization
WMO	World Meteorological Organisation
WWF	World Wildlife Fund

Part I

Contextualising the Research

Introduction

Me: Are you going to COP26?

Julian: Nah. I've been invited. But what's the point? We go there and they don't talk to us. Or if they do, they don't listen to what we have to say.

I asked because I was – going to COP26 that is. In 2021, world leaders in government, industry, civil society and International Development met in Glasgow, Scotland for a climate change conference hosted by the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). The annual Conferences of the Parties (COPs) represent a critical moment in the calendar of the world's highest level of climate change governance: an opportunity to turn ideas into tangible policy and a blueprint for a more sustainable future for our planet. I met Julian on a PhD course a few weeks prior. As a Tanzanian pastoralist, Julian was invited to COP26 to represent indigenous and pastoralist voices in the negotiations. But he declined his invitation. He has attended global climate change summits on behalf of pastoralists before and felt like his voice was not being heard by world leaders. Convinced “they don't listen to what we have to say”, he feels sufficiently disillusioned by the continuing political marginalisation that he would rather not subject himself to the humiliation again.

Julian's disillusionment reflects a sense of exclusion that has previously been expressed by representatives of indigenous communities (cf. Comberti et al., 2019). Pastoralist representatives have been formally invited to participate in global governance processes since 2000 under the auspices of the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues. While this provides an important channel for pastoralist voices, the UNFCCC is yet to provide

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a representative position exclusively for pastoralists. Having this channel alone limits their representative inclusion and lobbying power to indigenous issues, forcing them to canvas for a shared agenda with other indigenous groups as a homogenised group (Comberti et al., 2019). Being underrepresented and ignored makes pastoralist representatives like Julian feel side-lined in agenda-setting and denied the chance to define issues and formulate solutions. This resignation struck a chord with me; it wasn't the first time I had witnessed such dissonance. As a young man, I left my home country of United Kingdom and spent over four years working for development organisations in Kenya, primarily in the agropastoral region of Baringo. I encountered numerous well-intentioned projects from international NGOs – many of which we will revisit near the end of this thesis – which simply ignored local voices. One that sticks out is an abandoned community centre built by the Japanese aid organisation JICA¹ in 2000. Following a rapid rural appraisal, local community members expressed a need for piped water for homes and businesses in the village. Instead, JICA built a community centre. It now lies empty.²

Julian's voice reanimated memories of countless such examples from Kenya and set the tone for my trip to COP26. Walking around the pavilions at the conference, I stumbled upon a talk by a rangeland consultant working for UNEP on the future of sustainable food systems. "Ladies and Gentlemen," I heard her address the audience of dignitaries, ministerial officials and Development experts, "Sustainable Pastoralism is a viable nature-based strategy. We need to give pastoralists the attention they deserve". I attended COP26 wanting to understand what needs changing in order for pastoralists – or any marginalised group – to believe that global development agendas will work to empower rather than continue to mar-

¹ Japan International Cooperation Agency.

² This building is in the village of Kampi ya Samaki where I used to live. JICA's rapid rural appraisals consisted of workshops and interviews before the project to ascertain local priorities. The informants identified access to water, firewood, veterinarian services and low standards of living as their main concerns (JICA 2002a, p. T-23). JICA also conducted workshops where they invited village members to discuss potential project ideas. The attendees chose projects ensuring clean drinking water as priority number one. After completing their studies, JICA established a Provisional Development Plan which proposed the construction of a multipurpose commercial centre (JICA, 2002b, p. 5-9).

ginalise them. Against, this backdrop, I interpreted her speech as a call to action for political inclusion: include pastoralists in climate talks, learn from their experiences and give them the space to represent their own interests because, presumably, they have something valuable to say.

Less than two weeks after COP26, I headed back to Baringo; and to one of the worst droughts in living memory. Livestock were dying and people were slipping into severe food insecurity. Here I met Matthew, who makes a living out of fattening cattle on grass he grows on a small farm and selling them at market. His farm is located next to a lake which has flooded and swallowed one third of his land. This has left him in the curious predicament of facing drought and flooding at the same time. But Matthew saw an opportunity in the encroaching floodwaters to keep his farm running and secure his livelihood:

The rains haven't come this year, so I decided to irrigate my field to stop it drying out. I've been pumping water to my field for two months now. It's really helped me irrigate my field whilst there have been no rains (Matthew).

Thanks to his innovative thinking, his livestock now have lush green grass to eat, and he can continue to make a living while the pastures around him are engulfed by the floodwaters or turn to dust. Pastoralists like Matthew demonstrate a history of resilient practices that can provide vital knowledge towards the sustainable development of their own economic systems as well as for global governance of climate change. They have proven they can make a living in some of the harshest of environments on the planet, from the arctic tundra to arid drylands. They have evolved a livelihood system, often over hundreds of years, to adapt to the environment and maximise scarce resources. If Matthew's actions anything to go by, this culture remains.

When I lived in Baringo, it became my home. I learnt the language, met my (now) wife, Linn, and made lifelong friendships. I worked part-time for a local development organisation called Rehabilitation of Arid Environments (RAE). For the past 40 years, they have been working with hundreds of agropastoralists, like Matthew, to rehabilitate land and help them manage farms. Their development philosophy has always been 'listen

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to the people', meaning they follow long-term socioeconomic trends and adapt their support in response to what they people tell them they need. This thesis takes me back to Baringo, to try and find answers to a question that niggled at me incessantly during my time living there: why don't others listen to the people? I believe pastoralists' lived experiences of adapting to a changing climate and the knowledge it builds on can offer important contributions to sustainable development agendas. I'm convinced, like the speaker I overheard at COP26, that they ought to be given "the attention they deserve".

Aim and Research Questions

This thesis aims to use cultural analysis to understand how climate change and modernisation affect pastoralist landscapes and livelihoods in contemporary Baringo, Kenya.³ This is done in order to understand how the Development Industry might be able to counter this state of affairs and facilitate transitions towards more sustainable, inclusive development. To this end, it asks a series of questions that build on one another and gradually construct an argument for incorporating pastoralist knowledge into sustainable development agendas for the future. In doing so, it asks the following questions:

1. What environmental, economic and political challenges do pastoralist communities in Baringo face and what are the historical processes which have created these conditions?
2. How are pastoralists adapting to cope with the impacts of poverty and climate change and how is this affecting processes of modernisation? What social institutions, knowledge systems and cultural practices do they draw on to strengthen the resilience of their livelihoods?
3. How has the International Development Industry influenced pastoral regions, and which role have local adaptations and knowledge systems had in different development projects?
4. It concludes by asking how pastoralists' knowledge about climate change and practices of resilience can best contribute to future sustainable development agendas.

³ Cultural analysis, modernisation and marginalisation are all complex concepts which will be discussed and defined in the following chapter.

Structure of the Thesis

This thesis is split into three parts. Part one contextualises the thesis in the broader research project and describes the research process. Part two offers a cultural analysis of the lived experiences of agropastoralists in Baringo. Part three analyses the role that the International Development Industry plays in shaping pastoralist landscapes.

Part one is split into two chapters. Chapter one defines the research fields in which this thesis is situated, namely Ethnology and Development studies. This thesis covers a number of research fields that are not commonly researched in European Ethnology including pastoralism, the political economy of rural Kenya and the Development Industry. As such, it is necessary to provide the reader with a certain amount of background information and context on these topics before the ethnological work can be approached. Chapter two provides a theoretical and methodological background to the study. It introduces and discusses the main theoretical frameworks and research methods used throughout the project.

Part two is split into three ethnographic chapters which construct a picture of the everyday life of Baringo's pastoralists. Chapter three depicts the social, ecological and economic context of present day Baringo. It describes the main livelihood challenges facing agropastoralists today and analyses their lived experiences of drought, flooding and ethnic violence. Chapter four takes a historical perspective and asks how things got so bad. It traces the major socioeconomic changes in Baringo over the past half century which have led to increased precarity and instability. Chapter five explores how agropastoralists have adapted to their increasingly challenging environment through the creation of a new mode of production in grass farming.

Part three switches focus to the International Development Industry. It explores how discourses and philosophies around resilience-building in this industry have shaped livelihoods and the environment in Baringo. Chapter six takes a temporary detour out of Baringo to study the global processes of Development. It explores how the industry has historically engaged with pastoralists and how this legacy continues to shape ideas around sustainable development and resilience-building today. Returning

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to Baringo, chapter seven explores how these ideas come to life in the form of Development projects and critically examines their impact on the local landscape, economy and culture. The thesis concludes in chapter eight with a discussion of potential pathways to more localised approaches to development.

Chapter 1: The Research Field

Researching the intersection of pastoralism and Development in Kenya

Built on ethnographic research conducted largely within a marginalised community in Kenya, this thesis explores the intersecting fields of pastoralism and Development. The intersection is found in the development projects that transform the landscapes, economies, social institutions and governance arenas. This chapter provides a background to these fields as well as the broader research project. It starts by describing some of the most important terms, concepts and places that are needed to understand the scope of the thesis; namely pastoralism, the International Development Industry and the region of Baringo. From there, it positions this project in two research traditions of Ethnology and Development Studies.



Image 1. Me interviewing Chela, a pastoralist from Baringo who runs her own grass farm. Photo: Osman Oleparmarin.

Background

There are around 200 million pastoralists in the world, living in diverse landscapes on every continent across the planet, from the drylands of East Africa to the highlands of central Asia and the Tundra of the Arctic Circle (Nori et al., 2005). Pastoralism is both a mode of existence that centres around raising livestock and a form of social life dictated by the values, practices and social institutions associated with the production of livestock (Galaty, 2015). It can also be understood as a social-ecological system, or a system within a specific geophysical boundary in which people, ecology and the physical landscape are inextricably linked. Pastoral systems are defined by the interdependent relationship between people, livestock and the landscape (Manzano et al., 2021). There are different forms of pastoralism which feature varying degrees of mobility, but they all centre around animal husbandry often in harsh ecological conditions. Nomadism involves migrating, sometimes continuously, in an irregular pattern in search of pasture. Transhumance involves a regular movement back-and-forth between grazing grounds in accordance with the seasons. Agropastoralism, which is the primary focus of this study, includes some form of mobility combined with growing crops.

Pastoralists typically reside in areas with seasonal fluctuations in rainfall and unpredictable vegetation periods. They respond by moving their herds to areas where vegetation is available to maximise the use of scarce resources available to them. The type of pastoralism practiced in an area tends to depend on the local ecological conditions. In the arid and semi-arid lands (ASALs) of East Africa, agropastoralists rear livestock as well as grow cash crops. On the expansive Mongolian Steppes and the deserts of the Sahel, nomadism is more common. And the Tundra of northern Scandinavia and Russia is home to reindeer herders. Pastoralist societies can be organised in different ways. In East Africa, they are typically organised by ethnic identity, with distinct ethnic communities occupying specific geographic spaces. Each community is delineated further by clans (extended family units); the clan being the primary unit of organisation of labour and land tenure (Kandagor, 2005). Both livelihood practices and community relations are governed by these social institutions. For example, traditionally, a council of

elders controls grazing patterns and access to resources with a clan as well as social relations within and between clans and cultural ceremonies and rituals such as marriages and age-set initiations (Spencer, 1965).

Pastoralism in the 21st Century

Pastoralists across the world often live in marginal spaces, exposed to poverty, disease, discrimination and violent conflict. 60% of rural communities reliant on livestock in Asia, Africa and Central South America live below the poverty line (Thornton, 2002). Pressures from increasing populations, climate change and land use changes mean resources in most pastoral spaces are drying up. Privatisation of formerly communal land to accommodate large monoculture farms, wildlife conservancies and smallholder farms is reducing the land available to pastoralists. Land being parcelled up and fenced-off also cuts off access to traditional migratory routes, making it harder for nomadic pastoralists to access seasonal pastures (Nori et al., 2005). More herders forced to graze on increasingly smaller areas of land leads to overgrazing and large swathes of pasture disappearing. On top of this, the environments pastoralists occupy are becoming increasingly more exposed to climate change. Across the world, more frequent floods, droughts and diseases are disrupting pastoralists' capacity to cope and exacerbating food insecurity. What's more, as pastoralist areas are often located in politically volatile regions and sensitive border zones, the lack of resources commonly fuels ethnic violence and conflicts.

Pastoralists across the world tend to share an experience of political and social marginalisation. As a minority in most countries (with a few exceptions such as Mongolia and Chad), they are often underrepresented in national political contexts, lacking representatives to advocate for their views and concerns. Their marginalisation leads to discrimination, lack of access to services and fuels tension. Demarcation of land borders (both within and between countries) ignores the boundaries of traditional pastoralist territories. In West Africa, national borders between Benin, Burkina Faso, Niger and Nigeria cut off well-established transhumance corridors (Timpong-Jones et al., 2023). In East Africa the Uganda-Kenya border cuts through the grazing territories of Karamoja pastoralists (Bainomugisha et

al., 2007). In Northern Europe, the vast homelands of Saami reindeers were cut up by national borders between Norway, Sweden, Finland and Russia (Seitsonen & Viljanmaa, 2021). Further, being geographically remote from the urban centres of the state, pastoralists often miss out on economic investments and education, leading to high rates of unemployment and low literacy. This can lead to disenfranchisement like in Ethiopia where the lack of opportunities increases young men's susceptibility to militia recruitment (Nori et al., 2005). Pastoralists often lack access to adequate healthcare because of their isolation. Healthcare inequalities are often exacerbated by social discrimination, with ethnicity, religious affiliation or lack of political connections creating barriers to access (Wulifan et al., 2022).

The precarity present in many pastoralist spaces has been driven by a history of political and economic marginalisation. In most postcolonial settings, pastoralism has been left out of mainstream economies and overlooked in national development strategies, considered too unproductive to merit investment and development (Haller et al., 2016). In many African nations, this exclusion started in colonial times and often continued following independence. Pinning their hopes on modernisation as the key to economic rural growth, postcolonial governments focused on agricultural models of production and invested heavily in technological solutions. With its focus on context specific knowledge, community relations, subsistence and customary land tenure systems, pastoralism was not considered compatible with a modern economy which prioritised individual land and asset ownership, legal superstructures governed by the state and a market-based economy. This led to increased poverty and exposure to climate change among pastoralist communities in these newly independent nations. In East Africa, social service provision was neglected by postcolonial governments, with missionary groups and NGOs left to fill the void. Political powerlessness has also led to them losing land to politically connected actors with wildlife, tourism and agricultural interests (Little et al., 2008).

Economic marginalisation of many pastoral regions has accelerated in the 21st century. In Kenya, for example, with globalization accentuating the reach of late capitalism and climate change, inequalities between the rich and poor are widening, instability is commonplace and exposure to climatic risks are the norm for many in rural areas, particularly pastoralists

(Opiyo et al., 2014). The global financial crisis in 2008 saw billions of dollars of capital flows to Kenya stop almost overnight (Devarajan & Kasekende, 2011). After recovering from this recession, it was hit once more by the Covid-19 pandemic which had a disproportionate financial impact on casual labourers and daily-wage earners (Were, 2020). The ongoing Russia-Ukraine War has increased the prices of fuel and food in Kenya and pushed over a million people over the poverty line (Breisinger et al., 2023). The country has also had to navigate frequent climate emergencies and increasing rates of desertification and deforestation. In just 20 years, 10% of Kenya's grasslands have been lost to degradation because of failed rains and overgrazing (GoK, 2016a). At the time of writing, Kenya is experiencing the worst drought in 40 years; following 5 consecutive failed rains, 4.1 million people in rural Kenya are facing acute food insecurity (ReliefWeb, 2022). This drought comes off the back of the 2019-20 locust outbreak (triggered by extraordinary cyclones in the Middle East) causing \$2.5 billion of crop damage (World Bank, 2022). The irreversible loss and damage from these climate emergencies have also compounded a migrant crisis on an unprecedented scale. Refugees fleeing the twin impacts of drought and war in neighbouring Sudan and Somalia have made Kakuma and Dadaab refugee camps in Northern Kenya into some of the world's largest (WFP, 2016). These impacts are compounded by poverty and lack of access to quality healthcare, which have been exacerbated by postcolonial political elites raiding the national coffers for personal gain.

The Agropastoral Landscape of Baringo, Kenya

This thesis is situated largely within Baringo County, an agropastoral region in Northern Kenya. At the heart of Baringo County, lies Lake Baringo which is a large body of alkaline water nestled between the Tugen Hills to the west and the Laikipia Plateau to the east. For the last 200 years, the area around the lake, known as the Baringo Basin, has been home to three communities of agropastoralists – Il Chamus⁴, Tugen and Pokot (Bollig,

⁴ The Il Chamus community are also known as Njemps. This name was assigned by the colonial administration. Now, the terms are used interchangeably and most people in the

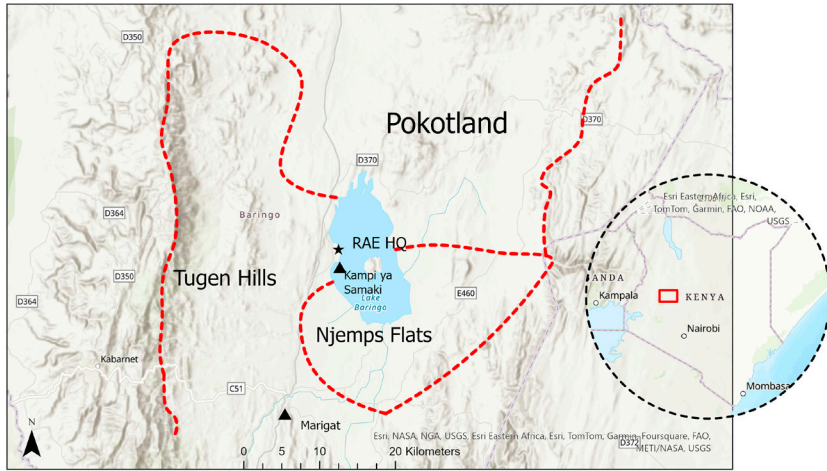


Figure 1. Map of the Baringo Basin, Kenya (ArcGIS Pro).

2016).⁵ Their home territories cut into the basin around the lake (see figure 1). For the past two centuries, the boundaries between the communities have remained relatively clear-cut but continually fluctuate as the communities vie for control over grazing lands (Anderson, 2002). The Tugen community have predominantly occupied the rocky escarpment that rises up to the Tugen Hills to the east of Lake Baringo (Kandagor, 1993). The landscape builds up towards the hills in a series of flat plateaus, punctuated by sheer cliff faces. Pokot herders live mostly on the open ranges to the North of Lake Baringo, known colloquially as *Pokotland*. This open land-

community self-identify as both. Throughout the thesis, I am using the term Il Chamus to refer to the people and the term Njemps to denote the geographical location (i.e. Njemps Flats). I make this designation on political basis, rather than because of a technical or scientific classification. I use Il Chamus out of respect, because they supposedly chose this name as a way to regain ownership of their cultural identity from colonial administrations. For more information, see Odhiambo (2016), *Il Chamus Versus the State*.

⁵ Anthropologically, the Pokot and Tugen communities are both classified as members of the Kalenjin tribe because they share similar linguistic traits, whereas the Il Chamus are a Maa speaking community and belong to the same linguistic grouping as the Samburu and Maasai. For one of the earliest anthropological texts to confirm these classifications, see Huntingford (1954) *The Southern Nilo-Hamites: East Central Africa Part VIII*.

scape stretches north to merge with the rangelands of Laikipia and Turkana. The Il Chamus people live mostly on the floodplains to the south of Lake Baringo, known as the Njemps Flats. They spread along the valley floor between the lake and the town Marigat, hemmed in by cliffs to the West and the Laikipia escarpment to the East (Odhiambo, 2016).

Historically, each of Baringo's ethnic communities had a slightly different take on agropastoralism, depending on the historical and ecological conditions. Ecologist Peter Little (1996) has shown that the Njemps Flats became home to the Il Chamus community in the 18th Century. Initially attracted by the possibility to fish and to use the lake water to irrigate farmland, they gradually settled. Over time, the permanently settled households established a system of sharing the pastures and coordinating the movement of their livestock. The swamps became an important source of grazing during droughts. Gradually, they became established as dry season pastures and the land further away from the lake became rainy season pastures (Little, 1996). Michael Bollig (2016) has identified that the Pokot community developed a specialised form of semi-nomadic pastoralism around the turn of the 19th century. This centred on the movement of cattle over larger distances in search of pasture and involved the practice of raiding to restock after losses. This practice was triggered after the losses from droughts or raids from other pastoral communities. Distinct family groups gradually consolidated under a shared ethnic identity through managing their herds collectively to protect against raids from neighbouring communities and increase their own effectiveness at raiding (Bollig, 2016). Around the same time, the Tugen community were predominantly settled in the Tugen Hills. They practiced agriculture and animal husbandry, prioritising agriculture because the highlands were more suitable to it. Daniel Kandagor (1993) has shown that a series of droughts in the early 20th century made agriculture in the Tugen Hills unviable for many and pushed a number of Tugen families towards the plains where they prioritised livestock herding as a way to cope with the harsh environment. They spread further to occupy the lowlands to the east of Lake Baringo following yet more droughts in the 1960s (Meyerhoff, 1991). Over time, families amalgamated into clans and divided the plains up among them (Kandagor, 1993).

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Modernisation in Baringo

Over the past 100 years, the county has been going through a drawn-out economic transition from a largely subsistence- and barter-based to a largely cash-based economy (Anderson & Bollig, 2016). As we will see in chapter five, this transition has occurred across several different eras, from colonial rule, through independence and the early days of postcolonialism and into the modern era of the 21st century. The colonial administration set this modernisation process in motion through legal and economic reforms. At the turn of the 20th century, for example, a ‘hut tax’ was introduced which was to be paid in cash, forcing pastoralists to find wage labour and sell their produce for cash (Kandagor, 1993). In the first half of the 20th century, schools were built and agricultural programmes and market centres emerged to facilitate the trade of livestock and grains (Little, 1987). Some communities were quicker to adopt the cash economy than others; by the 1940s, Tugen agropastoralists were participating widely in the money economy, trading cattle, millet and sorghum for cash as well as finding wage labour (Kandagor, 1993). Most Pokot herders, by contrast, retained a system of social exchange up to the 1980s and largely resisted the cash economy. By the 1990s, however, trading livestock for cash was commonplace and by the turn of the century, the market economy was ubiquitous. In recent years, Pokotland has seen the growth of a number of livestock markets such as Kenya’s second largest in Nginyang (Bollig, 2016).

Livestock and crops still dominate Baringo’s economy, contributing 58% of annual GDP. But today, they are predominantly produced for sale: in 2018, livestock contributed Kshs 2.9 billion, maize contributed Kshs 2.1 billion and beans contributed Kshs 951 million income to the county (GoK, 2019a).⁶ In Kenya as a whole, the livestock sector accounts for around 10% of the national GDP contributing almost \$1 billion of its production value (Nyariki & Amwata, 2019). Small hold pastoralists play a disproportionately large role in the livestock sector. Beef, the country’s biggest livestock product, is mostly produced by pastoralists in ASALs, with 75% of the country’s 18 million cattle (FAO, 2017) belonging to small

⁶ That said, livestock still retains important symbolic value as signifiers of wealth and status among all three of Baringo’s communities and barter still occurs on a small-scale.

hold herders (Nyariki & Amwata, 2019). While Baringo's cash economy has evolved mainly along the two forks of cattle and cash crops, grass is now offering a third fork. As I explore in chapter five, a growing number of agropastoralists are turning to grass farming to produce hay and private pasture fields for their livestock (Mureithi et al., 2010). The majority of these farms are located in the Njemps Flats and on the Tugen escarpment. Grass farming has been taken up less quickly within Pokotland, but in recent years it is starting to gain traction.

The region of Baringo is also somewhat of a hub for development projects. In the past half century, it has attracted numerous Development projects to boost the economy and tackle the degradation of the grasslands funded variously by multilaterals such as EU, World Bank, FAO and national development agencies like GIZ⁷ and JICA. Baringo has received projects to regreen the commons by replanting grass on large communal lands (Mureithi et al., 2010), initiatives to introduce foreign tree species to provide a source for firewood and fodder (Alvarez et al., 2019), irrigation infrastructure and investments to grow cash crops like maize and beans (Okuku, 2016) and large factories to convert invasive tree species into biogas (Ng et al., 2017). These projects will be the focus of chapter seven. The challenging climate, culture of innovation and prevalence of Development actors makes Baringo a good place to situate this research project.

The Development Industry

This thesis uses the term *Development Industry* as an umbrella term for a diffuse network of multilateral organisations, NGOs, government departments and civil society bodies, all of whom work to fight the causes of poverty and inequality, promote economic development and help the most marginalised communities cope with climate change. It is a \$200 billion a year industry whose funding comes primarily in the form of official Overseas Development Assistance (ODA) from Developed Nations – more commonly known as ‘global aid’ or even just ‘aid’ (Harcourt, 2022). I

⁷ Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (German Agency for International Cooperation).

borrow the industry concept from Development Scholar Arjan de Haan who argues that the Development world is best understood as an industry because it is a formal and professionalised branch of economic activity. “Although it uses public (tax payers’ and voluntarily donated) money, it disburses this in a professional way, with generally strict procedures, reporting and professional administrators, many of whom have a long-running career in international development” (De Haan, 2009, p. xi). Thinking of Development as an industry in this way helps to see the policies and practices of seemingly disparate organisations as part of a coherent whole which strategically directs the flow of finances.

Pasture Development is a sub-sector focusing specifically on the needs of the world’s 200 million pastoralists. They work to improve food security, capacity building, human rights, livelihoods, biodiversity and food systems infrastructure. Policies are shaped by multilateral organisations like FAO and WFP at their headquarters in Rome and New York and at world summits hosted in global capitals. The ideas come to life in the form of projects and interventions by international NGOs, relevant national ministries and grassroots organisations in the most remote and marginalised regions of the world. Collectively, the projects and policies of the Pasture Development sector intervene in the daily lives of pastoralists to shape their livelihood opportunities. They target livelihood practices centred around livestock production such as environmental management practices, the use of natural resources, mobility patterns, as well as trade and breeding technologies.

The ubiquity of the term *development* within this field can create confusion: it can refer to the industry itself, the activities of the actors within the industry, or the broad processes and conditions of social transformation within a particular region or country. To help avoid confusion, in this thesis I make a distinction between Development (with an upper-case D) and development (with a lower-case d), following the well-known distinction made by the Geographer Gillian Hart (Hart, 2001). I use *Development* to reference the industry and their action. I use the ordinary noun *development* to denote the wider patterns of economic and societal improvement. In this lower-case sense, development assumes some form of measurable progress in different arenas of social and

economic life according to a set of proxy indicators such as economic growth, life expectancy, poverty rates and literacy rates.

The Resilience Agenda

The International Development Industry is currently heavily influenced by the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, a global agreement signed by 193 countries in 2015 which “provides a shared blueprint for peace and prosperity for people and the planet, now and into the future” (ECOSOC, 2016). The 2030 Agenda, as it is colloquially known, is structured around the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), a set of 17 objectives intended to guide the world’s economic development in a manner that is equitable, just and prioritises the needs of the poorest and most vulnerable, all while protecting the planet from harmful climate change. With the goals explicitly designed to “shift the world onto a sustainable and resilient path” (UNGA, 2015, p. 1) resilience-building plays a prominent role in the SDGs and the 2030 Agenda. Recognising the vulnerability of the global poor to the effects of climate change, the agenda has a specific mandate to “build the resilience of the poor and those in vulnerable situations and reduce their exposure and vulnerability to climate-related extreme events and other economic, social and environmental shocks and disasters” (UNGA, 2015, p. 15). Accordingly, the Pasture Development sector endorses a resilience-building approach.

Interventions concerning pastoralists are often framed by resilience. The World Bank alone currently funds resilience projects to the tune of \$1.2 billion (IMF 2019). Of this, \$122 million directly targets pastoralist resilience in East Africa under the guise of the Regional Pastoral Livelihoods Resilience Project for Africa. This project explicitly aims “to enhance livelihood resilience of pastoral and agro-pastoral communities in cross-border drought prone areas” (World Bank 2020). The European Union fund a \$30 million project in Eastern Africa aiming to “enhance the food security, income and resilience of pastoral and agro-pastoral communities” (Europa, 2016, p. 2). The primary goal of these initiatives is to strengthen the economy’s livestock sector.⁸

⁸ A report by Government of Kenya and UNDP (2013) classifies Kenya’s pastoralists as

Resilience Discourses in Development

The philosophies behind the resilience agenda are known collectively as resilience-thinking. They join other development philosophies and ideas (such as participation, planning, conservation, settlement and diversification) as part of a wider web of sustainability discourses that inform the work of the Development Industry. Given its ubiquity in sustainable development, the notion of resilience is inherently vague: it has multiple definitions which are applied depending on the context. Following the distinction made by Political Scientist Phillippe Bourbeau (2018), there are at least two definitions of resilience present in the Development Industry's discourses. I shall call these two perspectives the *engineering* and *ecological* perspectives respectively, after the academic disciplines which birthed them. In this thesis, I engage with the different definitions of resilience in chapter six to explore ideas around the notion of sustainable pastoralism, a discursive construct developed by the Development Industry.

One of the earliest uses of the term comes from the world of engineering. The notion that certain physical materials like steel were more resilient than others was first developed at the turn of the 19th century. In this domain, resilience is understood as the ability to bend and not break, and emphasis is put on the persistence, endurance and robustness of a material. This perspective lends itself to a focus on economic systems and livelihoods. The resilience of welfare systems, infrastructures, social systems and authoritarian regimes have all been studied to ascertain their ability to bend and not break (Bourbeau, 2018). The ecological perspective emerged in the 1970s from the academic field of Ecology. The Ecologist C.S Holling championed a view of ecosystems that saw them as complex, nested systems in which the moving parts interconnect and interact (Walker & Cooper, 2011). A multitude of definitions and variations of resilience have since sprouted out of the ecological definition, but they all share a centrality of *equilibrium* and an emphasis on resilience at a systems level (Quinlan et al., 2016). In this context, resilience refers to equilibrium of the entire system – the ability of the system to

highly vulnerable. Baringo's pastoralists have a Climate Change Vulnerability Index of 0.45 which is higher than the national average.

absorb shocks and persist. It is understood as the adaptive capacity *of the system as a whole* to absorb disturbances and reorganise without changing to a qualitatively different state.⁹

Following the success of ecosystems thinking, Holling and his colleagues spread their influence beyond academia and into the realms of International Development and global policy through the Resilience Alliance, an influential consortium of environmental scientists. This spawned the Stockholm Resilience Centre, a powerful think tank that promotes resilience-thinking in environmental and development projects (Walker & Cooper 2011). The think tank's influence is far-reaching. According to their own website, they offer expert consultation to various UN bodies, act as key scientific contributors to WWF and have actively contributed to the construction of frameworks for conceptualising the SDGs (SRC, 2017). Incidentally, the SDGs explicitly incorporate an equilibrium approach to resilience: through SDG 2.4, they call for “sustainable food production systems and resilient agricultural practices... that help maintain ecosystems” (UNGA, 2015, p. 15).

Previous Research

This thesis evolves around Pastoralism in the context of sustainable development, with a cultural and post-colonial approach. It has its roots primarily in Ethnology but builds on research in several disciplines including Development Studies, Anthropology, Human Ecology, Political Science and Geography. The thesis has emerged from two research traditions: namely (i) ethnological research into the lived experiences of marginalized groups and (ii) research in the processes of development. This section provides an overview of the most important perspectives and findings in these two research traditions.

⁹ Bourbeau also identifies a third definition of resilience, which he calls *processual resilience*. In this view, resilience is understood as the process of adapting well in the face of adversity. Rather than an inherent quality the individual possesses, resilience is seen as a process that results from interactions with their environment.

Marginal Spaces

Broadly speaking, previous research (in Ethnology as well as other ethnographic traditions) understands marginal spaces, phenomena and people as existing at the edges/margins of society and its dominant development trends. I will elaborate on my understanding of marginal spaces in the next chapter. Staying with a broader definition for now, I position this thesis in relation to a tradition of ethnological studies carried out in marginal spaces. This tradition stretches back at least to the first half of the 20th century when European Ethnologists were interested in mapping and classifying the rural communities within their respective nation's borders. This geographical focus marked a disciplinary distinction from Anthropology, yet it shared a questionable relationship with the people it studied. Colonial era Anthropology was predominantly interested in looking at exotic peoples on the margins of the empire. The quintessential anthropological study involved fieldwork in a far-flung location to document the cultures of the exotic peoples that inhabited the colonies. If colonial Anthropology was a tool for empire-building, European Ethnology was a tool for nation-building, preoccupied with preserving national heritage. These traditional cultures – or *folk lives* as they were often referred to – were considered to carry the essence of the national culture. In Sweden, for instance, Ethnologists were employed in carrying out Nils Lithberg and Sigur Erixon's vision of mapping Swedish folk culture to build a record of national heritage out of these traditional folk cultures found in the rural margins of the country (Löfgren, 1996). These national culture-building projects had an international outlook, with a special interest in comparing the national contexts of other European countries. Swedish Ethnologists Sigurd Erixon, Åke Campbell and Gothard Gustafsson variously conducted comparative studies or referenced ethnological works on folk life in Lithuania, Italy, Netherlands, Belgium and Denmark (Gustavsson, 2014).

In a sense, this thesis continues a tradition of conducting research in marginal spaces which was started with these early Ethnologists and Anthropologists. Yet it does so by building on a more recent ethnological tradition of critically engaging with the themes of empire and nation-build-

ing which emerged out of the critical turn in the 1970s. Reflexivity on the part of Ethnologists and other ethnographers has pushed research towards more politically conscious themes and to a focus on the structures and processes that continue the social exclusion, discrimination and marginalisation of communities in these spaces (Löfgren, 1996). In the 1970-80s, European Ethnology was encouraged by the popularity of postmodernism to critically reflect on the marginalisation and othering which befell marginal groups in their respective national contexts such as immigrants, women and queer communities (Aria, 2023). At this time, the likes of Åke Daun, Karl-Olov Arnstberg and Tom G Svensson were conducting research in marginalised communities in Sweden and actively promoting political engagement (Richette & Daun, 2008). As pioneers in a newly politicised field of study, they documented discrimination against ethnic minorities such as Romany travellers (cf. Arnstberg & Goldman, 1974), the political struggles of industrial workers in Northern Sweden (cf. Daun, 1969) and the racialised barriers to political participation of Sami representatives (cf. Svensson, 1976). Similarly, outside the Scandinavian context, Alsmark (1979) analysed the social organisation and political struggles of marginalised herder communities in Corsica.

In the 1990s, following the acceleration of globalisation that came with late capitalism, Ethnology started to take a more international outlook, conducting global ethnographies which focused on the transnational processes that shape our world (cf. Linde-Laursen, 1995; O'Dell, 1997). A new approach to global ethnography emerged, inspired by a number of key texts proposing critical ethnographies of transnational governmentality (Ferguson & Gupta, 2002) and multi-sited ethnographies of the world system (Marcus, 1995). With this turn, European Ethnology started to look beyond the nation-state, towards the spaces marginalised groups occupy in a connected global system. Some ethnological research focused on the cultural processes that contribute to the production of marginalised spaces, emphasising the historical context (Jönsson, 1998), as well as social and political factors that lead to marginalisation (Åkeson & Grönberg, 1991; Ristilampi, 1995) and interactions between minority groups and the Swedish justice system (Svensson, 1991). Today, research of this ilk in Scandinavian Ethnology focuses on the marginal-

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ised spaces that women, refugees and ethnic minorities occupy. Cultural perspectives are used to highlight the intersectional structures of class, gender and political systems that increase women's vulnerability to drugs (Eleonorasdóttir, 2021) and rape (Nilsson, 2018). Others have analysed the cultural and political processes that hinder a city's accessibility for disabled persons (Hansson, 2019b) and increase exposure to sexual violence among unaccompanied refugee minors (Nilsson & Degerkvist, 2019). This thesis builds on this historical engagement with marginal spaces, adding a postcolonial perspective on how marginal spaces are created through development discourses.

Of special interest for the topic of this thesis is the ethnological research dealing with the cultural and political processes facing marginalised rural communities. Ethnological research focusing on modernisation in rural spaces in different parts of the world highlights many parallels to the social and cultural changes occurring in Baringo today. Ethnological research into rural livelihoods focuses on the role of modernisation, exploring the shifts in land use and changing social relations. This includes research on conflicts and tensions that arise between distinct cultural groups as land dynamics change (Saltzman, 2001). Cultural perspectives have investigated transnational capitalism's role in disrupting agricultural relationships with land (Ofstehage, 2018) and constructing traditional family farms as an alterity of modern rural livelihoods (Ioris, 2019). An ethnological lens has also been used to analyse the impact that the introduction of modernity to traditional, non-western rural communities has had on ethnic identity (Brison, 2003), husbandry practices (Kuoljok, 2020) and gender dynamics (Pauli, 2008) as well as the role formal education has played in promoting national cultural identities (Sun, 2022). Much of this research understands rural communities as embedded in a cultural landscape which is shaped by cultural flows from various local, national and global processes. I will elaborate further on the concept of cultural landscapes in chapter two. For now, it suffices to mention that this thesis contributes to this research field by exploring the role of global processes of sustainable development and modernisation in shaping cultural landscapes in a postcolonial setting.

Political marginalisation and the exclusion of minority groups from governance is another topic of this thesis. There is a growing body of research in Scandinavian Ethnology focusing on the state's historical role in the exclusion and discrimination of the Sami community, shedding light on the marginalisation of Sami knowledge, cultural practices and ways of being from political processes. This research often takes its analytical start point in the Swedish state's relationship with Sami communities, with the aim of "redressing the long-established power imbalance between Indigenous peoples and colonizers/settlers" (Daniels-Mayes & Sehlin MacNeil, 2019, p. 48). Cultural history has been applied to unpack the historical injustices of discrimination, political exclusion and economic marginalisation that came with the Sami-Sweden relationship (Lantto, 2014; Mörkenstam, 1999; Össbo, 2020). More recent research documents the narratives used to continue economic discrimination of indigenous communities today (Össbo, 2023; Sehlin MacNeil, 2015) as well as describing the cultural dynamics of decolonial movements working to redress historical injustice (Liliequist, 2015). Following this research tradition, this thesis hopes to shed light on the value of marginalized voices in Development by exploring the cultural and political processes that shape development from their standpoint on the ground.

Finally, my research is conducted in a geographic space which has been largely left alone by Ethnologists, particularly from European Ethnology. In contrast to the historical precedence of researching within national borders, since the turn of the 21st century there has been an increasing interest in conducting ethnographies outside of Scandinavia including USA (Gradén, 2003), South Africa (Gunnarson & Lundin, 2015; Högdahl, 2003), Moldova and Israel (Lundin, 2010) and Australia (Sehlin MacNeil, 2017). Despite this smattering of non-Scandinavian ethnographies, Scandinavian Ethnology's progress in representing communities across the globe is slow. Limited ethnological research has been conducted in Kenya or other African countries with pastoralist communities such as Ethiopia, Tanzania and Ghana. My research, therefore, provides an important contribution to this emerging, outward-looking tradition through its ethnographies of everyday life in Northern Kenya.

Landscape Research

This thesis builds on a tradition in Ethnology of studying landscapes which stretches back to Åke Campbell's (1936) seminal work *The Cultural Landscape*¹⁰. Landscapes have since been a topic of focus in a number of ethnological studies. Strömberg's (1992) *Where does a lake end?*¹¹ discusses the cultural and economic changes around Hornborgasjön throughout the 20th century. In *No Landscape is an Island*,¹² Katarina Saltzman (2001) explores how the landscape of Öland is created through historical, social and biological processes. Germundsson (2005) explores the political tensions shaping landscapes as opposing political forces compete for ownership of a landscape's cultural heritage. Although landscape research is not exclusively focused on marginalised regions, much of it tends to be situated in regions that can be considered marginalised such as Sápmi in Northern Sweden. Bartlett (2023) considers the role of modern technologies in shaping Sami relationships with the landscape. A synthesis report led by Johanna Bengtsson Ryberg reviews the impact of wind turbines on the people, landscape and ecology (Bengtsson Ryberg et al., 2012). Nutti and Kuoljok (2014) investigate the ways Sami youth create relations with places connected to their cultural heritage. Andersson and Cocq (2016) address how colonial state actors and present-day coal mine interests construct nature as a resource to be exploited.

Ethnology puts emphasis on lived experiences of landscape-based phenomena such as ecological crises. Kalb and Tak (2001) explore how floods in post-communist Poland of the 1990s wrought tensions between citizens and the state and eroded trust in the state. Sick (1997) documents techniques and strategies used by smallholders in Costa Rica to cope with an economic crisis resulting from global recessions. As new studies continue to explore this theme, they increasingly use a sustainable development frame to connect experiences of crisis to climate change. Tatar, Papzan and

10 Original full title in Swedish: *Kulturlandskapet: en etnologisk beskrivning med särskild hänsyn till äldre svenska landskapstyper*.

11 Original full title in Swedish: *Var Slutar en Sjö? Livsvillkor och naturuppfattning kring Hornborgasjön 1900-1990*.

12 Original full title in Swedish: *Inget landskap är en ö: dialektik och praktik i öländska landskap*.

Ahmadvand (2023) analyse how farmers in Iran experience water crisis primarily as an economic issue rather than an environmental one, stressing how it shapes their agricultural practices and economic decision-making.

The temporality of the landscape is another well-discussed topic in Ethnology and Anthropology. The anthology *Nature, Temporality and Environmental Management* (2017) offers perspectives from Scandinavia and Australia on, among other things, how the temporality of natural objects such as rivers, grasslands and trees are embedded into the land management practices of rural and indigenous communities across different rural landscapes. Ween and Lien (2016) argue for the relevance of time in the conservation of grassland landscapes. In the same issue, Cooke (2016) analyses how rural landscapes in Australia and Norway are enacted by legal institutions and how this affects future imaginaries of environmental management. Connected to temporality, speed is a topic which a number of Ethnologists have worked with. In discussing smuggling, Nilsson (2014) demonstrates how speed can destabilise borders. Comparably, Jönsson (2005) explores how high speed is central to modern urbanity, while Stancheva (2018) explores how slow food movements are reflexive attempts at protecting rural landscapes and ecosystems. Similarly, Murayama and Parker (2012) focus on slow tourism in rural economies.

My research contributes to the growing tradition of landscape research and builds on many of the themes that are typically tackled by Ethnology such as marginalisation, temporality, climate change and natural resource management. It also expands the research field by exploring pastoral landscapes in regions that have previously received little attention.

Development Studies

Academia has been engaging with the Development Industry since its conception in the aftermath of World War Two.¹³ In the latter half of the twentieth century Development Studies grew out of the discipline of

¹³ Academic research has provided both scholarly commentary and applied input in the Development Industry's evolution. In this section, I am focusing only on its role as scholarly commentary.

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Economics, providing economic theories and frameworks to mediate relations between industrialised nations and the so-called *Third World*, including many newly independent postcolonial nations (Chan, 2016). Inspired by this decolonisation process, the field itself started to incorporate more voices critical of the Development Industry and the rationalising of Development (Andrew, 2006). A series of landmark studies have set the tone for critical reflection. They trace the routes of development thinking in Western worldviews (Rist, 2014), critique the assumptions behind mainstream development theory from a subaltern perspective (Kothari, 2019) and shed light on the development mechanisms used by Developed nations to maintain power (Escobar, 2011). The field now includes Anthropologists, Political Scientists and recently Ethnologists providing critical reflection on the practices, discourses and structures that maintain this industry.

The main focus of ethnological research engaging with sustainable development has been to highlight the ways discourses and practices of Development are embedded in culture. Like many ethnological works, this thesis approaches humans as cultural beings, exploring the structures, practices and discourses that shape their lives. Given it is such a broad concept, a cultural perspective is deployed in different ways to investigate, understand and critically engage with development. Culture is understood as both a lens for questioning the structures of the Development Industry and a tool that can be used to further the sustainable development of communities (Soini & Birkeland, 2014). Discursive critiques have deconstructed (Soini & Birkeland, 2014) and explored the normative aspects of sustainable development discourses (Nordin, 2016). Structural critiques have reviewed the cultural processes of Development governance by examining the formation of discursive categories of cultural heritage (Hafstein, 2018) and sustainability (Birkeland et al., 2018), as well as critically examining the unintended consequences for gender dynamics of top-down development (Tandon, 2019). Ethnographic studies have shed light on how Development agents *do* Development work and emphasised the cultural praxes of the Development Industry. This includes how NGOs and Civil society organisations manipulate moral discourses to assert political influence (Bornstein & Sharma, 2016), the ritual practices that facilitate diplo-

macy at global governance summits (Irwin & Smith, 2019), as well as the strategies of resistance adopted by recipients of top-down development projects (Welker, 2012).

Other research affords culture a mediating role that can guide efforts towards sustainable development. In this instrumental sense, cultural practices, values and contexts are framed as a resource for local and regional development, providing the necessary means to ensure a specific group of people are able to develop sustainably (Soini & Dessein, 2016). The role of indigenous and local knowledge in sustainable development is a growing field in Ethnology. The Commission on Indigenous Knowledge and Sustainable Development is a group of researchers affiliated to the International Union of Anthropological and Ethnological Sciences. They document culturally-specific indigenous knowledge, explore opportunities for it to contribute to the sustainable development of local economies and critically assess the barriers to participation in Development governance structures (Rudnev, 2015). Members of the commission have documented the use of indigenous technologies for promoting rural livelihoods (Gefu, 2001) and the benefits of indigenous medicinal practices (Sebestyen, 2003). Others have explored the potential value of cultural traditions in preserving knowledge and utilising indigenous knowledge for community development (Roberts, 2019).

Livelihood Resilience

Within the sphere of Development Studies, there is a growing body of research on resilient rural livelihoods. This research tends to adopt an approach that is “centred on people as the main actors within adaptation policy and practice, underpinned by rights and justice and engaged with wider development processes” (Tanner et al., 2015, p. 23). In short, it puts the attention on the person and their attempts to build a livelihood. It assumes that the individual is at the centre of an interconnected web of socioeconomic, ecological, cultural, political and technological systems. The emphasis, therefore, is on understanding people as located *within* – not passively dominated by – these various systems. All these different factors play a part in shaping the livelihoods of the individual as she

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navigates the interconnected web that they form around her in her daily life. Researchers have provided alternative definitions (Tanner et al., 2015), proposed research approaches (Quandt, 2018), indicator frameworks (Speranza et al., 2014) and methodologies (Ayeb-Karlsson et al., 2016) for measuring resilience. The focus of this research field includes strategies to increase livelihood resilience (Mavhura, 2017), economic determinants of resilience (Quandt et al., 2019), the impact of natural disasters (Fang et al., 2018) and policy options for improving resilience (Shiferaw et al., 2014).

Cultural perspectives on livelihoods resilience have started to emerge in recent years. This research belongs to a growing movement that questions the assumption that resilience shares the same attributes across distinct contexts. It emphasises the context-specific nature of phenomena and asks: what does it mean to have a resilient livelihood in *this* context? It looks at the context-specific challenges that marginalised communities face which increase their vulnerability to climate variability (Obrist, 2003) and increase the insecurity of their livelihoods (Lin & Chang, 2013). Within this movement, an everyday life perspective also attempts to understand the cultural meanings of the practices and strategies that inform livelihood resilience (Marschke & Berkes, 2006). It focuses on the practices, perceptions and habits that people draw on to navigate challenges, find ways to adapt and thrive, as well as the role of tradition in sustaining livelihoods (Daskon, 2010). Ethnographic research has also explored the culturally specific sustainable practices that individuals adopt in their daily life (Hämeenaho & Wollin, 2020; Teuber et al., 2017) and actions people take to live a sustainable life (Ferenčuhová, 2022).

Studying Development in a Pastoralist Context

Research at the intersection of Pastoralism and Development has been going since the 1970s when the Development Industry itself started to take a serious interest in pastoralism (Scoones, 2020). The Institute of Development Studies at Sussex University in United Kingdom was a pioneer in establishing this research field and has continued to play a key role in defining the field through a critical engagement with the process-

es of development covering a range of themes including pastoral livelihoods, social institutions, climate change, food security, conflict and governance. These themes are addressed from multiple disciplines including Political Science, Anthropology, Development Studies and Geography, but what they share is a common “tradition of grounded field research in marginal pastoral areas” (Scoones, 2020, p. 1). With its tradition of researching marginal spaces, Ethnology is well-placed to contribute to this interdisciplinary field. Yet it has been relatively absent from the field to date, in part because of a lack of attention for pastoralism. Other than a few outliers in Ethnology (cf. Alsmark, 1979; Janzen, 2005), pastoralist cultures have tended to receive more attention from our disciplinary cousins in Anthropology departments. What’s more, Anthropology has been much more engaged in research connected to development in Africa and America, while the focus of Ethnology has typically been more on documenting and possibly preserving pastoralism in a European context. Classical ethnological texts in Sweden, for example, often focused on a form of agropastoralism called *fäbodkultur*¹⁴ (cf. Campbell, 1936; Lidman & Nyman, 1965).

Ethnology is arguably best defined by its shared methodology and perspective rather than an empirical field (Öhlander, 2011).¹⁵ There may be some themes, cultures or topics that are more popular than others, but Ethnologists study a broad array of fields. Its strength lies in applying its methods and providing an alternative perspective to different fields by focusing on cultural processes as they are experienced as part of daily life. This thesis hopes to provide examples of the role Ethnology can play in the interdisciplinary field of Development Studies but also in research concerning sustainable development more generally. The intersection of pastoralism and Development is inherently connected to globalisation and cross-cultural interactions through the flow of ideas, financing and people around the world to facilitate sustainable development. As such, this thesis follows the ideas of sustainable development as they enter the marginal spaces where pastoralists live. Being home to several pastoralist communi-

¹⁴ Sometimes translated to English as ‘summer farm culture’.

¹⁵ Without denying, of course, that the disciplines methods and perspectives change over time.

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ties as well as a number of development projects, Baringo offers a good location to conduct research at the intersections of pastoralism and Development. From this standpoint, at the bottom of the Development Industry and the edges of a global economy, it hopes to provide new, cultural perspectives that come from the margins to inform and enlighten the field. Throughout, it identifies pathways towards more inclusive, locally driven development agendas which build on the knowledge, existing modes of production and ways of life of people in the margins.

Useful Research

The choice to focus on marginalised voices in Development is also inspired by a political motivation to elevate the voices and knowledge of pastoralists in the governance structures of Development. This motivation builds on an ethnological tradition of prioritising neglected voices. As researchers who often work with marginalised or under-represented communities, many Ethnologists consider it an important part of their work to benefit society. In the book *Fältetnologi*, Arnstberg (1997) suggests that Ethnology has a history of what he calls *useful research* (*nyttig forskning*). Broadly conceived, useful research can be understood to include a variety of different forms of socially beneficial research, such as scholar activism and participant action research as well as applied and solution-oriented research. Swedish Ethnologists have been actively engaging politically since the 1930s when a group of Ethnologists created international associations to drown out Nazi-backed research (Garberding, 2012). Despite these early beginnings, the 1970s can be considered the highpoint of interest in public engagement, activism and an inclination to use knowledge to support the communities we research. As Ethnologists O'Dell & Willim note, this was a special time in Swedish academia:

Influences from American Anthropology and French cultural theory (from scholars like Michel Foucault and Pierre Bourdieu) captured the imagination of a new younger generation of Ethnologists who even began using their work to provide a voice to weaker groups in society (O'Dell & Willim, 2014, p. 4).

Following in the footsteps of these earlier generations of activist scholars, there is a community of Scandinavian Ethnologists continuing the tradition of prioritising socially beneficial research. Conducting research in marginalised communities, they endeavour to align their academic work and political ideals. This can come in the form of engaging intensely in public debates (cf. APF, 2019 on Katarzyna Herd); attending workshops and panel debates on topic-related policies (cf. IMS, 2019 on Gabriella Nilsson); working directly with medical practitioners (Hansson & Lindh, 2018); and shaping research and education agendas to address the needs of marginalised groups (cf. Umeå, 2011 on Britta Lundgren) and to encourage more inclusive societal policies (Hansson, 2019a). Their scholar activism can be understood as a commitment to what Routledge & Derickson (2015) have called a *politics of resourcefulness*:

This entails commitments to channel the resources and privileges afforded to academics for advancing the work of nonacademic collaborators; designing research explicitly to ask and answer questions that nonacademic collaborators want to know; and engaging in research that explores barriers to sustained and active participation and activism (Routledge & Derickson, 2015, p. 391).

Ethnologists are uniquely positioned to contribute to improving society for the most marginalised. Working closely with the communities they study assures the veracity of their knowledge while their academic status legitimises their role as a social authority. Ethnology is, thus, well-placed to explore what those generally considered in the margins of development can tell us about sustainable development and how the social cannot be separated from issues of land, production, climate and technology. Following Ethnology's tradition of political engagement, this thesis is driven by a politics of resourcefulness, aligning to the ideal of redirecting both research and Development agendas to focus on the needs and experiences of the least represented.

This thesis also builds on an emerging tradition of applied scholarship in Ethnology. A handful of Ethnologists have integrated consultancy work for external (non-academic) clients into their research agendas (e.g. spas

cf. O'Dell & Willim 2011, O'Dell 2010; regional tourist boards cf. Jönsson 2008; and art projects cf. O'Dell & Willim 2011). This tradition has been entrenched in recent years through the establishment of applied research education such as Lund University's Masters in Applied Cultural Analysis, which specialises in adapting ethnographic research to solve problems for corporations, public institutions and NGOs. Graduating from this programme in 2018, I follow a growing number of doctoral students with training in applied cultural analysis who have since conducted projects with an applied approach (Eleonorasdottir, 2021; Liu, 2023; Martin, 2020; Mirsalehi, 2024; Wiszmeg, 2019). As a PhD candidate in Lund University's Agenda 2030 Graduate School, this project continues this tradition by applying research to questions of sustainable development. This thesis contributes to this research field by putting the Development Industry at the centre of modernisation processes and exploring what might be referred to as developmentscapes in shaping marginalised landscapes.

Finally, I think it is important to note that with Ethnology's lack of geographical interest in African countries (with the exception, perhaps, of South Africa (cf. Högdahl, 2004; Lundin, 2010)) there has been a parallel lack of interest in theoretical perspectives originating in these countries. Even with the postcolonial turn, African perspectives have been overlooked with Orientalist and Indian theorists such as Edward Said (cf. Radtke, 2005), Arjun Appadurai (cf. Wiklund, 2016) and Gayatri Spivak (cf. Johansson, 2011) gaining more attention. Ethnology can be praised for its engagement with a broad group of theoretical perspectives. Nevertheless, it has tended to draw on theoretical perspectives from European thinkers.

Following feminist theorist Sarah Ahmed, I understand citation as a political practice. Ahmed tells us that "citation is how we acknowledge our debt to those who came before" (2017, p. 15). It explicitly shows whose ideas and theories we lean on to build our own perspectives. For Ahmed, actively citing thinkers outside of the mainstream canon is a method for establishing more just forms of intellectual practice. Where possible, I have endeavoured to cite works written by African researchers which have historically been absent from academic publications. With her pioneering book, *Southern Theory*, Raewyn Connell (2007) shows that theories written by academics based in European research institutions typically inform

a view of the world that is rooted in European modes of thinking so reproduce European ways of understanding the world – they are, in a word, Eurocentric. Equally, indigenous African theories are informed by the social contexts in which they are produced, suggesting they may offer a more intuitive interpretation of social realities in African contexts. In response to the dearth of African perspectives in Ethnology this thesis draws on a number of theories from African thinkers in its cultural analyses. This includes Archie Mafeje's (1991) theories of social formations grounded in the lives of pastoralists, Achille Mbembe's (2001) political economy of postcolonial African states, Samir Amin's (1974) postcolonial world systems analysis and V.Y Mudimbe's (1988) analysis of the formations of knowledge and discourses on Africa. I engage with these marginalised African thinkers to introduce new theories and perspectives to the discipline of European Ethnology.

Chapter 2: Theory & Method

The theoretical and methodological toolbox

This chapter discusses the theory and methods used to conduct the cultural analysis found in this thesis. As researchers, the fields we study, the questions we choose to explore, the material we choose to collect (and ignore) and the way we interpret them are always informed by a specific lens, or way of understanding the world. This chapter discusses the lens through which I choose to see Baringo's pastoral culture, engage with questions of sustainable development and construct this research project. It starts with a discussion of the most important theoretical perspectives I have taken with me when framing the research questions and analysing the



Image 2. Me and co-researcher, Joseph, comparing interview notes at the farm of a dairy farmer in Baringo. Photo: Osman Oleparmarin.

materials gathered. From there, it describes these materials and outlines the methods I used to collect them. It ends with a reflexive discussion of my choice of theoretical perspectives, methods and field site.

Theoretical Framework

In order to explore the intersection of pastoralism and Development from a grounded perspective, this thesis uses a theoretical framework which draws on several different theoretical traditions. The most important theories are presented below. They include postcolonial perspectives as well as theories of cultural landscapes and cultural flows.

Postcolonial Perspectives

Postcolonial theory claims that it is impossible to conceive of the globalised world we all inhabit without reference to the historical processes of colonialism. It concerns the political, social and economic processes which led to the marginalisation of colonised spaces and continue to shape their lived experiences today. Postcolonial perspectives tend to be critical and question, often from below, where certain ideas come from and how political processes impact the lived experiences of those who continue to suffer the effects of empire-building. While postcolonial perspectives have their roots in anticolonial thought (cf. Césaire, 1955; Fanon, 1963; Fanon & Markmann, 1967; Memmi, 1957), the postcolonial turn in academia began in earnest in the 1970-80s, with the likes of V.Y. Mudimbe (1988), Edward Said (1978) and Gayatri Spivak (1988), who critiqued the othering that they saw happening in North-South relations. They saw their task as exposing ideas emanating from Europe about the postcolonial world which exoticized, belittled, or marginalised non-Western ways of being. It has since expanded to cover a broad array of focuses including aesthetic representations in literature, philosophy and art; the history of nation states and transnational processes of globalisation; justice; and reimagining politics and ethics. In this thesis, I draw on the ideas of two influential postcolonial scholars: V.Y. Mudimbe and Achille Mbembe. Firstly, I draw on Mudimbe's ideas on discourses

of alterity to understand how the Development Industry engages with and influences pastoralist culture. Secondly, I merge Mudimbe's ideas on marginality with Mbembe's concept of the postcolony, to conceive of Baringo as a postcolonial marginal space.

Discourses of Alterity in Development

In his seminal work, *The Invention of Africa*, Mudimbe argues that the term Africa is a construct of European history. Africa and by extension, African ways of being, have been constructed as different to – and less than – European ways of being (1988). Mudimbe draws inspiration from Foucault (1971) who argues that discourses are so much more than just a form of communication; they are ways of representing knowledge about a particular topic. The particular way in which knowledge is presented and constructed as a discourse actively shapes the social world to which it refers. Discourses have the capacity to enable and constrain people's conduct and are, therefore, bound up with power. A discourse governed by people in positions of authority has the capacity to regulate conduct more so than others: it gives them the power to allow and constrain what can be said, by whom, where and when (Foucault, 1971). The Development Industry can be understood as what Mudimbe calls a “power-knowledge political system” (1988, p. 16). Given the political influence of the Development Industry on the livelihoods and ways of life of its recipients, its discourses determine what Mudimbe calls the “conditions of possibility” (1988, p. ix) for the development of economic and social life in the pastoralist communities where it intervenes. The ideas and knowledge systems such as resilience-thinking inform the practices, governance structures and financial flows of the Development Industry. These discourses regulate who is classified as a subject of development, where investments are made, which economic infrastructures are established in a region, as well as how community life is governed.

However, where Mudimbe departs from Foucault is in stressing the importance of epistemological contexts of discourses. For Mudimbe, “what the notion of conditions of possibility indicates is that discourses have not only sociohistorical origins but also epistemological contexts” (Mudimbe, 1988, p. ix). Discourses have specific origins and a specific character which

influence the way they regulate social and economic life. Development discourses are rooted in Western epistemes, even by African scholars and Experts (because they're typically educated in the West or frame their references in Western thought systems). Epistemological ethnocentrism leads to and reinforces alterity - classifications of Africans as something other and inferior to Europeans. This is traced back to the enlightenment. Art, science and political science constructed an image of Africans as similar but different. They were seen as inferior beings in need of civilisation. They were on a development trajectory toward the apex of humanity – European man – but had a long way to go. Anything African – culture, art, society, democracy, economy – was considered underdeveloped.

In reversing the othering process to reflect back on the imagination of the West, Mudimbe is exposing the myth of alterity and shedding light on the conditions it has created. Applying this approach to the Development Industry allows us to see what Mudimbe calls the conditions of possibility that allow certain views to be considered legitimate, objective and scientific. Ideas of alterity are still prevalent in global discourses on Africa today, shaping the epistemological frames of inference of global political powers today. Because they belong to those in global power (i.e. those with capacity to steer global capital flows), these ideas are bound up with political power and inform institutional practices (hence the term knowledge-power). As a legacy of colonialization, these narratives on Africa determine the conditions of possibility for African societies. They disproportionately shape the African continent and the lived experience of African populations, “producing marginal societies, cultures and human beings” (Mudimbe, 1988, p. 4).

In this thesis, Mudimbe's ideas on alterity are used to explore the history of the development narratives that inform development projects, specifically those implemented in Baringo. They are also used to understand the roots of the ideas that exclude pastoralist knowledge from participating in the political processes that govern the Development Industry. With these ideas, I hope to shed light on the colonial logic that is inherent in the Development Industry and which continues to shape rural Africa today. Tracing the ideals of modernisation, development and progress back to Western modes of thinking, illuminates how they have exacerbated poverty, conflict and cultural dispossession in Kenya.

Postcolonial Marginal Spaces

Mudimbe understands the immediate world in which rural Africans live their daily lives as a *marginal space* - a space in-between the 'traditional' sociocultural systems of the past and the "projected modernity of the future" (1988, p. 5). The civilising mission of colonialism sought to disintegrate traditional modalities and replace them with modern ones in order to bring Africans from a state of *underdevelopment* to one of *development* (Mudimbe, 1988, p. 5). What this image creates is a new formation of social experience which Mudimbe calls *marginality*. Rather than being a step on the evolutionary journey towards development, marginality is the de facto new experience of modernity for many in Africa.

According to Philosopher, Achille Mbembe, this marginal space is situated in a political context called the postcolony (2001). Modernisation (i.e. the pursuit of modernity) has its roots in colonialism; for most African nations, independence happened over half a century ago and the postcolonial era is now as long as colonial rule.¹⁶ The political structures of the postcolony have evolved into their own entity which bring their own challenges and instabilities. It is important to stress, with Mbembe, that Western ideas from the past are not alone in shaping the postcolony; they are merely one of the multiple, entangled dynamics and material culture which are variously global/indigenous, historical/present, private/public, that intertwine to create the original systems and social formations that define postcolonial systems. The legacy of 'traditional' social hierarchies, post-colonial independence ideologies and contemporary autocracies co-mingle with global financial flows, international legal structures, climate change and the materiality of natural disasters, weapons and technology to produce social formations across the continent and diaspora defined by a logic of entanglement.

¹⁶ By this I mean that the time that these countries have had indigenous leaders is the same as they were formally run by colonial administrations. Kenya for example, was a British colony for 68 years from 1895-1963 (first called the East Africa Protectorate and then the Kenya Colony). It has now been independent for 61 years. With this claim, it is not my intention to ignore or negate the historical influence of colonialism and colonial projects which stretch back to the 17th century and have their roots in the slave trade.

Combining Mudimbe's and Mbembe's ideas, everyday life of pastoralism can be read as carried out in this marginal space. In the postcolonial era, marginality reigns: inequalities between the rich and poor are widening, instability is commonplace and exposure to climate shocks is the norm for many. Following Mbembe, life in these areas is defined by disturbance, instability and absence. The postcolony in the 21st century is a different place to what it was when Mbembe was writing in the 1990s. Despite this, it is still relevant to understand Kenya (and by extension, Africa) as being in the postcolonial epoch because disturbance, instability and absence are arguably still the primary social constraints of life in the 21st century. Rather than drastically changing social dynamics, the hyper-connectedness of globalisation which has accelerated exponentially in the last three decades is accentuating the instabilities, inequalities and uncertainties experienced by Kenya's pastoralists. This is exemplified by Russia's invasion of Ukraine sending fuel and food prices in Kenya skyrocketing. The global economic downturn has been felt acutely in East Africa, fuelling further food insecurity, an increase in refugees entering Kenya and violent protests to a tax hike implemented to control spiralling debt. Rural communities, in particular, have been carried into the global economic system but denied the economic resources required to make a decent living in it with dignity. What is unique to the postcolonial African experience, then, is the mixing of *specific* forms of absence. The traditions of the past and the imagined future as a developed society are both unattainable: but equally, the rising inequalities created by present-day postcolonial political structures are creating extreme levels of poverty.

But it is important to stress, with Mbembe, that things are not all bad. The conditions that create marginal spaces also bring about, almost as a question of survival, a culture of resilience which fosters innovation, flexibility and adaptability. Inspired by this view on marginal spaces, this thesis wants to pay attention not only to how marginalization occurs, but also what happens within the marginalized spaces. Which strategies for resilience are developed and practiced and if and how can these be seen as pathways to a different and more resilient future, both within and beyond Baringo? These features are integral to pastoralists' ability to survive and thrive in hostile environments.

Cultural Landscapes and Cultural Flows

This thesis sheds light on how the various cultural processes of modernisation and sustainable development converge in the landscape of Baringo to shape the land and livelihoods of the agropastoralists living there. To this end, it looks at Baringo through the theoretical framework of cultural landscapes. The notion of a cultural landscape was first introduced to Ethnology by Åke Campbell in 1936. "Through human habitation and cultivation," he wrote, "the natural landscape has been shaped into a cultural landscape with settlements, villages and cities" (Campbell, 1936, p. 5).¹⁷ Landscapes are shaped through the productive labour of individuals, families and social groups who inhabit it to reflect their lifestyles, cultural practices and modes of production:

In the way they shape their landscape (housing, subsistence, etc.), social groups strive for or are driven to express and realise their cultural, economic and political ideas in the landscape. It then becomes the task of the Ethnologist... to analyse these ideas more closely (Campbell, 1936, pp. 36-37).¹⁸

I find the notion of a cultural landscape intuitively helpful for analysing the spatial and cultural changes in Baringo. After Campbell, generations of Ethnologists have developed the concept of cultural landscapes further. Katarina Saltzman, for example, sees landscapes as "a complex and multifaceted process that takes place on many levels at the same time. With this approach, landscape becomes an analytical peephole into the border zones between nature and culture, mental and material, local and global" (Saltzman, 2001, p. 61).¹⁹ A landscape is the result of a dialogue between humans

¹⁷ Translated from the original Swedish: "Genom mänsklig bebyggelse och odling har av naturlandskapet formats ett kulturlandskap med bygder, byar och städer."

¹⁸ Translated from the original Swedish: "människogruppen i sin landskapsbehandling (bebyggelse, hushållning etc.) strävar efter eller drives till att i landskapet uttrycka och realisera sina kulturella, ekonomiska och politiska idéer. Det blir sedan en etnologisk... uppgift att närmare analysera dessa idéer".

¹⁹ Translated from the original Swedish: "Landskap är ett komplex och mångfasetterad process som försiggår på många nivåer samtidigt. Med detta synsätt blir landskap ett analytiskt titthål in i gränzonerna mellan natur och kultur, mentalt och materiellt, lokalt och globalt".

and the so-called natural environment. The two are continually interacting, influencing one another and co-constructing a cultural landscape. As people live in a place, they shape the physical features of the landscape, but their social and economic relations are also shaped by the environment itself. As Saltzman stresses, this is a multifaceted process. Economic relations, social formations, political dynamics, ecological conditions, geological features of the environment and animals (both wild and domesticated) all play a role in shaping a landscape.

Frida Hastrup further emphasises the political dimensions of landscapes. How the physical landscape has been shaped through human intervention is heavily influenced by political ideas regarding resource use:

When looking at a place that has been drastically altered by human interventions, it becomes clear that what counts as a natural resource continuously shifts along with the political-ecological projects that are meant to tap them (Brichet & Hastrup, 2018, p. 9).

What counts as valuable natural resources that deserve investment and management is a politically contingent question, influenced by shifting political winds at local, national and global levels. Different resources are managed at different times in history and prioritised, by different stakeholders, according to perceived needs and ambitions.

The multiple human-nature interactions relevant to this thesis are perhaps best captured by the term entanglement. Cultural landscapes are produced by the multiple, entangled processes flowing within and through a physical location. A pastoralist landscape, for example, is continuously evolving through the multiple interactions between the various processes. Economic and social relations split the grasslands into community-run pastures, while seasonal fluctuations dictate the movement of livestock throughout these pastures between dry and rainy season paddocks and animal grazing patterns shape the grassland ecosystem by determining the balance of vegetation. Political marginalisation is further woven into these processes. The project of modernisation pursued by postcolonial governments, for example, prioritised agriculture which promoted the commodification of natural resources as crops. Because of the low productivity of pastoralism and the harsh envi-

ronment's unsuitability to intensive agriculture, successive governments have neglected pastoral regions, relegating them to the margins of the economy. Yet, even on the margins, the pressure to join to market economy and pursue economic growth has encouraged the intensive farming of grass and its conversion to a commodity. In short, the continual interaction between these various economic, political and ecological processes simultaneously shapes the landscape *and* the lives of the people living within it by determining their economic opportunities and social structures.

The world today is an inherently global place and, as such, cultural theories today cannot ignore the role of globalisation. The cultural landscape that Campbell studied in the 1930s was already affected by globalization. Imported fertilizers from Peru and Norway and the competition from cheap grains produced in USSR and North America had already made a severe impact on the cultural landscape in Sweden. However, in *Modernity at Large*, Appadurai stresses that "cultural transactions between social groups in the past have generally been restricted, sometimes by the facts of geography and ecology" (Appadurai, 1996, p. 27). The footprint of globalization, he reminds us, has multiplied exponentially in the last hundred years. Given the effort and resources required to cross vast spaces such as seas, deserts and mountains, interactions between distant cultures were restricted and cultural landscapes were more fixed than they are today. With the advent of globalisation, new mechanical and information technologies have significantly increased the speed at which once-isolated groups can interact. Ideas, technology and finances from all over the world can now move in and out of a landscape with ease and at speed. 100 years ago, for example, it would have taken months to send a care package to Baringo from Sweden. Now, I can sit in my living room and send cash directly from my laptop to a phone there in a matter of seconds.

As such, it may be helpful to understand contemporary cultural landscapes as fluid, irregular shapes inflicted by what Appadurai (1996) calls global cultural flows or 'scapes'. The ones that are most relevant for my research include *financescapes*, *technoscapes*, *ethnoscapes* and *ideoscapes*.²⁰

²⁰ Appadurai also talks about *mediascapes* as the movement of electronic and print media around the globe. But this concept is less relevant to this thesis.

Financescapes are the global flow of money in and out of national borders which shape the daily lives of individuals. This includes the flow of cash through livestock markets but also the unilateral influx of foreign aid into Baringo and the unilateral *outflow* of national debt. *Technoscapes* are the technologies, “both high and low, both mechanical and informational” (Appadurai, 1996, p. 34) such as the communal watering hole built by a clan, as well as the phones made in Chinese factories which sit in everybody’s pockets and the fences that delineate individual farms made with Indian steel. As an *ethnoscape*, Baringo is home to three distinct ethnic communities – Tugen, Pokot, Njemps – but also to other Kenyans attracted here by work and International Development professionals. Finally, the *ideoscape* of Baringo is shaped by the interacting ideologies of the postcolonial state and the Development Industry. The money, technologies, social groups and ideas shaping the landscape of Baringo nowadays come from a broad array of places, moving fluidly in and out of the region, so the cultural changes etched into the landscape are a vivid, tangible result of Appadurai’s global cultural flows. As well as creating the cultural landscape of Baringo, these various cultural flows also serve as the lens through which I analyse the intersection of pastoralism and Development.

In short, Campbell’s notion of cultural landscapes is a helpful theoretical tool for exploring pastoralist cultures and Development in Baringo because it highlights the interconnectedness of human and ecological processes. Expanding on his work with more recent theories that see landscapes as dynamic processes make it a stronger and more relevant tool for the present day. By updating the concept to account for explicitly political processes and the impact of globalisation, I hope to bring it into the new millennium and apply it to contemporary issues.

Methods & Material

This thesis is based on ethnographic research carried out between 2019–2022 but it also builds on the relationships and understanding of the cultural context of Baringo I developed through four years of living and working there. This section describes the materials gathered and discusses the process followed to obtain them.

Everyday Life Approach

This thesis employs an *everyday life approach* to uncover the individual stories that form the larger story of resilience, adaptation and marginalisation in Baringo. This approach aims to understand how cultural meaning is created in the mundane, everyday practices of life and daily routines that often go unnoticed or easily get ignored. As the remit of Ethnologists, everyday life is studied as “a way to understand larger issues in society. This means that people’s perceptions and habits are cultural products. They are learned, exercised, communicated and transformed during the course of life” (Ehn et al., 2015, p. 5). As cultural beings, our practices, and the processes that infuse them with meaning, are culturally loaded. An everyday life approach puts emphasis on “nonverbal cultural practices and also on the materiality of seemingly mental activities” (Ehn et al., 2015, p. 6) in order to reveal their hidden meaning. It finds meaning in the habits that people pre-consciously construct as well as the routines and systems that people incorporate into their daily lives. These capacities and shared meanings make society work and signify belonging to a specific culture, yet because they are formed pre-consciously (i.e. without any conscious reflection) the processes that create their meaning are hidden. Everyday life is carried out in the places and spaces where people live; they create meaning through daily interactions with society, the immediate environment and the knowledge, policies and economic structures that inform their practices.

This thesis adopts an everyday life approach to explore the marginal spaces of Baringo in which agropastoralists live and create meaning by drawing on local knowledge and unpacking the nexus of culture, everyday practices, the economy, multiscalar governance and the environment out of which challenges and solutions have arisen. This thesis attempts to make marginal spaces into what the Africanist, Grant Farred calls *an interrogative occasion* (2016, p. 18). Building on Mudimbe’s (1988) idea of the marginal space, Farred sees marginality as an opportunity to ask questions such as “what kind of thinking takes place in and because of the [marginal] space? What does this space make possible or foreclose?” (Farred, 2016, p. 18). Asking what kind of thinking takes place *in* the intermediate space is different to asking what kind of thinking takes place *because of* the intermediate space. Each of

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these questions can function as a methodological point of departure for exploring different aspects of development. The former opens up a phenomenological inquiry into pastoralists' experiences of marginality. This is the focus of part two of this thesis in which I explore how the entangled aspects of postcolonial life unfold in the daily lives of pastoralists to challenge and/or build up their resilience to changes and challenges. Exploring how these multiple, intermingling flows unfold in the daily lives of pastoralists can shed light on the emergence of socially destructive dynamics such as tribal conflicts, capitalism and desertification – but equally on the social bonds, innovations and entrepreneurial practices that define a culture of resilience and hope. The latter question, concerning what a marginal space makes possible, can open up an exploration of the formative practices and discourses of interventions – both local and external – that are situated in and informed by the marginal space. This corresponds with the focus of part two of the thesis which explores how the marginal space interacts with resilience discourses and what type of thinking and interventions this creates vis-à-vis resilience.

Research, Interrupted

Starting in 2019, the original intention for this research project was to return to Baringo to conduct a long-term ethnographic study of pastoralist perceptions of development projects. I planned on using ethnographic methods such as interviews and participant observation, which are commonly used in Ethnology, to study people in their cultural context and understand how cultural processes manifest in their everyday lives. Ethnography is built on the presence of a researcher in the field of study. The conventional image of ethnography assumes long-term field trips, a distinction between “field” and “home”, as well as researcher and informant (Günel et al., 2020). Recent developments in Ethnography have challenged this conventional view and opened ethnographic disciplines to alternative methods of enquiry such as multi-sited (cf. Marcus, 1995), insider (cf. Hansen, 2021), mobile (cf. Sheller & Urry, 2006), expert (cf. Mosse, 2011), facilitative (cf. Hansson et al., 2020) and autoethnography (cf. Siim et al., 2017). Nevertheless, they all still assume the presence of the researcher in

the field. This is true for the ethnological approach to exploring everyday life which informs this project. Physically being there in the place where people live their daily lives is a common approach in Ethnology as it enables a close look at the daily practices as they are carried out *in situ* in order to reveal their hidden meaning (Frykman & Gilje, 2003). *Being There*, with its roots in phenomenology, is both the name of an ethnological methodology book and a method of inquiry that calls for doing research where the research subjects are and “opening yourself to that which is already there” (Frykman & Gilje, 2003, p. 13). The authors argue that phenomenology has long informed ethnological studies of everyday life, especially in the Nordics, as a philosophical justification for the need for situated ethnography. Ethnology typically uses ethnographic strategies to unpick the hidden meanings that people build into their daily lives over time. Observing, interviewing and getting to know people as they carry out their daily lives provides an opportunity to take a close look at the mundane aspects of life and gradually unpick the meaning behind them. But what happens when you can’t be there?

In 2019, the pandemic shut down global travel, making it impossible to travel to Kenya to carry out fieldwork. Kenya shut its borders for almost two years (coincidentally, on the same day I received approval from the ethics review board to conduct fieldwork) and Lund University banned non-essential travel by its staff. On top of this, starting a PhD coincided with me becoming a father. Having two small children during the project meant I did not want to leave home for a long period of time. This left me with a dilemma: how was I going to carry out a field-based project in Kenya without being able to physically go there for an extended period of time? As I saw it, I had two options: scrap this project and start again with an entirely different project that didn’t include fieldwork or find ways to carry out some (or all) of the ethnographic fieldwork from a distance. I was hesitant to scrap it entirely and endeavoured to rework the project. This was a period marked by further intense intellectual labour spent re-imagining the project; it required deep reflection and creativity to explore potentially feasible methods and research topics.²¹

²¹ This included attending a course held by the IT University of Copenhagen which

Research, Reconstructed

In response to my circumstances, I created a hybrid form of ethnographic fieldwork which could be carried out from a distance, accommodate my personal family circumstances and involve distinct research moments at multiple field sites. Inspired by decolonial approaches to research, I designed the methodology in a way that would attempt to give as much control to members of the communities being studied as possible and prioritise their concerns over my own research interests. These decolonial ambitions will be discussed shortly.

The majority of the data collection was conducted by two employees of the long-standing grassroots development organisation RAE²², called Joseph and Osman. They used a phone to conduct interviews and record footage and uploaded the material to a shared cloud storage where we could translate and analyse the data together. Once the pandemic restrictions were lifted, I travelled to Kenya on two short field trips to Kenya – 14 days in December 2021 and 10 days in December 2022 – to conduct additional interviews and participant observations. In total we conducted 36 interviews and recorded over 10 hours of film footage. I also attended two climate conferences hosted by the UNFCCC in November 2021 and June 2022 to observe the processes of climate governance in action. This enabled me to follow the ideas of sustainable development that shape livelihoods in Baringo to the places where they are created.²³ Finally, the project was punctuated by long periods of parental leave and desk-based archival research.

The following sections explore the multiple methods used to conduct this research and the people involved, using the ideas of *patchwork ethnography* and *collaborative ethnography* respectively.

shares the name of this section (Research, Interrupted). Motivated by the disruption to research caused by the pandemic, the course aimed to help PhD students rethink fieldwork in uncertain times.

²² RAE formed in 1982. In 1994, they started operating as a Charitable Trust. In 2015, they became a social enterprise and started to operate as a Limited company. For more information, see Meyerhoff et al. (2020).

²³ The first conference, titled *26th UN Climate Change Conference of the Parties (COP26)*, took place in Glasgow, Scotland on 31st October–13th November 2021. The second conference, titled *56th session of the Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technological Advice (SBSTA)*, took place from 6–16th June 2022, in Bonn, Germany.

Patchwork Ethnography

With its multiple, fragmented and innovative methods, I see this project as an example of what Gökçe Günel and Chika Watanabe call *patchwork ethnography*, or the “ethnographic processes and protocols designed around short-term field visits, using fragmentary yet rigorous data and other innovations” (Günel et al., 2020, p. 3). Patchwork ethnography relies on a combination of methods to create a coherent, diverse body of data which is “patched together” to make a whole. Many methodological developments are rooted in the participants’ needs (cf. Amit, 2000; Burawoy et al., 2000; Gupta & Ferguson, 1997; Marcus, 1995). But patchwork ethnography comes from the researchers’ needs. It is borne out of a feminist perspective on the structural pressures which make long-term, field-based research an impossible goal for most researchers. It recognises that the ethnographer’s life outside the academia, including domestic duties and child-caring responsibilities, must be considered when designing ethnographic research. Conducting research with two young children means that this applies well to my situation: leaving a new-born at home to conduct a lengthy field trip abroad was not an option. In part, this was motivated by a modern sensibility to parenting

Material	Quantity/Duration	Collection Period	Researchers Involved	Relevant Chapters
In-person interviews	11 (25-60 minutes)	December 2021 December 2022	Joseph Osman Billy	3, 4, 5
Phone interviews	26 (5-20 minutes)	May 2021 - August 2023	Joseph Osman Billy	3, 4, 5
Film footage	>1400 (10-20 secs each)	May 2021 - August 2023	Joseph Osman Billy	3, 4, 5
Photos	>1900	May 2021 - August 2023	Joseph Osman Billy	3, 4, 5, 6, 7
UN archive material	35 documents, reports and proceedings	1959-2020	Billy	6
Fieldnotes from Kenya	Notes from 2x trips (25 days total)	December 2021 December 2022	Billy	3, 4, 5, 7
Fieldnotes from UN conferences	Notes from 2x trips (7 days total)	November 2021 June 2022	Billy	6

Table 1. Summary of Material.

– the thought of leaving my children for such a long period of time was unpalatable – but equally it was motivated by economics and feminist solidarity. Going on fieldwork would have meant placing all the domestic burdens on Linn, requiring her to leave her job (which we, as a household, could not afford) and thus reinforcing the gender trap that keeps women tied to the domestic domain while men advance their careers. To counter these structural inequalities, I imagined a fieldwork project that would bring the least possible disruption to our family life. The result was a series of data collection moments – phone interviews, short field trips to Baringo and UN conferences and archival research – patched together into an ethnography. Ethnographies often explore entire cultural systems or multiple, overlapping aspects of a social world. Such approaches typically require various methods to explore different aspects of the culture in question and build a comprehensive picture. The patches of this ethnography build an image of the social world of pastoralism in Baringo and the Development Industry's role in shaping the social and material realities of pastoralism.

The research did not move between the different patches in a linear static process but jumped back and forth between them iteratively. Rarely is research conducted as a linear process of design, data collection, analysis and write-up. Rather the different research activities are often done in cycles. You continuously review and update the research field as new insights and information emerge. Analysis may uncover new insights that require you to return to the field to seek out information on a new topic. Similarly, interviews may expose new topics to explore and new people to interview. As Günel and Watanabe highlight, this iterative nature is made even more transparent through the process of a patchworked ethnography: “Many of us produce anthropological scholarship in fits and starts and through an iterative process amid caring responsibilities, precarious employment, disability, relational commitments and other life circumstances” (Günel & Watanabe, 2024, p. 133). Distinct periods, or patches, of research overlap as we pick up different parts of the research and put others on pause in response to external factors not related to the research agenda. As we return to a patch with new information, we see it in a new light informed by research done in a previous patch. Consequently, we are continuously redefining the field based on new insights and perspectives that emerge during the entire process.

Summary of Empirical Material

The data contributing to this thesis have been gathered over three years, in three countries spread over two different continents. During my two field trips to Baringo, I conducted 11 semi-structured interviews and observed RAE's work in action, joining their field officers – Joseph and Osman – on trips to visit farmers. Joseph and Osman also continuously carried out interviews and observations between May 2021 and August 2023, which will be covered more in the next section. I used my attendance at the two UNFCCC hosted conferences as an opportunity to conduct participant observations.²⁴ COP26 was part of an annual series of climate change summits at the highest level of global governance. Its global climate change pledges are made by global leaders and blueprints for a sustainable future are born. Bonn was a smaller conference mostly for technocrats to “take stock” of these pledges and turn them into policy. If the COPs are where ideas are born, the stocktakes are where the nitty-gritty of policy creation happens. Finally, to understand the roots of development discourses, I visited the United Nation's digital archives in the Dag Hammarskjöld Library and conducted a systematic review of documents which explicitly mention pastoralism and resilience. The methods used are summarised in the table below and discussed in the following sections.

Fieldwork in Baringo

I understand the fieldwork for this project to include not just my two short field trips to Baringo but also the continuous fieldwork carried out by Joseph and Osman when I was not physically present. With this broader understanding, the process of fieldwork became a central research process to this ethnography and connects it to a research tradition of what Lars

²⁴ I attended the conferences as an official observer for Lund University which sends a small delegation to the COPs every year to act as observers to the negotiations. The delegation typically includes researchers interested in sustainable development or the politics of climate change. I was granted access because of my affiliation with Lund University's Agenda 2030 graduate school. In Glasgow, we were a handful of delegates from Lund. As far as I'm aware, I was the university's only delegate in Bonn.

Kaijser (2011) calls *field-working Ethnologists*. In Sweden, this tradition has been a hallmark of Ethnology since the discipline's early days (cf. Campbell, 1936; Erixon, 1921) and beyond (cf. Alsmark, 1979; Gradén, 2003; Högdahl, 2003) and continues to form the field today. For Kaijser, "the field-working Ethnologist can offer a knowledge that focuses on how individual people or social groups experience their reality" (Kaijser, 2011, p. 37).²⁵ Through fieldwork, the researcher is immersed in the social world of those under study and explores how it is experienced and constructed through their everyday lives. Kaijser continues that "as research is a searching process, it is difficult to know in advance exactly where the material that the researcher will use is located" (Kaijser, 2011, p. 39).²⁶ Fieldwork is a necessarily interactive process which requires active exploration of the field in order to understand what topics are important and to whom. It is often unclear what to observe, who to speak to and which data collection methods to use in advance. The research direction is continually being defined and redefined throughout the fieldwork process.

Obtaining a comprehensive picture of the social world of pastoralism in Baringo involved a number of methods including interviews, participant observations and recording film footage. Central to this non-linear, multi-method process was participant observation of RAE's development work. During my field trips, I was hosted by RAE and observed their work with grass farmers in Baringo. Observing development interventions in action and discuss the ways in which they affect livelihoods enabled us to see how development ideas are translated into practice. We used this participation to access informants and to guide the research process, exploring new research avenues as they emerged. Seeing Matthew's water pump as a practice of resilience to climate change, for example, made Joseph think about another farmer's traditional hay storage techniques in terms of climate resilience.

25 Translation from original Swedish: "den fältarbetande etnologen kan erbjuda en kunskap som tar fasta på hur enskilda människor eller sociala grupper upplever sin verklighet."

26 Translation from original Swedish: "då forskning är en sökande process är det svårt att på förhand exakt veta var det materiel som forskaren kommer att använda sig av finns."

Go-alongs

I conducted go-alongs with Joseph, Osman and Murray. Go-alongs are an ethnographic method which Sociologist Margarethe Kusenbach has described as “a hybrid between participant observation and interviewing” (2003, p. 463). They involve following informants as they perform ordinary activities in their daily life, all the while discussing their experiences and observing their practices. Go-alongs are an increasingly popular method in Ethnology (cf. Andersson Cederholm & Sjöholm, 2023; Hansson, 2019b; Högdahl, 2003; Saltzman & Sjöholm, 2016). They are well-suited to research on the everyday praxis of professional practitioners because they enable the ethnographer to observe people carrying out their jobs and discuss how large ideas are translated into everyday practices.

Kusenbach makes a distinction between natural and contrived go-alongs. The former being those “that follow informants into their familiar environments and track outings they would go on anyway as closely as possible, for instance with respect to the particular day, the time of the day and the routes of the regular trip” (Kusenbach, 2003, p. 463). A contrived go-along, by contrast, is when the researcher sets up an activity which is outside the informant’s normal routine expressly to explore a specific subject. I conducted four natural go-alongs with Joseph and Osman whereby I shadowed them on visits to farmers. As a contact point between the organisation and the community, much of their time is spent meeting farmers and attending community meetings to maintain relationships. They regularly conduct short visits to the farmers that RAE support to monitor the state of their farms, provide training and arrange any technical assistance if required. Having worked with RAE prior, I had plenty of experience of these visits and I reasoned they would make an ideal opportunity to both meet farmers and observe RAE’s grassroots development model in action. I used these trips to compliment the interviews we conducted with farmers (in a handful of cases, we arranged the interviews to correspond with the visits). I also conducted a contrived go-along with RAE’s co-founder, Murray Roberts, which became the basis for chapter seven. Driving around the sites of current and historical development projects in Baringo we explored the history of external development interventions and how they have shaped Baringo’s landscape and the lives of its inhabitants.

Semi-structured Interviews

Semi-structured interviews are used to gain insight into how the interviewee perceives the topic at hand. Anthropologist Charlotte Aull Davies (2012, p. 95) writes about semi-structured interviews as lying somewhere between unstructured, free flowing interviews with no formal topics and structured interviews in which a series of pre-determined questions are asked in a particular order with no variation in wording. Typically, the researcher determines a number of questions or topics of interest in advance, but during the interview the order can be altered, the wording adjusted, and questions added or omitted in response to what the interviewee says. For this project, interviews were used to understand how pastoralists perceive the social, ecological and economic changes happening in their landscape. Research topics were established, and interviewees were identified who were assumed to have knowledge about them. We went into the interviews with a few key topics noted down and a rough idea of what we wanted to talk about, but no strict structure. Rather, we let the interviewee steer the conversation, allowing their interpretation of the topic to guide the interview and dictate what empirical data connects to the question or topic at hand. Some interviews were also supplemented by shorter, follow-up interviews if new research topics came up that they didn't discuss in the initial interview.

Semi-structured interviews are commonly used in ethnographic settings; hence they are often also called ethnographic interviews (Davies, 2012). Conducting interviews in-situ helps draw out the connections between the individual experience and ontological status of the social world being discussed. For this project, the interviews were all conducted at the interviewee's home or place of work. Sometimes we walked around an agropastoralist's farm as we talked, so they could point out things of interest to hook the conversation onto. For example, when interviewing Matthew (the agropastoralist we met at the top of the introduction), he took me to see his water pump and demonstrated how it worked during the interview. The objects, animals and people surrounding us acted as conversational triggers, helping steer the conversation in the way that felt relevant for the interviewees. But more than this, they also provided material evidence of the knowledge being presented.

Interviewees

For this project a wide variety of people with different experiences and backgrounds were interviewed in order to obtain a comprehensive understanding of the social world of pastoralists and the variety of roles the Development Industry played in shaping their daily lives. Social worlds are made up of the numerous overlapping realities and are experienced differently according to one's social position. Age, gender, class, ethnic identity and religious background can inform the way you see the world and interpret a research topic. This raises the question of interviewee selection. It is important to find a sample of interviewees that are representative of the social world at hand and can speak to the research topics under exploration. In part, this is because research normally covers a number of topics, so multiple respondents may be required to be able to discuss all the topics. But, as Davies remarks, interviewees ought to be selected to provide a variety of interpretations: "any selection of respondents should be based primarily on theoretical considerations, in particular keeping in mind that the purpose of ethnographic interviewing is to obtain a variety of interpretations" (Davies, 2012, p. 98). Social phenomena are experienced differently depending on one's social position. For example, women don't have the same legal rights as men to own land in Kenya (Djurfeldt, 2020). Accordingly, the issue of land inheritance in Baringo is experienced differently by men and women. While men may see land inheritance as an opportunity for material gain, women are likely to relate more negatively to questions of land ownership and view it as an oppressive structure. The topics ought to be explored from these different social positions. A representative sample helps capture a wide variety of experiences and understandings of the social realities, ensuring more comprehensive knowledge of the topic.

In total, we conducted interviews with 36 people, of which 16 are cited in this thesis.²⁷ All the interviewees lived in Baringo but came from a variety of backgrounds delineated by age, gender and ethnic identity. We interviewed a mixture of young and old agropastoralists of which sixteen were men and twenty were women. They came from one Baringo's primary ethnic communities – Tugen, Il Chamus, Pokot. The interviewees can be categorised

²⁷ A list of interviewees cited can be found in the references.

into three groups: community elders, grass farmers and herders. These are not strictly delineated groups and there is some overlap between them. For example, some of the elders we interviewed were also grass farmers. There were also a handful of other informants who provided supporting insights. Finally, we also interviewed a small number of people working for RAE.

The community elders included informants presumably aged between 60-85 years old. Most didn't know their exact age because they were born in a time when birth certificates were not commonplace, and the specific calendar date of one's birth was less important. Age was more tied to age sets, a customary categorisation system common in Baringo whereby generations of individuals from within an ethnic community are grouped together as age mates (Spencer, 2014). We interviewed this older generation in order to explore the history of modernisation and the changing climate in Baringo through oral histories. They also provided insight into the knowledge systems that supported traditional modes of pastoralism such as the uses of flora and fauna, ethnomedicines and drought survival strategies. These insights were particularly useful for chapters three and four, because they helped build an image of what life used to be like before modernisation took hold in Baringo and what factors influenced the changes in the economy and environment.

Grass farmers were interviewed to understand the practices, systems and knowledge that go into grass farming. We also explored some of the livelihood innovations they have created to adapt agropastoralism to the challenging environment in which they find themselves. These insights were useful for chapter five which explores the cultural practices and adaptations that inform this novel mode of production and build the cultural resilience of pastoralists. Herders included pastoralists who rely primarily on mobile grazing to feed their livestock. In contrast to the grass farmers, they exclusively move their livestock around communal pastures in search of pasture. They provided insights into the challenges facing pastoralists today as a result of modernisation and climate change, which were helpful for chapter three. They were able to offer first-hand experience of the consequences of the loss of land and resources such as ethnic conflict, displacement and the corrosion of traditional cultural institutions and knowledge.

Finally, I interviewed RAE staff members to understand the organisa-

tion's approach to development and their role in the grassroots of the Development Industry. Through these interviews, I learned about the ideas and practices they connect with sustainable development and resilient pastoral livelihoods. They explained their development model using supporting documents and outlined how they implement this model in practice, giving examples of how they actively engage with the local community. We also discussed how they navigate the changing narratives and funding requirements of this industry to secure funding whilst staying committed to their own development model.

Video Recordings

We recorded almost all of the interviews and go-alongs and captured additional footage of the surrounding environment using a phone camera.²⁸ This method was used to replace long-term observations when I couldn't physically be in the field. Joseph and Osman recorded the majority of the

²⁸ Some of the footage was also captured on a handheld video camera, as seen in image 3.



Image 3. Osman filming the environment in Baringo. After an interview, we filmed aspects of the surrounding environment which were discussed. Here, Osman is filming the invasive tree species, *Prosopis juliflora*, which a livestock herder told us was damaging his goats' teeth. Photo: Dan Besley.

film footage over the long periods I wasn't in Baringo. The interviews were filmed in-situ and documented the surrounding environment and subjects of conversation with photos and short (10-20 second) film clips. If they discussed an object, topic or practice, we would then take a short clip of that specific thing. For example, when Matthew talked about his water pump, we filmed the pump. Or when an interviewee talked about the solar panel he had installed on the grass-thatched roof of his mud hut, we filmed the solar panel.

The use of video footage across the different methods gave the research process a flavour of visual ethnography. Following Sarah Pink, visual ethnography can be loosely understood as relying predominantly on visual media such as images, film and art to provide an insight into the culture or phenomenon under study (Pink, 2007). Video recording is a powerful tool for exploring the multisensory aspects of the research subject. The video footage enabled us to capture the audiovisual dimensions of the environment, for example. By filming the interviews in-situ, the sounds and visuals created a backdrop which transports the viewer into the interview place. You can see the grass swaying behind the interviewee, hear the cows braying and the birds chirping. However, as Pink suggests, the use of video offers more than mere background: "when we use video as a research method we are not merely video-recording what people do in order to create visual data for analysis. Rather we are engaging in a process through which knowledge is produced" (Pink, 2007, p. 105). The video is used to produce an understanding of the research topic. Interpretation and representation of the subject matter of the video recordings, as well as the way it is recorded, have an influence on the sort of knowledge being produced. Which things we choose to record and what we omit, have a bearing on the knowledge being produced.

Pink talks about the usefulness of collaborative video recordings in projects where long-term immersive fieldwork is not a possibility. She recognises that, while this approach cannot replace the deep understanding acquired through long-term participation, it can help to "explore collaboratively and intensively, the visual and other sensory knowledge and experience that form part of people's everyday lives" (Pink, 2007, p. 108). Because of the aforementioned restrictions, my time in Baringo was limited and did not

suffice to gather enough sensory data to fully animate the image of the changing landscape that was emerging in my mind. Not being there makes you blind, anosmic (unable to smell) and deaf to the cultural context. It strips your experience of its multi-sensorial character denying you access to the landscape's multisensory dimension. The film footage was intended to remedy this limitation. The phone recordings worked to transport me to the field. Of course, this is never the same as physically being there. You don't get the olfactory for example and you only get snapshots of the experience. But it works to make the field more multi-dimensional than it otherwise would be – it takes you as close to *being there*, on a different continent, as you could get during a global shutdown.

Archival Research

Chapter six is based on an analysis of official UN documents from the Dag Hammarskjöld Library archives. As a public resource, the archive hosts over 1,000,000 UN records and non-UN documents related to development. A systematic review of the database yielded a body of key documents written between 1959-2020 explicitly discussing the twin topics of pastoralism and resilience. Using the word stems *pastoral** and *resilien**, my search produced 970 unique records for the period 1945-2020. This search included all the possible record types: documents, reports, publications, meeting records, resolutions and decisions, letters and Notes Verbales. I split my search into two eras (pre- and post-2000). The first group included all record types, yielding 84 records. The second group included only *publications*, yielding 140 records. Of the 224 documents, 35 explicitly discussed pastoralism and resilience together.

The genealogical method employed in chapter six can be understood as an attempt to write a history of the present ideas around resilience by uncovering the concept's roots and tracking its evolution throughout history. The United Nations documents were analysed and classified according to the version of resilience they discuss – ecological, engineering, processual or "other". These documents formed the foundations of the search for the genealogical roots of resilience in relation to pastoralism. Exploring this archive gave me a way to reach back in history to find the origins of

the ideas that shape the narratives the Development Industry reproduces about pastoralism. This enabled me to ask such questions as: where does the notion of pastoralism as backwards come from; what are the origins of the modernisation rationales; and how did resilience-thinking merge with ideas about sustainable development? These histories are complemented with a variety of additional data including photography, maps and project reports from the likes of FAO and World Bank. Collectively, they create a bricolage of information that helps tell a history of Development in Baringo by mapping where development ideas come from, how they move around the globe and how they are translated into material projects.

Patchworked Writing

It is important to make a distinction between the ethnographic methods used to collect data and the ethnography itself. As an amalgamation of two Greek terms, *ethno* (meaning culture) and *graphy* (meaning writing), the term originally denotes a form of writing about culture. For Humphreys and Watson (2009), an ethnography is characterised by thick descriptions and analysis which explores the subject in question in what they call the *cultural whole* of the context. In the strictest sense, then, ethnography ought to be understood as a written account of a cultural group. I think it is important to resist this narrow definition because it restricts the possibility of alternative forms of producing ethnographies. Ethnographic filmmaking, for example, expands the concept of ethnography beyond the written text. Similarly, applied ethnography and action-research emphasises the practical application of the knowledge over the writing. With a narrow definition, these forms of research are excluded. Nevertheless, this thesis can be understood in the narrow sense as an ethnography.

In their seminal collection of essays, *Writing Culture*, Clifford and Marcus (1986) unpack the ethnographic writing form and explore how its authority is constructed. One thing they point to is the convention of swinging back and forth between the first and third person throughout the text: “personal narrative persists alongside objectifying description in ethnographic writing because it mediates a contradiction within the discipline between personal and scientific authority” (1986, p. 32). An ethnographer’s

authority comes from their subjective, first-hand experiences of the field of study. Writing exclusively in the third person implies a detachment from the objects of study and a distance from the field which the research experience belies. At the risk of becoming too unscientific, then, allow me to quote my mother's reflection on the ethnographic writing style: "The first person is used because implicit in the framework of the first-person narrative is the idea that the narrator is present within the effective landscape" (Mum). Everyone has a perspective. We all see the world from somewhere. Writing in the first person works to emphasise that the arguments put forward in this thesis come from the ground. This writing style mirrors the meta-narrative of the overall thesis, which is that in order to understand the complexities of a place and affect sustainable change, we need to start from within the landscape itself.

The overall style in which this ethnography is written may also be understood as patchworked, with each chapter being a patch of research with its own focus. The empirical and analytical focus shifts between chapters, variously covering climatic changes, processes of modernisation, modes of production and development discourses. The different patches require their own object of study, analytical perspective and even writing style. Collectively they build a mosaic which presents a larger image that is more than the sum of its parts. This is an intentional strategy inspired by seeing a similar approach in previous ethnological theses (Högdahl, 2003; Ristilampi, 1995; Salomonsson, 1998). It allows me to build up a comprehensive image of Baringo's cultural landscape by tracing the ideas, cultural processes and ecological changes which come from different times in history, places and global arenas.

The first patch (chapter three) adopts a narrative format of a road trip. It follows me, Joseph and Osman as we journey through the landscape of the Baringo Basin where we witness the impacts of climate change and meet agropastoralists to discuss the challenges they face. This narrative style is used to bring the reader down to the ground and immerse them in the marginalised spaces that pastoralists navigate on a daily basis. Chapters four and five are written in what might be described as a hermeneutic style. That is to say, they combine description and interpretation. Each chapter starts by building up an image of the topic in question. It follows a format

of detailed empirical description followed by analysis of the material presented. The chapters end with a theoretical discussion of the material, using a particular lens – namely, modernisation and livelihood resilience, respectively – to unpack the material and connect it to questions associated with development. Chapter six is written using a style common to critical discourse analysis. It briefly presents a historical series of UN texts which discuss pastoralism and connects them to the global narratives that dominated the Development Industry at their time of publication. While the researchers' bodies are physically present in the previous chapters, this chapter adopts a more detached style, critically analysing the texts as if from nowhere. Chapter seven returns to the narrative format of the road trip. It wraps up the thesis by returning to the place it started, namely journeying around the Baringo Basin. This time, it follows me as I join RAE director, Murray Roberts, on a trip. We visit the abandoned development projects that litter the landscape and discuss their histories and implications for pastoralist livelihoods.

For the sake of clarity, the events described in chapters three and seven are written as if they all happen at the same time, on the same road trip in December 2022. While these road trips did actually occur in December 2022, not all of the conversations and observations presented in the chapters come from that time. While uncommon, this is not a technique that is entirely foreign to Ethnology. In her thesis, *Fattigdomens Besvärjelser*, Karin Salomonsson (1998) uses the technique, which she calls hypertext. Like Salomonsson, I have merged and condensed material from different statements to create a coherent story. This particular trip punctuates a timeline of conversations with and in Baringo over several years; conversations which have taken place physically during time spent in Baringo, but mostly at distance, over the phone. I have used quotes, data and snippets of conversation from these different conversations and put them into the dialogue. This means some of the dates and places have been altered to fit into the chapter's timeline and support a coherent narrative, but the data, quotes and observations are all true. In using a quote out of context, for example, I have stayed true to its original meaning by only using quotes to support an argument that were discussing the same topic in the original instance. They may not have been uttered at the same point

on the narrative's timeline, but they have been uttered by the same speaker, about the same topic.

As a final note, it is important to mention the quoting convention adopted throughout the text. When a new informant is introduced, it is made clear who they are interviewed by, be it me, Joseph or Osman. When citing an informant, the quote is followed by their pseudonymised name in brackets. Convention dictates that such quotes be cited as personal communications with interview name and interview details as follows: (Matthew, personal communication, December 8, 2021). To help maintain the writing flow, however, only the name has been written in the body of the text and the details of the correspondence have been omitted like so: (Matthew). A full list of interview correspondences, complete with interviewee pseudonym, interviewer and date can be found in the references section.

Collaborative Ethnography

Data collection and analysis largely centred around an active collaboration with RAE. They played a central role in several stages of the interview process including preparing, conducting, translating and analysing. Their database of local socio-ecological records and published research stretching back 40 years provided the foundation for understanding the changing context. Their directors and key staff members were directly involved in finding interviewees, writing interview questions, conducting interviews, video recording, translation and analysis. Of particular importance were the field officers, Joseph and Osman, who conducted and recorded the majority of the interviews using a phone. The success of the project also hinged on the collaboration of numerous other RAE staff members, from coordinators and drivers making field trips possible to gardeners providing us with invaluable insights into local history. Given the emphasis on working closely with RAE, it may be appropriate to frame the research approach as collaborative ethnography. Following Luke Lassiter, collaborative ethnography can be loosely understood as “deliberately and explicitly emphasiz[ing] collaboration at every point in the ethnographic process, without veiling it – from project conceptualisation, to fieldwork and, especially, through the writing process” (Lassiter, 2005a, p. 16). Collaboration em-

phases working together with co-researchers – or what Lassiter calls “ethnographer-consultant teams” (2005b, p. 95) – throughout the project to collect and analyse material. Using this collaborative approach, we were able to continuously collect data between May 2021 and August 2023 despite me only physically entering Baringo on two short field trip occasions.

We prepared for interviews and go-alongs by establishing a list of successful farmers that RAE had been supporting and who would be appropriate interviewees. The list was established using RAE’s database of farmers, Joseph and Osman’s knowledge of the farmers and human-interest stories on individual farmers which RAE had previously used as evidence of their impact in donor reports and media outputs. In the words of RAE Director Elizabeth Roberts, this built on “combining expert local knowledge with records from long-term research into monitoring and evaluation of the socioeconomic impact of RAE’s approach” (Elizabeth). The database, which includes long-term records on grass fields’ size and condition, enabled us to compile a list of successful farmers. Human interest stories helped identify potential themes to explore in the interviews. Joseph and Osman’s knowledge on the farmer’s management approaches, personal histories and interview suitability helped refine the interviewee list.

Joseph and Osman’s roles as RAE field officers set them up well for the interviewer position. They had good working relationships with the pastoralists we hoped to interview. Further, because their professional roles often involve interviewing the farmers, they already had a good level of interviewing skills. They were, however, used to more structured interview settings. So, with support from Elizabeth (who has extensive interviewing experience as a Social Anthropologist), I trained them in more specific semi-structured interviewing techniques such as letting the interviewee guide the discussion and listening to what they’re really saying. We held a series of physical and digital workshops where they practiced interviewing RAE staff members, and we discussed the process.

Before initiating the interviews for the thesis, we wrote a list of interview topics that included land management practices, gender dynamics, ethnic conflict and impacts of climate change. Drawing on their extensive knowledge of the personal circumstances of so many farmers, Joseph and Osman came up with a list of farmers to interview around these topics. They

carried out most of the interviews together, visiting farmers in their homes together with one interviewing whilst the other filmed.²⁹ Who led an interview was determined by ethnic affiliation and language. As a member of the Il Chamus community, Osman led all the interviews conducted with Il Chamus people and Joseph, as a Tugen, led all the interviews with Tugen and Pokot. They uploaded interview recordings to a shared cloud storage. From there we transcribed and translated the interviews; I translated most of the Swahili interviews to English and Joseph and Osman respectively translated the Tugen and Njempsii interviews to English. Finally, we analysed the data together in a series of dedicated workshops to explore its cultural meaning.

Collaborating with RAE meant their data and perspectives guided the research agenda. Joseph and Osman's work at RAE locates them in the field of Pasture Development, a sub-sector of the International Development Industry. They are trained to focus on concerns of economic development and livelihoods in rural areas. What's more, RAE is a grassroots organisation. Unlike the international NGOs headquartered in urban hubs like Nairobi, RAE's headquarters sit within the communities they serve. RAE have extensive records of long-term local data on rainfall patterns, livelihood changes, development projects, biodiversity and more. They also have a long-term policy to hire field officers from within their respective communities. At the time of writing, the vast majority of RAE's work is conducted in the Njemps and Tugen communities. Accordingly, Joseph (Tugen) and Osman (Njemps) are the dedicated field officers assigned to these areas. This standpoint influences the way they engage with the world. Standpoint theory posits that we all see the world from a particular place, occupying a vantage point which reveals the truth of our social reality and informs our understanding of the world (Naidu, 2010). Being physically located on the ground, as well as drawing on local data, shapes the perspective of RAE's employees and distinguishes it from Development practitioners working elsewhere. Where Development professionals are located informs how they understand the challenges facing the Rangelands. Joseph

²⁹ During my field trips, I also joined them on interviews, but they still acted as lead interviewer.

and Osman see the challenges in the rangelands up-close through their work. In contrast to their counterparts in Nairobi, this standpoint gives them a *grassroots* development perspective. It is worth noting however, that much of the data was collected by me, Joseph and Osman, all of whom identify as men. The standpoint perspective has its roots in feminist social theory, arguing that in a patriarchal world, women's perceptions of truth are usually informed from below, from a subjugated position (Gurung, 2020). It could be said, therefore, that our collaboration had a conspicuously male gaze. As we conducted the primary data collection on field trips, our male gaze determined what we observed and discussed. We tried to counter the male bias by including female informants and co-researchers: we interviewed more women than men and Elizabeth and another female manager at RAE were actively involved in analysis discussions.³⁰

Decolonising Through Collaboration

Moves towards collaborative forms of ethnography have been inspired by feminist and decolonial critiques of ethnography (Lassiter, 2005a). The use of collaboration in this project has been particularly inspired by decolonial scholarship. Broadly speaking, this entails placing the voices, epistemologies and concerns of the communities being studied at the centre of the research process and de-linking knowledge production from exclusively Eurocentric modes of thinking. The standard research model reproduces the mental and intellectual reproduction of power structures that uphold unequal relations between Western and former colonial states (Mignolo, 2011). Social and cultural research concerned with Africa reproduces a system of knowledge production that values academic knowledge above that of the people being studied (Mudimbe, 1988). It does little to actively challenge the colonial structures that subjugate indigenous ways of knowing whilst relying on them to uphold its own privilege. This is done, in part, through fieldwork. While Ethnology can be praised for the breadth of methods and perspectives it allows, it regularly relies on ethnographic methods based on fieldwork. During a limited time in the field site – os-

³⁰ Of the 36 interviewees, 20 were women and 16 were men.

tensibly understood as a place away from the researcher's home institution – the ethnographer collects data from informants, perhaps supported by field assistants, only to leave the field to analyse and write up the results at his home institution. This method ends up working as a gatekeeping tool which “prevent[s] the emergence of other forms of thinking, logic and world view” (Jimoh, 2022, p. 81).

The most well-established opportunities for decolonising research come in the form of the methods and perspectives for data collection and analysis. Linda Tuhiwai Smith's landmark book *Decolonizing Methodologies* (2021) set the foundation for much of the decolonial work being done in cultural studies. Exposing the colonial nature of the standard research paradigm, her book paved the way for a new research paradigm that incorporates indigenous ways of knowing and emphasises global injustices. Collaborative ethnography builds on this work by offering a way to open up more research moments to provide space for input from indigenous voices. Alberto Arribas Lozano understands collaborative ethnography essentially as a process of thinking together with co-researchers, which means that “their questions, concerns, reflexivity and knowledge-practices will be fully integrated into the design and the implementation of the research project, process and products” (Arribas Lozano, 2022, pp. 4-5). Each phase of the research process is informed not just by the academic's perspective but by the collaborators' as well. With this, they also partly define the research project; their interests, needs and concerns are able to shape who we talk to and what we talk about. The centrality of collaboration to the data collection in this thesis worked to make the methods more dialogic. Rather than an individual pursuit by a lone researcher, data collection required discussion at each stage to ensure we were all on the same page. Interview preparation, translation and analysis all involved discussions between me, Joseph, Osman and Elizabeth. With their grassroots perspectives on development questions and extensive knowledge of the local context and the personal histories of the informants, they opened up new fieldwork opportunities. They enabled us to access historical local research as well as new informants in places and languages which I could not access alone.

Having indigenous persons at the centre of knowledge production is of particular importance when research concerns what philosopher D.A

Masolo calls “homegrown problems” (2010, p. 21). Indigenous persons, he argues, “must train to know how to systematically explain the “ways” of their world and how it relates to the rest. She who once was only the unrecognised “native informant” must now become the principal investigator. She, not the expatriate, becomes the expert” (Masolo, 2010, p. 21). Rather than limiting their involvement to informants or research assistants, decolonial research ought to find opportunities for local people to take a more prominent role in the production of knowledge and build on their deep understanding of the social and cultural context in which research is situated. Considering their central importance to the research process, Joseph and Osman are more than field assistants; they are collaborative partners. The elevation of their status from would-be research assistants into collaborators comes from sharing ownership of the research process. This is perhaps most pronounced by the use of phone recorded interviews. With the camera phone, they are effectively in charge of the narrative being produced by the research; their voices, views and personality are represented through the camera. The discussion points and subjects of the filming are directly informed by their choices: they decide what is important to film, what questions ought to be asked and who to ask. And with the camera in hand, they decide where to shoot, what shots are needed and how to frame interview questions in order to capture the story they consider relevant.

Culturally Attuned Data Collection

As well as grassroots development experts, Joseph and Osman are pastoralists born and raised in Baringo who now have their own grass farms. As such, they brought a deep understanding of cultural norms to the research process, which enabled us to collect data in a way that was highly attuned to the local context. This made it possible to use culturally specific ways of accessing knowledge and conduct conversations in contexts, formats and languages that make sense to them. The value of this cultural sensitivity was made apparent to me during a car journey between two interviews we conducted together. When driving, we had an unspoken agreement that Joseph, being an elder, sits in the most comfortable seat – the front seat –

and Osman as young man sits in the back.³¹ Getting in the car to head to an interview with an older Il Chamus woman, however, Joseph silently climbed into the back seat and Osman took the front. Confused, I asked why they were switching seats to which Joseph replied: “we are going to see Osman’s people now, so he has to be the one who greets them when we arrive”. Joseph gave tacit consent for Osman to temporarily violate the age hierarchy without needing to verbalise it. This micro interaction silhouettes the social institutions of age hierarchies and ethnic identity which, as we will see in chapter four, govern life in Baringo. Status quo puts Joseph above Osman in the hierarchy because of his age. But, as we enter the Il Chamus community, Osman’s status as a community member makes him more important to the social interaction so temporarily elevates him above Joseph. Aware of the way ethnic identity modulates the age hierarchy between them, they seamlessly switch roles to adapt to the social context in which they find themselves. Cultural awareness shapes the way they move, sit and position themselves together in a social environment, attuning them to the contextual shifts in social norms. As part of their embodied, pre-conscious practices, this cultural sensitivity is brought to the research process through the way in which they move through the field and conduct interviews.

Joseph and Osman being the main interviewers also opens up the possibility of culturally specific interviewing techniques which traditional approaches do not typically encourage. This is exemplified by an interview situation which changed from a 1-1 interview to an impromptu focus group. I had planned to interview a young man in his village. Upon arrival, a group of elderly men joined the interview, turning it into a focus group. Our interview was to take place at the centre of the village, which is a public space belonging to the village, a place where they come to discuss public matters together. Because of his intuitive understanding of the role of space in this cultural context, Joseph instantly adapted the interview and opened it up to the elders. Consequently, we gained access to insights on the political history of the region from the elders who joined, which would have remained inaccessible if I had been interviewing alone. The

³¹ As the only one able to drive, I am somewhat excluded from this age hierarchy negotiation.

flexibility to switch from 1-1 interview to impromptu focus group and access these insights is contingent on Joseph's positionality as a fellow community member, partly because of the language barriers he can surpass, partly because of the trust he implicitly gains. As an older member of the Tugen community, the social structures of gerontocracy are ingrained in his being more so than the foreign conventions of interview etiquette, making the elder-driven focus group a natural choice for him.

Interview Language

Because they speak their respective vernacular languages, their input enabled us to overcome would-be language barriers, meaning we could interview elders who speak little English and prefer to converse in their vernacular Tugen and Swahili. Being fluent in Tugen and Il Chamus respectively, Joseph and Osman are able to adapt to the language preferences of the interviewee. In most interview situations, all three languages were spoken, with speakers choosing the language that best suits their statement.

This enabled us to provide a voice to pastoralists who might otherwise be overlooked if I was interviewing alone. Postcolonial theorists Viruru & Cannella argue that it is important reflect on whether the use of language in interviews is excluding certain voices from contributing to the research. Interviews rely on language to illicit self-disclosure and extract information from the interviewee. The language used becomes what Viruru and Cannella call a modulating tool, "limiting and controlling how different voice can be heard, [it] continues to control people through modulating their voices". It is thus important to ask "Who is allowed to speak? Who controls what can be said?" (Viruru & Cannella, 2016, p. 183). When they are conducted in previously colonial languages, ethnographic interview situations can become what Viruru and Cannella call *colonizing structure*. "When interviews are carefully constructed as limited spaces where conversations can occur, but only within certain bounds and according to certain rules, they become part of a colonizing apparatus" (2016, p. 183). This, they continue, creates of the third world "fragmented, inarticulate voices in (and from) the dark" (2016, p. 183). Unable to speak any Baringo's vernacular languages, I conducted inter-

views in English or Swahili – Kenya’s official languages. Remaining in these linguistic realms in interviews discriminates and excludes, giving platform only to those who speak those languages. By dictating the terms of the interview (time, place, topic discussed), the interviewer is already in a position of power. Excluding certain voices because they do not align with the interviewer’s preferred language(s) exacerbates this power imbalance. The voices of pastoralists who don’t speak either of these languages, or are unable to fully express themselves in them, remain *inarticulate voices in the dark*. By contrast, Joseph and Osman leading interviews brings the possibility to converse in more languages and brings these otherwise unheard voices into the research.

Data Protection

This project was submitted to the Swedish Ethical Review Board (Etikprövningsmyndighet) who approved the research under the condition that my material be stored securely and in accordance with the university’s procedure for storage and removal of research data. This also includes primary data, such as recordings (decision number 2019-06391). This section offers a short discussion of some ethically significant elements of the data processing and my efforts to uphold ethical standards.

The data includes sensitive personal data and information about violations of law and criminal wrongdoings. If this data were to be leaked, there is a risk it could expose the informants to harm. A lot of our informants express their ethnic identity – which is classified as sensitive personal data according to the Swedish Ethical Review Authority – or a special category of personal data according to GDPR. With this data public, they could be vulnerable to harm in the form of attacks from cattle raiders. One example is a herder we interviewed about his experiences of cattle raiding. The information he gave suggests that he is a viable candidate for raiding: he admits that he is unarmed, that he will continue to restock his herd whenever he gets raided and that the police won’t acknowledge his plight. The probability of a cattle raider reading this work and using it for malevolent ends is quite low. Nevertheless, if this were to happen the severity of the risk is high.

I have taken measures to minimize such risks. This includes anonymising my writing as much possible by using pseudonyms, removing references to addresses and other identifying data. The names given to informants such as Matthew and Chela, have all been made up. The only people who haven't been given pseudonyms are RAE staff (Murray, Elizabeth, Joseph and Osman) because of the central role they play in the research process. They have all given their consent to have their real names used in the thesis. I have also de-identified photos where possible by not including images of faces or homes. I have also securely stored all my data. I have chosen not to make this data publicly available as open data in order to protect the sensitive data of the informants. This decision is also informed by the risk that the data can do harm to third parties who haven't actively participated in the research. The data contains informants' opinions on their neighbouring ethnic communities. Some of these opinions are potentially prejudicial and potentially damaging to the reputation of the ethnic community. This is especially an issue when these third-party groups are stigmatized and oppressed. The Pokot community, for example, face both regular military attacks in the form of police crackdowns and reputational damage through the media. The Pokot community are frequently portrayed negatively by other, non-Pokot informants during my research. If this data is shared, there is a chance it could be used malevolently to harm the group through further stigmatization or oppression. There is only a small risk of military or media personnel in Kenya mining open data repositories to make an unfair or damaging case against the group, but it is not an impossibility.

This research has relied on voluntary participation by informants. Where possible, valid, informed consent has been obtained from participants. This has been done partly with the use of consent forms and explicit oral consent. In Sweden, consent forms are the gold standard tool for ensuring informant autonomy and self-determination are respected. In Baringo where illiteracy is prevalent and the formal apparatus of research institutions are less relevant, the consent form can carry less capital. Some informants, particularly the elderly cannot read or write (especially in English), yet we have asked them to sign a consent form; sometimes asking a younger person to help clutch the pen in the older person's hand and

scribble an imitation of a signature. Consequently, it is doubtful that the consent form is sufficient in obtaining valid, informed consent. While the consent form satisfies the regulatory demands of the university and Swedish laws, it does very little to ensure I respect my informants and live up to their ideals of consent. The significance or relevance of the performative act of signing a consent form is not understood in the way a Swedish legal institute would expect (i.e. as a binding acknowledgement of consent). Rather than a static, one-time action, these elderly people tend to understand consent as a relationship that is continually negotiated and can be deviated or aborted at any time.

What's more, consent is signed by the individual, but in rural Kenyan communities, there is a collective dimension that cannot be ignored. In communities with a communitarian understanding of identity, consent belongs as much to the individual as to the community – be it the family, the clan, or the ethnic group. While the individual may agree to consent, the wider community may not. During fieldwork, consent was obtained both by the individual but also by the wider community, either through discussion with elders, the chief, or through the head of the family. But there is no consent form to uphold and safeguard this type of collective consent.

Reflexivity

In the 1990s, Ethnology joined a broader trend in humanities and social sciences to question its methods, perspectives and position in relation to its study objects. At the time, Ethnologist Britta Lundgren commented: “Through critical examination of ethnological methods, several scholars have tried to ascertain the way in which the researcher’s own personality influences scholarship and make the research processes more evident in the texts” (Lundgren, 1994, p. 349). Since this so-called reflexive turn (cf. Mellander & Wiszmeg, 2016), it has become common practice in Ethnology to reflect on the research process. From this has emerged new, more considered forms of ethnography which take into account gender (cf. Gustavsson, 2015), the researcher’s bodily relation to the field (cf. Cridland, 2017; Hansson, 2021), language (cf. Mirsalehi, 2024), and interview questions (cf. Andersson, 2019). Given the centrality of questions

of knowledge production, ethnicity and identity to my research, it seems apt to engage in a reflexive discussion which hangs on these themes. Because of the historical role ethnographic research has played in reinforcing colonial and imperial power structures and the centrality of field work to the discipline, I find it important to reflect on the role my own research plays in reproducing the structures that continue to reinforce questions of epistemological inequality.

Of particular importance to this thesis is my relationship with the field site. In their seminal book, *Anthropological Locations*, Akhil Gupta and James Ferguson (1997) initiate a discussion on the centrality of the field site to ethnographic research, challenging the traditional assumptions about where a field site ought to be located, how long ethnographers need to spend in the field and who can be considered an object of study. They sketch out an archetypal ethnographic project as “the lone, white, male fieldworker living for a year or more among a native village” (Gupta & Ferguson, 1997, p. 11). The traditional model of ethnographic research was built on notions of the field as an exotic place far away from the civilisation in which the seat of learning is based. With this model, the notion of “going to the “field” suggests a trip to a place that is agrarian, pastoral, or maybe even “wild”” (Gupta & Ferguson, 1997, p. 8). The archetypal ethnography is centred on the notion of the field site as an exotic location far away from home, which the researcher enters and leaves as a detached observer. The image of the archetypal field site has created a standard for fieldwork which informs our understanding of what counts as field sites, ethnographic knowledge and importantly, the ethnographic ‘self’ against which research subjects are defined as ‘other’. Historically, a field site has been constructed as a geographically bound location where a non-European society can be studied to understand how *they* live differently to *us*. Classical conceptions of research implicitly build on this model and frame the research as a cultural outsider, disconnected from the community under investigation. Being an outsider is supposed to provide objectivity and epistemic distance – the detached capacity to see things insiders are blind to. In his classic text of the same name, for example, the Anthropologist Michael Agar terms the outsider as a *professional stranger* (Agar, 1980). This perspective frames

insider and outsider and two dichotomous perspectives. You can either be a part of the community or outside it.

Baringo has long been a site of ethnographic study. As early as 1906, colonial anthropologists demarcated Baringo as a distinct site of study (cf. Dundas, 1910; Hobley, 1906). Numerous studies in anthropology (cf. Bollig, 1998; Davies, 2008; Little, 1992; Moore, 1986), Archaeology (cf. Hodder, 1977) and recently Political Ecology (cf. Anderson, 2002) have continued to designate Baringo as a geographically distinct area of academic interest. Fieldwork in Baringo also contributes to Development Studies (cf. Little, 2019). In a way, Baringo has become the archetypal field site through this multidisciplinary tradition of research. With its three distinct ethnic communities and its rural, non-industrialised way of life, Baringo fits nicely with the metaphor of ‘the field’ as a faraway place with agrarian ties and a connection to nature.

As a white male conducting ethnographic research in a faraway location, among an agrarian society, my research runs the risk of reproducing Baringo as the archetypal field site. Given the history of ethnographic research in Baringo, I find it important, echoing Gupta & Ferguson, to challenge “the uncritical mapping of “difference” onto exotic sites” (Gupta & Ferguson, 1997, p. 14). Given my identity (white British male), the geography of my research (*on* Kenya *from* Europe) and the historical baggage of colonialism that colours relations between Britain and Kenya, it is important to reflect on the role my research plays in reproducing the structures of colonial thought. Have my interactions with Baringo as a field site upheld its (undesirable) image as the archetypal field site and reproduced an exoticisation of pastoralism?

Fieldwork plays a central role in a history of scholarly discourse of othering which has tended to reduce the people living there to little more than tropes of exoticism and difference. As Mudimbe’s (1988) *The Invention of Africa* showed, anthropological research has contributed to the image of Africa as the ultimate, primordial other. Similarly, Edward Said’s (1978) *Orientalism* exposed how classical research in the Middle and Far-East created the trope of The Orient as a land of exotic people and exploitable riches. Othering has social and political implications in the real-world. As Foucault (1977) has shown, othering is connected to power and knowl-

edge; it establishes hierarchies of domination and legitimise certain knowledge systems above others. Ideas coming out of ethnographic studies like these have historically informed policies and agendas in the Development Industry (Scoones, 2020). In fact, as we will see in chapter six, the exotic image of pastoralists has had a strong historical influence on how the Development Industry engages with pastoral regions. Admittedly, it cannot be said that Ethnology has contributed to this image. Other than a few exceptions (cf. Vehrs, 2022), Baringo has not been on Ethnology's radar. That said, there are parallels with Ethnology's history of fieldwork which has its own murky history of othering communities such as rural communities (such as Campbell, 1948; Erixon, 1921) and the Sami through fieldwork (see Evjen, 2009). Thus, it is important to reflect on the structures that reproduce the image of the archetypal field site and actively resist in the design of this project.

Challenging the Field/Home Dichotomy

The longevity of my relationship with Baringo challenges the field-home dichotomy. Baringo is not a place that I entered to conduct fieldwork then exited and left behind me. Rather, it is a place I continually return to and have a long, personal connection with. I lived there for several years before moving to Sweden and returned on several occasions prior to starting my PhD. Plus, I have maintained close connection with many people there since; Murray and Elizabeth, for example, attended my wedding in 2019. The differentiation, then, between home and field site as exotic, unknown location is not suitable for describing the role Baringo continues to have in my life and research. This blurring of field and home challenges the classical conception of the researcher as an outsider. Contrary to the archetypal image of an objective outsider, the Ethnologist Robert Labaree (2002) suggests that researchers are often multiple insiders and outsiders. Rather than an either/or perspective, insider-outsider status is continuously being negotiated: sometimes you are an insider, sometimes an outsider and you constantly fluctuate between the two. Insiderness, as Labaree phrases it, is "a result of the person's biographical profile, political activities, research agenda and the relationship with the community under study"

(Labaree, 2002, p. 102). Echoing Labaree, my own positionality challenges the insider-outsider dichotomy. Having lived in Baringo for so long, I am not an outsider. Yet, having moved away for so long, I am not an insider either. Rather, the boundaries of one's *insiderness* "are situational and defined by the perceptions of those being researched" (Labaree, 2002, p. 101). This project took me to villages on the outskirts of Baringo to interview pastoralists I had never met. For them, I am a complete stranger, making me an outsider in their world. But I have also interviewed pastoralists whom I have known for over six years, RAE staff members and Murray and Elizabeth. These are people with whom I have worked closely have personal relationships. For them, I am an insider, a former member of the team. I have insider knowledge of the workings of their organisation. I am observing a practice that is embedded in an organisational culture of which I have an acute understanding. Researching within a community or organisation to which the researcher is closely related is common among field working Ethnologists (cf. Engman, 2023; Hansson, 2007); as is fluctuating between insider and outsider (cf. Irwin & Smith, 2019; Kuoljok, 2020). Similarly, my status as insider or outsider, is a process of ongoing evaluation dependent on the situation and proximity to the informants.

The collaborative approach adopted in this project further challenged the field/home and insider/outsider dichotomies. Even when interviewing pastoralists, whom I have never met, the research team is never exclusively from outside because Joseph and Osman are insiders in their respective communities. Further, much of the analytical work is being carried out *in-situ*. It is not as self-evident where the fieldwork ends and the production of knowledge at the researcher's home institution begins. Ultimately, though, the final product (i.e. this thesis) has been written at home, by a single author. The co-researchers are left behind in the field and their voices are not included in the final stage of the production of knowledge. Given this limitation of collaborative research, it has arguably failed to fulfil the stated decolonial ambitions of redressing the structural power imbalances of research conducted in the South from the North. But at least it provides a semblance of redress, a step in the right direction – towards the village and away from the academy.

Summary

This is the end of part one of the thesis which has provided a background to the research field and an extensive discussion of the project design. Chapter one provided the context necessary to understand the intersection between Baringo's pastoralists and the Development Industry. It defined and contextualised several important concepts and places including pastoralism, the Development Industry and the field of Baringo, Kenya. It also situated the thesis in the research context by providing an overview of the previous research upon which it builds. Chapter two outlined the theoretical and methodological tools used to conduct this research. It described the ethnological and postcolonial theories which will be used to explore the ecological, economic and political processes shaping pastoralism in Baringo. It also discussed the materials gathered to conduct this analysis and provided theoretical and reflexive discussions of the ethnographic process and the specific data collection methods.

It's now time to enter Baringo. Part two of the thesis explores the major challenges facing pastoralists and the ways they are adapting their livelihoods to cope. Chapter three provides a vivid description of the contemporary cultural landscape, complete with details of the climate crises, economic pressures and political processes which make Baringo a marginal space. Chapter four explores the historical changes in the political and economic context which have created these conditions of marginalisation. Chapter five explores how the economic model of agropastoralism is changing in response to the emergent conditions through the introduction of grass farming.

Part II

The Changing Face of Agropastoralism

Chapter 3: Living with Multiple Crises

An introduction to the contemporary cultural landscape of Baringo

December 2022:

That's not normal. We're on a trip around Baringo and we drive past a herd of dead cattle at the side of the road (see image 4). The cattle's owner was walking them to the livestock auction in Marigat, in the vain hope he could sell them before they die of starvation. I've driven this road countless times over the past 10 years and I've never seen a sight like that. I'm back in Baringo during one of the most severe droughts in the region since 1981. Where-



Image 4. Dead cattle, starved by the drought, lining the road between Loruk-Marigat, December 2022. Photo: Osman Oleparmarin.

ever we drive, be it the rocky escarpment or the lakeside Flats, there is virtually no grass. And grass is life in Baringo. Almost everybody rears cattle, goats and/or camels to make ends meet. But there is so little grass for the livestock to eat, they are literally dying in the street. Somewhat paradoxically, Lake Baringo is also flooded to its highest level in recorded history. This continual barrage of environmental shocks destroys the livestock and land that agropastoralists rely on to make a living. The decreasing resources also mean cattle rustling is on the rise: as grazing lands shrink, herders are pushed into more extreme and violent means of securing resources.

This chapter explores agropastoralists' lived experience of these multiple, overlapping crises. It follows me, Joseph and Osman as we drive around and visit three agropastoralists living in different areas of the Baringo Basin – Kibet, Brian and Chelangat – who embody the difficulties of pastoral life. By digging into their stories of struggle, this chapter sets the scene for the rest of the thesis, exploring why it has become so difficult to make a living in Baringo and why this has triggered the changes in the cultural landscape which unfold in subsequent chapters.

How do people perceive climatic disasters and navigate them as part of their daily life? How do they impact the lives and livelihoods of pastoralists in Baringo today? These questions are explored through the theoretical framework of marginal spaces. Drawing on the ideas of Achille Mbembe and V.Y. Mudimbe, it frames Baringo as a rural landscape sitting on the margins of the modern national (and global) economy. It deploys Mudimbe's (1988) notion of marginality to investigate the political, economic and ecological dynamics which have expedited a transition away from the traditional lifestyle of the past without providing the conditions to successfully thrive in the modern economy. It further draws on Mbembe's (2001) idea that absence and disturbance are the *de facto* experience of daily life in many postcolonial settings to explore how pastoralists navigate life in this marginal space.

Our first stop takes us to meet Kibet, a Tugen elder who has struggled to keep his cattle alive through multiple droughts.

Drought, Floods and Invasive Species

We leave the tarmac and head up the cliffs onto the escarpment and into a landscape of dust and rocks, dotted with low growing brush, cacti and dense forests of greying trees. Nourished by four months of consistent rain, it ought to be greener than this. As we come closer to Kibet's homestead, Joseph signals to me to turn; we follow a goat track as far as we can into the bush until the shrub becomes too dense to drive and we are forced to get out and walk. After hacking our way through the thorn bushes that have grown over the remaining few metres of the track, we find an old man sitting outside his house waiting for us. Well into his eighties (but not sure exactly how old), Kibet has lived on this same land his entire life. With the barren ground and dead cattle fresh in mind, I ask him if it has always been so stark here:

Kibet: This area was completely covered in grass in the past. As soon as it rained, the whole place was covered in grass up to your knee. But now it has completely disappeared.



Image 5. The road heading onto the escarpment. This vast expanse of rocky land, which stretches to the Tugen Hills in the background, is the traditional home and grazing lands of a number of Tugen clans (own photo).

LIVING WITH MULTIPLE CRISES

Billy: Why is that?

Kibet: I think it's because the sun has become more intense, so the water dries up quickly. The grass takes time to grow, it needs the water to stay for longer.

Billy: And why is there no grass left in this specific area?

Kibet: Livestock. Overgrazing.

Billy: When did the grass start to disappear?

Kibet: It was a long time ago, in the 1960s. Back in 1961 there was grass everywhere. But since that time, it started to change.

Kibet is telling a story of climate change and how it effects the grass, a crucial element in pastoral life. Having lived here his entire life, he has been able to observe the landscape around him change from being “covered in grass up to your knee” to almost entirely devoid of grass. He may not explicitly use the vocabulary of climate change, but he describes his observations (“the sun has become more intense”) and makes comparisons with the past to communicate that the environment has changed for the worse. Specifically, he is describing the process of desertification whereby grasslands are unable to cope with the overgrazing, so they gradually decrease until they are eventually stripped bare of any vegetation. This creates a feedback loop of land degradation; with no vegetation anchoring the nutrient-rich topsoil, it washes away, leaving lower quality ground in which grass cannot grow.

Kibet identifies this process as starting almost 65 years ago. As we will see in the next chapter, agropastoralists in Baringo could once rely on communal grazing areas to provide enough nutrients for their livestock and they accessed additional foodstuffs through trade with nearby agriculturalists. As a socio-ecological system, pastoralism was able to consolidate and sustain throughout the late 19th and early 20th centuries partly because the area enjoyed a long period of climatic stability.³² Following a 60-year drought in

³² I understand climatic stability to mean a relatively predictable cycle of dry and rainy seasons.

the beginning of the 19th century, “rapid environmental recovery allow[ed] a specialized pastoral community... to become established in the Baringo plains” (Bollig, 2016, p. 27).³³ For the next century, the grasslands consistently produced enough pasture for pastoralism to continue as the dominant mode of existence. Since the 1960s, the population of people and livestock has consistently increased so there is more pressure on the grasslands.

The desertification process accelerated in the 1980s when droughts started to become more frequent and severe in Baringo (Fratkin, 2019). Nowadays, the rains are less predictable and more extreme (Koskei et al., 2018) and droughts are twice as common as they were 40 years ago (GoK, 2017).³⁴ According to local rainfall records, there is now less rainfall during the rainy season (RAE, 2022).³⁵ This corresponds to regional data which suggests that for the Horn of Africa as a whole, 2022 presented the largest rainfall deficit in 70 years (FEWS, 2022). Since 1988, the pastures of Baringo have reduced in size by 23% (Ochuka et al., 2019). That’s almost a quarter of the entire available grasslands wiped out in the last three decades. With the population more than doubling in the same period,³⁶ the land simply cannot cope with the prolonged levels of overgrazing it experiences now. The communal grasslands are running out and this form of pastoralism is becoming untenable. Desertification has reached a critical point with the current drought: this is the fifth consecutive rains to have failed and there is so little grass that, as we have seen, cattle are dying from

33 Bollig makes it clear that climatic stability was only one reason for the consolidation of specialised pastoralism; during this period herders were also successful at innovating livelihood strategies such as mobility and evolving social institutions such as cattle raiding to restock herd numbers after a drought.

34 The report on drought frequency by Government of Kenya (2017b) says that “evidence from historic climate data sources show that the drought frequencies and duration in the county increased from four droughts every ten years in the 1980s to eight droughts every ten years in the 2000s.”

35 RAE’s (unpublished) rainfall records, captured in 11 locations across the Baringo Basin, show that the most rainfall typically comes in April-May and July-August with a small dip in June. This year (2022), the monthly average rainfall was 494.9mm. The monthly average has only been lower five times in the past 40 years.

36 According to the national census, the population of Baringo in 1989 was 347,990. By 2023 it had reached 733,333. That is an increase of 110%. For more information, see *Baringo Population Density* (2023).

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starvation. While I'm here, the government declare Baringo in a *drought alarm phase*, announcing among other things that the number of children at risk of malnutrition is above the long-term average (GoK, 2022b). This drought has had a particularly negative effect on Kibet:

I had 10 cows, but they all died. During the drought there was no grass around here, so I was forced to take them in search of grass. I took them down to the grasslands by the lake, but they got malaria, and they all died (Kibet).

Against the backdrop of decades of desertification, droughts become a livestock killer. They either starve to death or herders are forced to move in search of grass into dangerous areas. Down by the lakeside, there is generally more grass. People tend to avoid keeping their cattle there because of the risk of disease; but when times get dire, you face the choice of certain starvation or risking fatal diseases.³⁷ Unfortunately for Kibet, the risk did not pay off. Another problem that Kibet highlights is foreign plant species degrading the grasslands:

You see this thick forest around us, this wasn't here before. It was just grass. There were a few trees dotted around but it was primarily grass. From the 1960s, the grass started to disappear, and the trees took over until we got this forest you see around us (Kibet).

Kibet points to a thicket of *Acacia reficiens* trees that separate his home from the main road. I'm well aware of the trees; the scratches still stinging my skin from hacking our way in are a visceral reminder of their presence. As the desertification process gradually took hold of these grasslands, the emptying land was concurrently being colonised by a number of non-native tree species including *Prosopis juliflora*, *Acacia reficiens* and a variety of *Opuntia* species. Ecologists have declared each of these tree species as *invasive species*, by which they mean “non-native plants, with large dispersal

³⁷ Incidentally, cattle don't get malaria. It's most likely that Kibet is using the word malaria as a proxy for sickness in general, or for a livestock disease which is transmitted by tsetse flies called Trypanosomiasis.

capacity and causing negative ecological, economic and social impacts” (Alvarez et al., 2019, p. 297). We will return to these noxious trees in chapter seven. For now, it suffices to mention that they have been introduced by different development projects, missionaries and businesses throughout the past half century to counter desertification or provide a new source of fodder for livestock. But, without their native predators to keep their numbers in check, these aggressive tree species spread like wildfire, turning into impenetrable forests which have been shown to be significantly less nutritious to livestock.³⁸

Droughts on Top of Floods

Leaving Kibet, we jump back in the car and head towards the Njemps Flats to meet Brian, an Il Chamus elder and hear how he has been affected by the droughts, but also by the rising floodwaters of Lake Baringo. Exacerbated by rapid deforestation in the surrounding hills, excess siltation in the lake is raising its bottom and turning it into a wide, shallow pan.³⁹ Over 14,000 acres of grazing land – an area the size of Manhattan – has been swallowed by the lake.⁴⁰ Over 5,000 people have been displaced (Muia et al., 2021).⁴¹ The floods are most acute in the Njemps Flats, a low-lying

³⁸ For a detailed account of the introduction of these trees, particularly *Prosopis juliflora*, see Kaur et al. (2012) *Community Impacts of Prosopis juliflora Invasion*.

For more information on how their nutritional input is inferior to indigenous flora, see Ouko et al. (2020) *Modelling Invasive Plant Species in Kenya's Northern Rangelands*.

For more information on the community impacts and land use changes caused by invasive species, see Becker et al. (2016) *Land-use Changes and the Invasion Dynamics of Shrubs in Baringo*.

³⁹ Lake Baringo is one of a chain of lakes running along the Great Rift Valley rift fault line including Lake Turkana, Lake Naivasha and Lake Nakuru which have all flooded in recent years. A scoping report by GoK and UNDP identified several causal factors for the lakes rising including land use changes in the surrounding hills, climate change and shifts in the tectonic plates below the valley. For more information, see UNDP (2021) *Rising Water Levels in Kenya's Rift Valley Lakes, Turkwel Dam and Lake Victoria*.

⁴⁰ This is an approximation acquired using satellite imagery from 1995 and 2023 to visually represent the lake's increase in size (see image 7).

⁴¹ This figure comes from 2021. The number of displaced is now likely to be much higher. A survey carried out by RAE in early 2020 put the numbers at 5,705 but with a



Image 6. View of Lake Baringo from atop the Tugen Escarpment. The rocky, semi-arid terrain and the flooded plains below make Baringo a difficult place to live. But, as indicated by the evergreen *Boscia angustifolia* and *Maerua crassifolia* trees jutting out of the craggy rocks, life has found a way to flourish despite the hostility. Both trees are used for dry season grazing and as traditional medicines (own photo).

expanse of flat land on the southern shore. As there is no outlet for Lake Baringo, water is slowly filling up the valley floor and engulfing the land. Coming back down the cliffs, the barren landscape behind us is contrasted against the glimmering avocado-coloured waters of the lake. As we drive towards the lake, the view through the windscreen is a breath-taking sight, for its beauty but also for its sadness: not enough water to grow grass and yet too much to live. The stark visual contrast demands our attention,

caveat that they are likely to increase rapidly (RAE 2020). More recent media reports suggest the numbers could be as high as 10,000. See for example Koech (2024) *Endless Cycle of Displacement of Baringo Families with Nowhere to Go*.



Image 7. Top: Lake Baringo 2023. Bottom: Lake Baringo 1995. The Lake is hemmed in by the Tugen Hills to the West and Laikipia Plateau to the East so the floodwaters spread along the flat flood plains. The most pronounced losses of land have occurred in the Njempis Flats to the south and east of the lake (Google Earth).

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urging us to engage with it. How have the flooding and droughts affected people living down by the lake?

When we sit down with Brian, he first tells us about how he has been affected by droughts:

I was very wealthy before with 200 head of cattle. But unfortunately, they were wiped out by drought and only 12 survived. I have about 14 children. They are in different levels of education - university, college, secondary and primary. I had so many livestock before, but they all died during droughts (Brian).

From 200 cattle down to 12. That is a staggering 94% loss of stock. Like the cattle we drove past lining the road, Brian's cattle were victim to severe drought. He relied on the communal grazing lands that spread across the Njemp Flats to feed his cattle. With increasing pressure from overgrazing, these pastures were already struggling to support all the livestock that used them. As drought hit, Brian's cattle were simply too emaciated to survive. Brian previously identified as a wealthy herdsman and used his wealth to pay for his kids' education. Seeing it as his moral duty to put as many of his kids through school and university as possible, he would periodically sell cattle to raise the cash required to pay school fees. Droughts have changed this: given his cattle were his only source of income, he was propelled into poverty. Forced to live hand-to-mouth until he found a more permanent solution, he was constantly struggling to find money to put food on the table and cover the rising costs of modern life. No longer able to invest in the future of his children, he was forced to redirect his immediate energy to survival.

Like many of his neighbours, Brian has also been displaced by the floods, forced to move inland to and find a new place to settle down. In an interview with Osman, Brian's son (Matthew) gives a sense of the scale of this displacement:

The floodwaters have stretched many kilometres inland... [They] have really brought problems to my community. All of our fields have been completely destroyed. People's homesteads have been destroyed. There are people without a place to live. People are begging for a place to live (Matthew).

For a while, Brian was one of these people begging for a place to live. The immediate and most primary impact of the floods is that his home was swept away, and he was forced, in Matthew's words, to beg for a place to live. On top of this, the grazing lands that comprise most of the Njemps Flats have also been engulfed by the flood waters so there is no grass to feed livestock. The floods are something I am personally, acutely aware of. My own home, where I lived before leaving Kenya, was swallowed by the rising floodwaters and remains under water (see image 8). It was the first place I called home together with my (now) wife, Linn; it is filled with symbolic meaning as the foundation of our own personal journey. Seeing it under water triggers a small grief in me, a sadness that this material link to the beginnings of our shared history is now gone.

But there is a very big difference between our experience and Brian's. As Europeans, Linn (Swedish) and I (British) could leave the country and start



Image 8. Remains of my first home in Baringo following the flood. This building was once several kilometres from the lakeshore. When I moved here in 2013, the shoreline was approximately 50 metres away. The water has crept further inland since, and at the time of writing this structure is entirely submerged (own photo).

a new chapter of our lives in Sweden.⁴² Brian could not go home for his home was destroyed and his life was displaced. Eventually, Brian managed to find a new place to live. His community gave him a plot of land further away from the lake to build a home. But it seemed his run of bad luck was not quite over. Alas, the floods displaced him yet again. This time from a river:

I was living here before the river changed direction and went through my home. It flooded one day, destroying houses and killing my goats and lambs. This forced me and my family to move to a safer area (Brian).

Lake Baringo is fed by several perennial and seasonal rivers which regularly oscillate from full to empty (or near empty) with the seasons.⁴³ As the rains arrive, dry riverbeds quickly fill to become temporary rivers. These fluctuations are incorporated into Baringo's infrastructure. For instance, the C₄ – the only tarmac road in and out of the Baringo Basin – includes a series of fords to allow seasonal rivers to flow uninterrupted. Rain showers bring an explosive deluge of water, soil and organic matter rushing down from the Tugen Hills, making the fords impassable. After a while (anywhere from a few minutes to a few hours), the deluge subsides and lowers to a crossable level. Understanding the fluctuating patterns of this interruption, commuters sit and wait. With no other routes across for tens of kilometres up or down the river, the impasse is simply a fact of life. An inconvenience, yes, but not life threatening (as long as you don't try to cross too early). Deforestation in the surrounding hills, however, means the rivers now pick up more loose soil, making the waters more voluminous. As they reach the Baringo Basin, the heavier, more intense rivers break their banks, looking for new courses across the plains towards the lake. The denuded plains, overgrazed during the droughts, make for a silt pan, an open expanse where the river is given free rein to slither wherever it feels, snaking across the landscape finding the most direct route to the lake. Twisting and shifting at will, one

⁴² We moved to Sweden before Brexit made it more difficult for British people to move freely within Europe.

⁴³ According to the world lake database, "several seasonal rivers drain into the lake, including Ol Arabel, Makutan, Tangulbei, Endao and Chemeron. Perkerra and Molo are perennial rivers, although with significantly reduced water discharges during dry seasons" (ILEC 2002).

river found a suitable path through Brian's homestead, punching right through his house and farm with no regard for the inhabitants.

Living with Multiple Crises

The image of denuded grasslands, forests of invasive species, rising lake waters and unpredictable rivers give us a snapshot of a landscape plagued by climatic and economic disasters. There is a growing body of ethnological research focusing on lived experiences of disasters which demonstrates that they are often interpreted and navigated as crises (cf. Arvidson et al., 2013; Mellander, 2021). From an ethnological perspective, crisis can be understood as an inner struggle or unrest which arises when changes in the world force you to question your understanding of how the world works and your place in it (Hansson, 2013). For pastoralists like Kibet and Brian, the disasters facing Baringo appear to bring forth multiple, overlapping crises: reduced rainfall is interpreted as drought, excess water as a flood and the introduction of a foreign species of tree as an invasion. In an essay on the subjectivity of crisis, Achille Mbembe suggests that the present era, particularly in Africa, is defined by the acute presence of various crises originating from different realms. Across Africa there are economic recessions, wars, environmental degradation, large-scale population shifts and natural catastrophes going on, often simultaneously. These are experienced in people's daily lives as an "entanglement of a plurality of real and not wholly distinct transformations" which bring about "physical and mental violence" (Mbembe & Roitman, 1995, p. 324). The omnipresence of overlapping crises shapes the lived experiences of people living through them so acutely that, for Mbembe, they have become a defining feature of the present era.

Kibet and Brian remember a time when perpetual crises weren't the norm, and the land could provide enough resources for people to make living. As we will see in chapter four, the landscape had been cultivated into pastures upon which herders graze their cattle, goats and sheep in accordance with the seasons. They hinted at something which will be explored further in the next chapter, namely that people could rely on a stable climate to make a living out of pastoralism. Seasonal regularity brought a knowable temporality to the landscape which they could work with. They

could predict how long they could graze an area and still leave enough grass for the pastures to self-regenerate during the next rains. As the next chapter shows, land management was built on a body of social institutions and knowledge that related to the seasonal fluctuations which have since been disrupted by climate change. Nowadays, multiple crises have become a mainstay of everyday life. Rains regularly fail, killing livestock and putting people at risk of malnourishment. Rivers burst their banks seemingly at will, destroying homes and farms. Forests of foreign trees colonise the pasture lands, taking away vital sources of fodder. Rather than cataclysmic, one-off events like an earthquake or a volcanic eruption, most of the crises present in Baringo occur gradually and are a constant presence.

Forced to navigate these crises as part of their daily lives, people learn to live with them and adapt. For Mbembe, the everydayness of crisis turns it into an ordinary phenomenon:

It is in everyday life that the crisis as a limitless experience and a field of the dramatisation of particular fields of subjectivity is authored, receives its translations, is institutionalised, loses its exceptional character and in the end as a “normal”, ordinary and banal phenomenon becomes an imperative to consciousness (Mbembe & Roitman, 1995, p. 325).

As crises become ordinary features of everyday life, they lose their sensationalism. Desertification, for example, is a slow, creeping phenomenon that has progressively taken over the grazing lands and coping with extended droughts has become the norm. Droughts are a prolongation of the dry season, which occur when the rains fail to arrive. Every additional day without rain presents Kibet with one more day in which he needs to keep moving his cattle around in search of grass. Along this drawn-out journey, navigating the risks of drought become an everyday function of his grazing practices – as has the heightened capacity to cope with crisis, as we will see in chapter five. With each day, he is also forced to push a bit further beyond his normal grazing lands and make his way, for example, to the lakeside where he knows there is grass but also more harmful livestock diseases. The volatility of the environment and the tragedy of death are translated into the slow, rhythmic movement of walking towards the lake. The unpredictability of the rainfall

forces him into the predicament between his cattle's certain death by starvation or potential death by disease. In either case, the death of his cattle is associated not with dramatic fatality, but with a slow, painful demise.

Changing Temporalities

Climate change brings new temporalities to the landscape of Baringo by distorting timeframes of the seasons and changing the speed of the lakes and rivers. In contrast to the predictable temporality of the past, pastoralists now face an unpredictable and erratic environment. The regular seasons have given way to unpredictable rainfalls and prolonged drought, the lake waters are rising and the floods snake arbitrarily across the land. The irregularity of the fluctuations in the landscape's temporality creates a departure or disjuncture from the predictable, regular temporalities of the past. The temporalities of the landscape today are defined by what Mbembe calls disjuncture and disorder: "in this intermeshing of temporalities" he argues, "...contradictory dynamics are at work, made up of time-lags, disjunctures and different speeds" (Mbembe, 2001, p. 73). The droughts and floods represent three distinct but "*intermeshing*" ways in which the unpredictable temporality of the landscape have changed. A drought is a dry season which has been *prolonged*, stretched out beyond the regular temporal parameters of seasonal fluctuations. With the increased population, grazing is also *sped up*, diminishing the resources at a more rapid rate than the ecosystem has evolved to accept. Finally, the river destroys homes by *accelerating* beyond a speed that the riverbeds and its banks can contain.

These irregular temporalities of the landscape disrupt livelihoods by bringing multiple forms of disorder and chaos which pastoralists have to navigate simultaneously. For Brian, the dry season prolongs until it kills his livestock, while the floodwaters attack from multiple angles and at differing speeds; both from the slow rising of the lake sluggishly engorging his land and from the seasonal rivers smashing frenetically through his home. All these disruptions represent the temporalities of the seasons oscillating, expanding and contracting at a rate and irregularity Brian struggles to cope with. The drought disrupts his life by stretching beyond a temporality he can cope with; unable to slow down his cattle's grazing rates

enough to make the grass last the season, 94% of them die. This is accompanied by the slow, gradual suffocation of the grasslands that comes from the creeping lake waters. Exposed to the overstretched dry seasons, the gradual, creeping ruin of the lake and the ferocious, hurried intervals of the river, Brian's life is destabilised by these interwoven temporalities.

The temporality of the lake is also out of sync with the seasons. The level of the lake has typically fluctuated in line with the seasons. It rises with the influx of water from the seasonal rivers, during the rainy season and falls thanks to high rates of evaporation, during the dry season (ILEC, 2002). Now, because of deforestation in the surrounding hills, the rivers bring huge amounts of silt and soil which settles to the lake floor and raises the bottom. Unaffected by the cycles of rain and sun, the lake slowly fills up from below, gradually claiming the land that once belonged to the people. The slow inundation of the floodwaters interacts with and compounds the distorted temporalities of the stretched out dry seasons. With 14,000 less acres to graze, the remaining pastures are being used up more quickly and denuded. People have to turn to dry season grazing pastures more quickly, depleting their resources so they can't provide a crucial lifeline throughout the dry seasons and droughts. Moreover, the denuded lands provide a plane across which seasonal rivers can wind freely and frenetically, smashing through farms and homes at will. Following heavy rainfall, deluges of water and soil rush down from the hills bursting frantically out of the courses that the riverbeds have prescribed and onto the plains. This image of the river as an erratic, unpredictable snake, roaming free and uninhibited, is relatively new. Traditionally, the rivers appeared and disappeared in a more regular flux akin to the tides of the sea. During the dry season, the riverbeds usually remained dry. When the rains came, they temporarily filled up before subsiding again. Nowadays, as the climate becomes less predictable, the rivers are less inclined to stay in their lane.

As we will see in chapter five, agropastoralists like Brian and Kibet are finding ways to cope with this new reality. But, without the economic resources he had before, he has been left in a state of uncertainty, exposed to the continuing, relentless shocks that his environment unleashes upon him.

For the final stop on our road trip, we leave the floodplains behind us and head North towards the Tugen-Pokot border. We're meeting Chelangat, a Tugen herder who has been the target of numerous cattle raids to which he has lost his livestock, home and several family members.

Here is Home But it's Dangerous Now

"*We're entering the conflict zone now,*" Joseph declares as we leave the main road. We drive a further 45 minutes past abandoned homesteads and maize fields, former grazing lands covered in weeds and, most poignantly, very few people. The area has recently been targeted by cattle raiders⁴⁴. Arriving at the village, I park the car in the shade of an Acacia tree and follow Joseph to find Chelangat sat under a wood and straw arbour with a small group of men from his village. With Chelangat's consent, they also join the conversation. Despondent yet candid, Chelangat sets the tone for the conversation by launching straight into a story about the last time he was attacked by raiders:

We were ambushed in the morning as we were heading out. My brother was killed and his brother [pointing to his neighbour] was attacked. The thieves entered our homes, threw us to the ground and started beating us... In total, they took over 100 animals. The animals were stolen from three homesteads, and they killed two people... I went to the police station and submitted a report. But if they can't come and arrest the thieves there and then, they just run off and you have to wait until you catch them again. Now, at the market, you can go there and find your own goats or cows... But the guy will just say "but I bought this cow, let me go and get the guy I bought it from"... So, the only thing to do is to buy back your animal. And that is okay if it is only one or two goats, but if we're talking about 200-300 then that is a real problem (Chelangat).

At the time of the attack, Chelangat was living right next to the community border, within a stone's throw of his Pokot neighbours. Scared for his own life after the attack, he immediately fled further into the Tugen lands, seeking refuge in the nearby village. The elders organised a new plot of land

44 Also commonly referred to as bandits or cattle rustlers.

away from the border for him to build a new home. In total, Chelangat has been attacked four times, losing most, if not all, his livestock with every raid. Each time, he starts from scratch and gradually restocks his herd. Sitting to Chelangat's immediate right, George is nodding dejectedly to confirm Chelangat's plight. He lost 42 goats in the most recent raid last year. Considering the constant threat of violence, I wonder why they haven't abandoned herding and pursued a safer livelihood elsewhere, to which they respond respectively:

What else can I do? You go and do some labouring, you get a bit of cash, then you buy more goats. There's no other way, there are no jobs around here we can do (Chelangat).

Where will I go? Here is home. We have nowhere to go. It is difficult and expensive to move elsewhere. People are slowly bringing their cows back, but you cannot expect peace here now. Here is danger (George).

Living in a remote village 50km from the nearest urban centre (Marigat), Chelangat and George recognise that there are very few economic opportunities available to young, uneducated men like them. After a raid, Chelangat tends to look for temporary work as a labourer in the surrounding area at quarries, construction sites, or farms. 70% of households in Baringo own livestock, whereas employment in the formal sector sits around 15% (GoK, 2016b). The majority of these jobs are located in the urban centres of Kabarnet and Marigat and in tourist areas like Kampi ya Samaki. Some people even venture further afield to search for employment in the larger cities of Nakuru and Nairobi. By contrast, there are very few employers offering long-term, formal employment in remote areas of the county. If Chelangat is able to get work, it is typically short-term, cash-in-hand work. He saves up what he can to buy more livestock and restock his herd. For George, the idea of moving elsewhere to another village or a city is not an option either: it is difficult and too expensive, so he is forced to return home. Francis, an elderly man sat to my right, starts telling Joseph in Tugen – which Joseph later translates for me – about how raiding functioned when they were young:

In the past, the Pokot were still doing cattle rustling, like now. But the difference is that they only had home-made batons. But nowadays they have got guns... I think those guns arrived around 1978 (Francis).

From the mid-1970s onwards, wars in neighbouring Somalia and Ethiopia meant small firearms were more prolific in the region and moved easily across the porous, poorly controlled borders into Northern Kenya (Greiner, 2013). A series of regional and civil wars in the Horn of Africa were absorbed into cold war era tensions between global superpowers and became a battleground for communist and democratic ideologies. The lack of surveillance in Northern Kenya makes it easier to use guns to commit violent raids with little fear of legal repercussion. These raids are often sponsored by well-connected urban elites. In a national newspaper article, the Politician George Nitembeya suggests that cattle raiding operations are akin to crime syndicates run by elected officials (Wafula & Kibor, 2023). Expressing frustration at the political acceptance of this situation, he gives an example from his time as regional commissioner of Rift Valley (where Baringo is located). In his words, he had:

a full list of individuals who had invaded Laikipia Nature Conservancy with illegal grazing, where lives and property were lost. Some of the high-ranking individuals in the military, police, Kenya Wildlife Service (KWS) and politicians, among others, were named. No action was taken against them (George Nitembeya).

High ranking officials use their position and access to public resources to supply raiders with arms and ensure their protection. The group we're talking to tells us that raids centre around the Pokot-Tugen border or the Pokot-Il Chamus border (see figure 2). Raids are conducted mostly at night, or in the morning and the raiders come across country, through the bush. After a raid, they herd their haul towards the market towns to sell them. The map shows the scale of the raiding landscape. Most of the sites are concentrated around the conflict zone on the Pokot-Tugen border. But the raids occur as far away as Marakwet (50-60km away from the conflict zone) and the raiders take the stolen animals to sell at markets at Nginyang (30km away), Marigat (50km away) and even Mogotio (100km away).

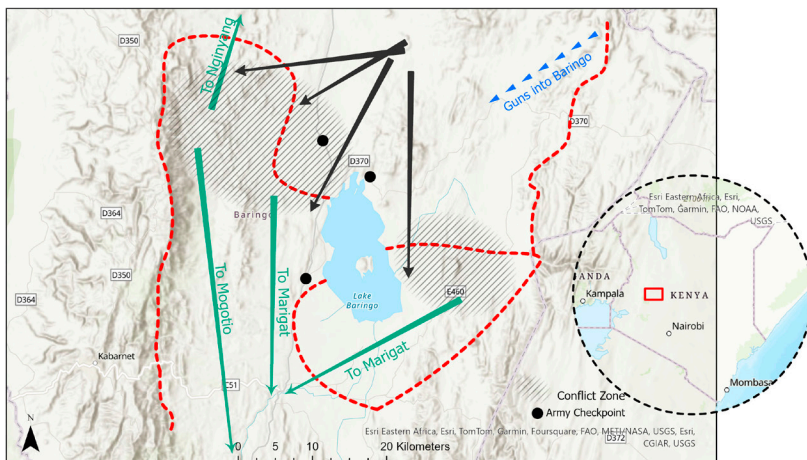


Figure 2. Map depicting the conflict zones of the Baringo Basin. The cattle raiding hot spots are located on the inter-ethnic borders. Raiders come from within their own community lands (as depicted by black arrows) to raid in neighbouring areas. Stolen livestock are taken away to surrounding markets (routes depicted by green arrows) (ArcGIS Pro).

A Violent Mode of Production

Cattle rustling has been a feature of the economic model of pastoralism in Baringo since pre-colonial times. Historian Joshia Osamba (2000) suggests that, historically, it was akin to a sport which was controlled and regulated; a raid had to be sanctioned by the elders who considered it their duty to ensure relations between communities remained amicable. Nowadays, it is used primarily for commercial gain, both for the urban elites sponsoring it and the young men carrying it out. Now, there is “a shrinking resource base, which has provoked a desperate struggle for survival” (Osamba, 2000, p. 21). According to Osamba, the theft of livestock, resources and land is now used as a common strategy to cope with climatic disasters and the ever-present challenge of high living costs. Against the backdrop of environmental shocks and economic pressures, cattle raiding brings about what Osamba calls “new forms of violence [which] are characterised by the commercialisation of banditry and cattle rustling” (Osamba, 2000, p. 22). Rustling is a mode of production, predicated on the use, or at least poten-

tiality, of violence. With livestock being the main source of income for most pastoralists, the very act of stealing is a gratuitous economic violence – violating another’s livelihood. When they are already struggling with poverty, this can be a death sentence.

The economic and physical violence surrounding raiding further creates new forms of what might be called *existential violence* by disrupting a victim’s sense of belonging and the relations with their neighbours. Following the phenomenologist Michael Staudigl, we can understand violence as being destructive “of the very foundational ways we are able to make sense of the world” (2007, p. 236). It destroys the way we understand the world around us by shattering our basic capacity to make sense of the world and our place in it. “Here is home,” George reminds us, “but it’s danger now.” To feel at home in a place requires peace; it ought to be taken-for-granted that you can live your life without fear of disruption. The threat of violence radically disturbs this taken-for-granted sense of peace. It is ever-present in the conflict zones; so long as you have livestock or land that others could take, you are exposed to the violence of raiding. By staying in the conflict zone, Chelangat and George are staying with the violence. Unable to move elsewhere, they are imprisoned in the place that is home but no longer provides the peace expected of a home.

The continuous cycle of raids between neighbouring communities turns neighbours into enemies and a constant source of potential danger. Because rustling presents an opportunity to overcome poverty or as a lifeline during droughts, the violence that accompanies it is taken out of the realm of justice and transplanted into the realm of economics. Stripped of its concern for sanctity of life and respect for the dignity of others, violence is but a competitive edge over one’s neighbours. Defined by the logics of economics and the market, cattle rustling creates what Mbembe (2019) calls *relations of enmity* between individuals from neighbouring communities. Within these newly accelerated economic parameters, relations between perpetrator and victim are shaped by the violence that binds them. Rustling is typically not defined by acts of targeted malice against a specific individual, or retaliation (although, this motive is not ruled out). Being located in a conflict zone, on the other side of the tribal border, you are merely living in the wrong place at the wrong time. Nevertheless, if I’m attacking you, you are not one of us,

but an Other. Ethnology has taught us that market forces play an increasingly significant role in processes of othering (cf. Hansson, 2007; Ristilampi, 1995). Scarce resources and an increasing relevance of economic incentives in daily life make this othering more pertinent. Chelangat and George have detailed their plight at the hands of Pokot raiders. But it is important to note that no ethnic community has a monopoly on the violence of cattle raiding. It is a mode of production open to anyone living under conditions sufficiently precarious to necessitate survival and make rustling a viable option. A victim one day, any pastoralist with sufficient motivation – not excluding the impulse for retaliation – can become a perpetrator the next. Swinging back and forth between victim and perpetrator, the cycle of violence binds them tighter into their relations of enmity.

The Spatiality of Violence

The violence is mostly confined in *conflict zones* where raiding is more prevalent than elsewhere; the risk of violence and land grabs is intensified, making them hotspots for livestock theft. Space, as Mbembe eloquently puts it, “is not only crossed by movement. It is itself in movement” (2019, p. 37). Far from a static area carved into the map, the conflict zones are in constant flux, following the movements of rustlers. Pastoralism is defined by movement; its modes of production – semi nomadic grazing and now rustling – involve moving around in the landscape. Rustling matches these patterns of movement, expanding, contracting and shifting the boundaries of a conflict zone with every execution. Accordingly, as Mbembe highlights, “the dynamics of violence tend to marry those of spatial mobility and circulation typical of desert, or semidesert, nomadic worlds” (Mbembe, 2019, p. 37). As rustlers exhaust the bounty in one area, they move in search of more, expanding the boundaries of the conflict zone as they go. The trade routes spread beyond the conflict zone, engulfing more of the landscape into the path of violence. Prowess in this violent mode of production requires the mastery of movement, accommodating, even orchestrating, the constant flux of the conflict zone. This calls for an intimate and expansive knowledge of the landscape and awareness of the spatial mobility of social and market networks.

With conflict zones concentrated along borders between neighbouring communities, their spatial dimensions are etched into the landscape through the (visible and invisible) markers that delineate ethnic boundaries. Raiders usually do not steal from within their own community, but from another. For an individual to become a target of rustling, is an act of happenstance and arbitrariness. Nevertheless, in crossing over the tribal borders to steal or kill, the violent acts of rustlers work to entrench the tribal borders into the landscape. According to Achille Mbembe, violence of this sort produces a cultural praxis which “makes the violence omnipresent; it is presence—presence not deferred (except occasionally) but spatialized” (2001, p. 175). As their territory expands, so too does the landscape of violence, each wave of expansion engulfing more land and binding it to the *conflict zone*. Violence is constrained by the spatiality of the landscape, but the threat of violence is always present. Just as an active volcano does not continuously spit out lava, this area is not a constant battleground; rather, it is an area *prone to violence* in which the scars of past conflict and the risk of future conflicts are ever present.

This marks the end of our road trip around the Baringo Basin. We have seen people forced to cope with droughts, floods, invasive species and the ever-present threat of deadly cattle raids. What do these experiences tell us about the state of the modern-day cultural landscape of Baringo?

Living in Marginal Spaces

Pastoralists in Baringo today are faced with multiple, overlapping crises. The instability of the environment is making it increasingly difficult to manage the land and resources effectively. The ecosystem collapse has been accompanied by economic collapse. As we will see in subsequent chapters, there has been a shift away from the traditional way of life and new economic opportunities are emerging. Given Kibet identifies the time when things started changing in the 1960s, the same time that the country of Kenya was born through an independence struggle against British rule, the era he is referring to could be understood as postcolonial Kenya. For Achille Mbembe, the defining features of daily life in postcolonial Africa

include disturbance and absence, particularly for the rural poor, where climate-related risks, extreme poverty and food insecurity are commonplace. This is a time which, as he puts it, is “made up of disturbances, of a bundle of unforeseen events, of more or less regular fluctuations and oscillations” (Mbembe, 2001, p. 16). Globalisation means wars or recessions elsewhere on the planet send economic shockwaves that reverberate through rural Africa and human-induced climate change brings extreme climatic events to these areas at almost regular intervals. For many in the postcolonial era, to live means to navigate the disturbance and absence which define, constrain and guide daily life. Following Mbembe, then, it could be said that pastoralists in Baringo are now living in a landscape of disturbance and absence defined by economic disaster, environmental destruction and depleting natural resources.

This phenomenon has parallels to the marginality experienced by Sami communities in Northern Sweden who are unable to continue their traditional way of reindeer herding yet have been excluded from the development opportunities of mainstream Swedish society. Ethnologist Tom G Svensson (1991) has argued that Sami herders’ experiences of marginality have political, legal and ecological dimensions. Svensson builds on earlier studies of marginalization in Swedish Ethnology, such as Daun’s (1969) study of a community facing a closure of the factory and Arnstberg & Goldman’s (1974) study of the Romani minority in Sweden. Politics, law and ecology create equally important barriers to Sami livelihoods and “these three factors are viewed as interdependent variables” in the difficulties in maintaining a viable lifestyle (Svensson, 1991, p. 123). Large-scale commercial exploitation, combined with weak communal land ownership structures, has denied them the natural resources required to support their livelihoods, and an absence of meaningful political representation undermines their rights to self-determination and cultural autonomy.

Likewise, with an economic system, a justice system and an ecological system that disturb and destabilises, this makes Baringo into a marginal space, or what Mudimbe calls “an intermediate, a diffused space where social and economic events define the extent of marginality” (1988, p. 4). One’s home and livestock are a continual presence throughout a herder’s life journey and so represent ties of continuity between past, present and

future. Crises have severed the ties with both the past and a viable pastoral future, forcing people to live in the present, in a marginal state of being. As semi-nomadic pastoralists, they are used to moving around in response to climatic variability. If they can't graze an area, they move and graze elsewhere. Now, with the grass running out, they don't have this flexibility. Unable to draw on the same tactics they used to, their flexibility and adaptability is compromised. With livestock and pastures wiped out, many pastoralists also lack the resources to invest in their future. For Mbembe, this state of marginality brings a mixing of different forms of absence "in which the future horizon is apparently closed, while the horizon of the past has apparently receded" (Mbembe, 2001, p. 17). Forced to rebuild a livelihood every time disaster strikes, the displaced must simultaneously build a vision of a new future which does not follow on from their past.

The material conditions of precarity force people living in borderlands into deadly conflicts with their neighbours. Traditionally, cattle raiding was a culturally significant practice, connected to age-set initiations and bride wealth and was regulated by the elders. Now, it is primarily a strategy for commercial gain, sponsored by urban elites using it for their own material gain. However, as spaces of violence, conflict zones are largely confined to the marginalized rural areas of Kenya by the market economy. Cattle rustling plays a central role in the production of meat and dairy products that are demanded in the urban centres. Livestock markets link rural regions of Kenya with the urban centres through the flow of goods and resources. Yet the market ensures that this mode of production and its attendant violence does not follow the produce. The conflict is over the resources and the resources are produced in the rural areas; more specifically, in the conflict zones. Whilst alienated from his product, the producer is not alienated from its mode of production. Rather, he is bound to it, ensnared in the violence it necessitates. The same geographic distinction between the urban and rural also places the conflict zones on the outer margins of the formal justice system which is coordinated from Nairobi. Concerns for justice from the margins are rarely heard. On the margins of the national economy where resources are scarce and competition for land, livestock and pasture is fierce, there is little room for concern for the welfare of the victim. "Today victim, tomorrow executioner, then victim once again—

the hateful cycle does not stop growing, twisting and spreading its coils everywhere. Few misfortunes are deemed unjust from this point on. There is neither guilt nor remorse nor reparation” (Mbembe, 2019, p. 39). In the conflict zone, the omnipresence of violence is predicated on the necessity for all herders of making a living, no matter what the cost. At the outer edges of social and economic life, individual lives become superfluous, and nobody feels obligated to respond to deaths. This provides ideal conditions for the violence of cattle rustling to flourish without accountability. In this dog-eat-dog world, it’s you or me. There is no remorse, only survival.

It is perhaps important to mention that this image of marginality, which I borrow from Mbembe, is inspired by a broader theoretical perspective known as *Afro-pessimism* which casts doubt on the possibility of overcoming the challenges of poverty, development and governance in Africa (cf. Nothias, 2012). As a self-proclaimed Afro-pessimist, Mbembe has been criticised for being overly pessimistic and denying the productive agency of people to create new futures (cf. Weate, 2003). The overriding emphasis on negative forces in his work makes it appear as if African subjects have no capacity whatsoever to influence their lives and must simply resign to their fate of marginality. However, the critic Bennetta Jules-Rosette suggests that Africa’s marginal spaces often become an “empty space of creativity where new ideologies and cultural strategies are shaped and deployed” (Jules-Rosette, 2002, p. 604). Rather than lie down and accept their fate, people in these spaces often use invest energy in finding creative ways to overcome their challenges. Given this critique, it is pertinent to question how much space marginality and crisis play in the daily lives of pastoralists. Are people in Baringo mere victims to the barrage of disturbances they face without any agency to cope or shape their futures? Arguably not – or at least not entirely. As we will see in chapter five, people are in fact managing to build a new vision of their economic future in the form of grass farming, which helps build their resilience to the disturbances etched into their landscape.

Nevertheless, given the undeniable conditions of disturbance and absence, the tone for these actions is set by a condition of temporariness. Being stuck in the present implies living in a constant state of temporary existence, treading water and struggling to move forward, especially for the poor:

For the poor, many things in life have a temporary quality: not only physical and spatial resources, but also social, political and moral relations. The social energy and personal creativity of the poor are devoted to producing a sense of permanence. For many people, the struggle to be alive is the same as the struggle against the constant corrosion of the present, both by change and by uncertainty (Mbembe, 2021, p. 29).

For many, navigating disturbances, preparing for unseen events and struggling to overcome instabilities is the primary activity of daily life. With more unpredictable seasons, they dedicate more time to planning and preparing for the constant threat of unforeseen droughts and the risk of violence. On top of this, the rising costs of modern-day life require productive energy be applied to survival. Despite being largely ignored and receiving little investment, Baringo has not been able to escape the reach of the market, and the subsistence and barter-based economy have been replaced with a market-based economy. As we will see in the next chapter, cash is now king. Finding sufficient cash to buy food is at the forefront of the thoughts of the some 70% of Baringo's pastoralists living below the poverty line.

Summary

Dead cattle lining the road. Invasive species destroying entire ecosystems. Flooding and drought. Cattle rustling and displacement. It's been a heavy day. This chapter has taken us on a road trip around the Baringo Basin to give a snapshot of the challenging environment in which pastoralists conduct their lives and attempt to make a living. It has explored how pastoralists are impacted by and cope with the multiple, overlapping crises that shape their lives. For the majority, the place they call home is now experienced as a number of overlapping marginal spaces. Forced to navigate the entangled system of economic, judicial and ecological challenges emerging out of the crises, daily life for many in Baringo is now defined by absence, disturbance and violence.

The picture painted in this chapter opens up a number of questions that will be answered in subsequent chapters. In particular, it begs the question as to how the crises are being handled today, both economically and politically. On an individual level, what are people doing to cope with these

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crises and etch out a living? What are the Development Industry and the state doing to ameliorate the situation and help pastoralists cope? It also evokes questions of how this dire state of affairs came about in the first place. How did Baringo become a place plagued by economic crisis, climatic disasters and violence? The next chapter addresses this latter question by delving into Baringo's history. Let us now leave the road trip and take a trip back in time, through the oral histories of some of Baringo's oldest pastoralists to explore the economic and climatic changes they have witnessed in their lifetime.

Chapter 4: The Emergence of Modern Pastoralists

The modernisation of agropastoralism and the creation of modern pastoral identities

In the past, things weren't like they are now. Back then there were much less people, and the grazing areas were much bigger. You could graze your animals on communal land without any problem. There was no chance of them starving. However nowadays, there are so many more people, and the grazing lands have been completely used up. So, now people are fencing off their own land and planting grass to feed their cattle. But you won't find any grass outside the fence. You've got to grow your own grass now and your cattle will benefit (Chemjor).



Image 9. A section of formerly denuded pastures, being ploughed by a tractor in preparation to be planted with grass. Photo: Osman Oleparmarin.

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Chemjor is an older Tugen woman who has lived her entire life in Baringo. In her youth, the grazing lands belonged to the community and were available to any community member to use to feed their livestock. Chemjor has watched the communal grasslands disappear around her. A few years back, she joined an increasing number of pastoralists making the switch from extensive herding on the rangelands to the intensive agriculture of grass on individual farms. For Chemjor, this signifies a different era – the era of modern agropastoralism. Things are no longer like they were “back then”⁴⁵. In the modern era, there are no communal grasslands left and “you’ve got to grow your own grass now”.

This chapter explores the oral histories of Baringo’s oldest generation and contrasts their accounts against the experiences of younger generations to find out how such monumental changes occurred within one lifetime. The chapter starts by detailing the traditional mode of agropastoralism practice around the middle of the 20th century. From there, it explores changes in the social, environmental and political landscape of Baringo which have accompanied the accelerated transition into the modern era. These historical changes are being looked at through the theoretical framework of modernisation. This lens is turned on the changes in the material, legal and political infrastructures of society which facilitated the shift towards a modern agrarian-based society. Drawing on the concept of modernity, it ends by exploring how these multiple processes shaped pastoralist perceptions of self and community.

45 It is important to note that “*back then*” is not an imagined past but an unspecified time in the pastoralists’ own history: namely a time before the drastic social and environmental changes, described in the previous chapter, started to make their mark on the livelihoods and landscape of Baringo. That it is a real (not imagined) time is signified by the nature of the oral memories of the elderly interviewees such as in the opening quote above. When referring to “the past” and “back then”, Chemjor is referring back to a time in her own past when she remembers life being different. She is not dreaming of an idealised version of the past here but referring to a concrete experience in her past when communal grazing lands were more abundant.

Agropastoralism *Back Then*: A Communal Approach

This is my home. I have been living here for 71 years... This is a big area. It goes up to the hills over there where another family's [clan's] land is... There are only Tugens here, it's just one community. We're all from here. If you're born here, you can stay here. Pokot have their own way of doing things – but we are actually very similar (Kibet).

In our culture, we live according to clans. My clan has this line of land here. So, we live just like that. There is a line from the lake up to the hills where we live. When you have decided to leave your parents and develop your own homestead, you just go to the line of your clan. You don't go beyond that one (Paul).

Paul and Kibet are both Tugen elders whom Joseph and I interviewed on separate occasions. In their youth – around the middle of the 20th century – the grasslands of Baringo were split up into communal lands and further split into clan lines. Kibet's clan are one of seven clans sharing the same communal lands. His clan all lived within the same 15km² area⁴⁶, building homes and relying on the land for the majority of their livelihoods. Likewise, the land Paul lives on belonged to his clan; he and his brothers all inherited an equal sized plot next to each other when they came of age. If they haven't passed away, the brothers all still live in the same location with their families. As he describes it, each clan had its own *line* of land which determined the spatial and social boundaries of where one could build a home, live and graze one's livestock.⁴⁷

⁴⁶ This is only an approximation of the land size made by plotting the boundaries of Kibet's land onto a satellite map. According to information from the 2019 census acquired via the chief's office, Kibet's sub-location (i.e. communal lands) is 102.2km². Assuming each clan has an equal share, the clan lines are approximately 14.6km² each.

⁴⁷ The Tugen community historically lived mostly on the escarpment and not near the lake. The community expanded to occupy the area by the lake where Paul lives (known in Tugen as *Arayiin*) in the 1960s following a severe drought. For more information, see Meyerhoff (1991), especially pages 11–17.

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Kibet tells Joseph in Tugen that they used different parts of the land for grazing at different times of the year:

In the past, when the grass ran out in an area you left it. You went down towards the Njempsii or up towards Pokot. We would leave certain areas alone, like that hill over there. As soon as it rains, nobody is allowed to take their cattle over there. You left it alone completely and let it rest until the dry season. Then we took our animals there to graze... If you wanted food, you had to walk from here to Marigat to buy flour. There were no roads. Or you had to go up into the hills. People up there grew maize and millet. You couldn't grow it around here; you had to go up there (Kibet).

Within a clan's land, different areas were allocated to different activities. Small areas were cordoned off for homesteads where people would build a house, farm crops (mostly millet) and sometimes plant a small kitchen garden. The rest was dedicated to grazing to support animal husbandry. The pastures within one clan's land would have been insufficient to feed all their livestock all year round. To ensure sufficient grazing, they would move their livestock around other clan's lands. This depended on upholding good relations with other clans, and to a further degree with other communities, especially during times of drought. The grazing lands were typically split up and managed in sections according to the seasons; some were allocated to rainy season grazing and others to dry season grazing. There were typically two cycles of long- and short-rains per year and livestock were rotated around the grazing areas in accordance with these cycles. The onset of a rainy period precipitated a change in the grazing, triggering herders to move their livestock off one piece of land and onto another. As Kibet says, when it rained, "nobody was allowed to take their cattle" to certain areas. The seasons imposed a cyclical pattern to the grazing system, but they also imposed parameters that the herders were obliged to follow. In other words, the grazing patterns were governed by the rainfall patterns; grazing was dictated as much by the boundaries of the clan's land and inter-community relations as by the climate.

In an interview conducted in the Njempsii language with Osman, Alice highlights that the oldest generations of each clan coordinated the grazing:

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Elders controlled who could graze where. There were no problems with overgrazing because grazing was controlled. They would close off one side of the area and let it rest, then tell everyone to send their cattle to graze on the other side. The elders would send morans [young men] to guard the grass and make sure nobody grazed it (Alice).

Classic studies of pastoralism in East Africa, such as Paul Spencer's (1965) *The Samburu: A study in gerontocracy*, have highlighted that many aspects of community life were managed through a gerontocratic governance system, from grazing rights and land disputes to matrimonies and ceremonies. The elders controlled the grazing system within any given area. As Alice tells us, "The elders would send morans to guard the grass." *Moran* is a Maa name used to describe a specific age set of young men who formed the warrior class of society.⁴⁸ It denotes the group of healthy, young men who belong to a community and have responsibility for guarding the community's collective property – the livestock, dams and pastures. The boundaries to the grazing lands were made up of natural features of the landscape (rivers, cliffs, etc), meaning there were no fences or barriers to stop people entering the vast open paddocks and illegally feeding their livestock. The morans, therefore, were the physical deterrent. They would patrol the grazing lands, ready to chase off any unwanted livestock or fight any invading herders.

The agropastoral economy was based around subsistence and barter. In an ethnographic study of the changing economic landscape of Baringo, RAE co-founder and Social Anthropologist Elizabeth notes that "as recently as [1960s] most economic and subsistence needs of the people living in Arayiin were provided by household livestock herds and farms" (Meyerhoff, 1991, p. 20). As we saw in chapter three, the semi-arid environment in the Baringo Basin and escarpment was well suited to the hardy indigenous grasses that fed livestock, but it was not suitable for water-intensive crops. The surrounding hills were better suited to growing crops and people grew maize, millet and fruits. To get food crops and other goods,

48 In what is perhaps the most celebrated classical study of pastoralist gerontocracy, Paul Spencer (1965) examines in detail how this governance structure is predominantly upon the relationship between elders and morans. For another classic anthropological example of the roles and rituals associated to the moran age set, see Galaty (1983) *Ceremony and Society*.

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herders like Kibet and Paul would trade with agriculturalists in the foothills and highlands as well as at the market town of Marigat. The majority of this trade was based around barter and direct trade.

In an interview with me and Joseph, Paul says that cash only played a minor role:

Money was a thing. But very few people had access to money... There wasn't that much need. Back then, there were no schools, so people didn't need to pay school fees. People were eating wild animals, like we discussed. And if they couldn't find any, they could eat their own livestock. And people planted finger millet. They cultivated their small farms to get a little bit of food. But the most significant thing was that since the population was so small, the environment hadn't been destroyed so much... So as soon as the rains came, the grass grew, meaning the cows and goats were well-fed and we had a lot of milk (Paul).

Paul tells us that the majority of trade did not involve a money transaction but was based on direct trade of goods for goods. Money has featured in Baringo since at least 1902 when the colonial administration introduced a "hut tax" which was to be paid in cash (Kandagor, 1993). But it didn't play a dominant role in the economy because, as Paul suggests, most people didn't have many household costs such as school fees (schools, as we will see shortly, largely came to Baringo after independence). Plus, they could generally get enough food from the surrounding environment for subsistence because, as Paul emphasises, "the environment hadn't been destroyed so much". The grasslands were still sufficiently productive to support the populations of domestic and wild animals. The environment had not yet suffered the degradation we met in chapter three; there was still an abundance and variety of flora and fauna. This meant Paul was able to rely on his livestock for meat and milk, eat wild fruit and animals⁴⁹ and grow a few subsistence crops in kitchen gardens beside his homesteads.

49 Paul tells us that not all communities in Baringo ate wild animals: "Our tradition says that you should eat the wild animals before your own cows. Keeps your own cows alive... This is our culture. You know Maasai culture, for example, does not permit killing wild animals. But our culture allows it" (Paul). When talking about *our culture* and *our tradition*, he is referring to Tugen culture and traditions, which is part of the Kalenjin ethnolinguistic group.

Community Modes of Production

The stories imparted by the elders paint a picture of the cultural landscape of Baringo when they were young. The land was cultivated into communal pastures allocated to dry- and rainy-season grazing, the economy revolved around subsistence and barter and the social formations within each community were set up in a clan-based system to coordinate the production of livestock. This landscape was influenced significantly by what Political Scientist Samir Amin (1974) calls *community modes of production*. He uses this term to describe the economic relations within small, politically autonomous communities, typically based in rural areas who relied primarily on resources in the environment for subsistence and to produce economic goods. For Amin, community modes of production all share three distinct characteristics: the communal organisation of labour, absence of commodity exchange⁵⁰ and reliance on kinship structures to distribute resources (Amin, 1974). According to Amin, such modes of production are

all characterised by an organisation of labour partly on an individual basis (that of the “nuclear family”), partly on a collective basis (that of the “extended family” or of the “clan”, in a village) and the essential means of labour - land - being the collective property of the clan and its use, free to all members but according to specific rules (1974, p. 58).

Communities were made up of individual families who pooled their resources and shared their labour. Each family contributed not only to the

The Il Chamus are part of the Maa ethnolinguistic group and didn't share this practice of eating wild animals. For an anthropological description of Baringo's linguistic groups at the time, see Hodder (1977) *The Distribution of Material Culture Items in the Baringo District, Western Kenya*.

50 Strictly speaking, the presence of money and trade suggest pastoralism in Baringo wouldn't be classified as a community mode of production because it doesn't satisfy Amin's requirement that there is an absence of commodity exchange. However, given the insignificance of cash in this largely subsistence and barter economy, I would argue the claim still largely stands. Nevertheless, I'd rather not get bogged down in theoretical details; the relevant point to take from Amin's idea is that pastoralism was based largely on a communal approach to the production of goods. This is still a helpful theoretical concept to help build a picture of the cultural landscape of mid-century Baringo.

production of goods for their own homestead but also to the benefit of the wider community. As the most important resource in a community's mode of production, land was the collective property of the community and available to all. Goods were produced primarily for subsistence, not trade. Any trade was surplus, used to supplement the community's subsistence with products they could not produce alone. The production and distribution of goods within the community was not influenced by an external political or economic authority. Rather, it was characterised by "the distribution of the product within the community according to rules closely connected with the kinship organization" (Amin, 1974, p. 58). Social formations within the community, such as the clan, ethnic group and council of elder, determined how resources were managed and allocated between community members. Livestock belonged to the family and land belonged to the clan and community. However, Archie Mafeje emphasises that the property relations present in community modes of production did not constitute land ownership in the conventional sense. In his seminal study of political and economic relations in East Africa, *The Theory and Ethnography and African Social Formations* (1991), Mafeje argues that:

The traditional African community did not conceive of land in terms of ownership but in terms of *dominium eminens* within which use-rights were guaranteed. These were activated through family units and could get entrenched, depending on the demographic pressure and the use to which different types of soil were put (Mafeje, 1991, p. 109).⁵¹

Nobody owned the land outright; certain people had the right to use land to graze livestock. As the unit of production, the clan and community determined property relations. The entire community had the right to graze any part of the grazing lands, and family heads and clan leaders

⁵¹ Mafeje is discussing the tributary modes of production that accompanied most pastoral societies in precolonial East Africa. Nevertheless, I find some of his ideas can be applied to the post-independence era. Despite the drastic social and political changes that colonialism brought, contemporary pastoralism has its roots in the precolonial societies that Mafeje analyses and some of the economic and social formations such as communal land usage remain, albeit in a new form.

maintained relations with neighbouring communities on their behalf. They coordinated the movement of livestock within their own communal lands as well as organising access to pastures (especially in times of drought) to ensure they all had sufficient resources.

Mafeje's ethnography (1991) is heralded as one of the classical ethnographic texts by a postcolonial African author. It belongs to a canon of African ethnographies like Jomo Kenyatta's *Facing Mount Kenya* (1978), John Mbiti's *African Religions and Philosophies* (1969) and even Bernard Magubane's *The Making of a Racist State* (1996) and accounts of ethnophilosophies such as Akinsola Akiwowo's *Contributions to the Sociology of Knowledge from an African Oral Poetry* (1986).⁵² There are striking similarities between these texts and classical ethnological writings on the interaction between the landscape, the village, social institutions and the material infrastructures of life. In a 1931 text on the social and material infrastructures of village life in rural Sweden, for example, Sigurd Erixon exclaims that "The village is in a way a company. To be a member of the village association is to be a co-owner of the village"⁵³ (1931, p. 83). Similarly, in the classic *Från Vildmark till Bygd*, Åke Campbell argues that in preindustrial Lapland, all households "regardless of the seasonal exploitation of natural resources are subject to the general course of the Lapland natural year"⁵⁴ (1948, p. 81). Such analytical claims could apply equally as well to mid-century Baringo as they did to preindustrial rural Sweden. However, arguably where African theorists depart from classic Ethnology is in how central identity infrastructures are to their ideas and the implications this has on understanding the social institutions that govern contemporary communal life. D.A Masolo suggests that for many African social theorists the conception of the self as communal is foundational:

52 For a brief introduction to the main tenants of African intellectual thought, see Raewyn Connell's *Southern Theory*, especially chapter five. For more information specifically on Mafeje and Magubane's role in shaping African ethnographic traditions, see Pratten (2012) *Retroversion, Introversion, Extraversion*.

53 Translated from the original Swedish: "Byn är på sätt och vis ett bolag. Att vara medlem i byalaget är att vara delägare i byn."

54 Translated from the original: "oavsett det säsongsmässiga utnyttjandet av naturtillgångarna äro underkastade det lappländska naturårets allmänna förlopp."

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Many African thinkers... have argued that because personhood is socially generated, interaction or intersubjective penetration, not aggregation, is the formative foundation of human nature and the conduit through which humans develop their sense and basis of the moral and cognitive values (Masolo, 2010, p. 139).

From political theories like Ujamaa and Ubuntu to economic theories like Mafeje's concept of *dominium eminens* or Mbembe's social tax (which we will hear about shortly), communal identity is not one of a number of processes but lies at the very core of the ideas. The centrality of communal identity can also be seen in Amin's understanding of community modes of production when he asserts that everybody in the clan is entitled to access land "by the mere fact that he is a member of a clan" (Amin, 1974, p. 59).⁵⁵ According to this familial form of economic production, the right to live on and graze clan lands was a birth-right. Belonging to the clan is a fundamental right that is realised at birth. The right to claim an identity within the clan and by extension, to claim access to its collective heritage and resources is foundational to the very existence of an individual.

The clan system's organisation of labour was buttressed by a gerontocratic governance model: the elders decided. The elders organised the labour of herders and morans, in part, through what Samir Amin (1982) calls *relations of dominance*. In controlling the grazing, they asserted dominance over the rest of their community by enforcing the rules which they had decided upon with regards to the use of their collective means of production (i.e. the land). The labour relation between elder and moran is one of unilateral dominance. That is to say by sending, the elders are commanding and in guarding the grass, the morans are enacting the elders' commands. Morans upheld the elders' management system through their role of guarding the grazing lands and protecting it from illegal grazing.

⁵⁵ The gender pronoun "he" is significant here. In Kenya, women could not legally own land. Constitutional reforms have increased women's legal rights in Kenya, but barriers remain. For example, female pastoralists can typically only access land through their husbands or male family members. As we will see in chapter five, this is slowly changing, and women are finding novel ways to access the economic value of the land through grass farming. For more information, see Djurfeldt (2020) *Gendered Land Rights, Legal Reforms and Social Norms in the Context of Land Fragmentation*.

More-than-economic Relations

The cultural landscape of mid-century Baringo was largely shaped by the communal mode of production described above. However, focusing exclusively on the mode of production ignores other factors that were involved in producing the cultural landscape at the time, such as the role of community identities and ecological conditions. As Ethnologist Katarina Saltzman (2001) reminds us, a cultural landscape is produced through ongoing interactions between multifaceted processes at many levels. This perspective builds on a tradition of seeing the landscape as a co-production of ecological and social conditions which has persisted in ethnological research since the earliest formulations of the concept of cultural landscapes (cf. Alsmark, 1979; Campbell, 1936; Löfgren & Frykman, 2019). For Saltzman, a landscape is “something that is created by nature and people in cooperation”⁵⁶ (2001, p. 54). So, she continues, it is helpful to see people and the environment as “participants in a constantly ongoing construction process” (2001, p. 60).⁵⁷ Economic relations are but one of the realms that intertwine to produce the cultural landscape; politics, identity infrastructures, capital, technology and the environment also play a part. Processes of ethnic identity shape the economic realm (what resources they can access), the social realm (where and how they can live) and the physical landscape (how the grasslands are divided into seasonal pastures and farms). Ecological and material conditions also play a significant role in shaping the landscape, determining the extent to which these other dynamics can inform a cultural landscape. The landscape and the climate are integral components of pastoralism which people navigate daily and incorporate into their land management. For example, natural features of the landscape shape social organisation by providing boundaries between clan lands and the seasons dictate where – and for how long – herders can graze their livestock. In short, Baringo was (and still is) shaped equally by human (i.e. economic and identitary) processes and ecological dynamics.

⁵⁶ Translated from the original Swedish: “något som är skapat av naturen och människan i samverkan”.

⁵⁷ Translated from the original Swedish: “delaktiga i en ständigt pågående konstruktionsprocess”.

The entanglement of these three realms is perhaps best exemplified by the land management system based around what Paul called “*clan lines*”. This phenomenon conjures up stark imagery of lines etched into the landscape guiding the lives and livelihoods of Baringo’s pastoralists. I find it a powerful rhetorical device which builds a vivid image of the cultural landscape of Baringo. It portrays clan life as an almost totalising structure which dictated significant portions of social and cultural life from land access and grazing rights to trade and community governance. Along with the marketplaces where they trade, the agricultural plots in the hills and dominant physical objects like the lake, the clan lines make up the world of immediate experience. In this sense, the clan lines may be understood as both a physical and social entity, turning the landscape in to what Geographer Yi Fu Tuan (1977) calls an *experiential space*.⁵⁸ The physical objects in the landscape – the hills, rivers and cliffs – and the social kinship structures become intertwined to create the experiential space of the clan lines. More than a mere economic resource or commodity, the land provides the materials that constitute the experiential space of pastoralism and reinforce the clan-based mode of belonging to the land.

Anthropologist Tim Ingold calls the material elements of the landscape the *furniture of the earth* because they are what make the landscape a liveable space (Ingold, 2015, p. 39).⁵⁹ Kibet’s clan inhabited their clan lines in the way you might inhabit an apartment. The floor in an empty apartment provides a space in which to live and the furniture turns it into a liveable space. The apartment with its four walls, windows and floor affords the possibility to make a home but without furniture, it is still just an empty vessel. A bed, a sofa and a kitchen make the space liveable. Similarly, the hills, rivers, plains and cliffs provide the social and economic parameters of clan life by designating seasonal grazing lands, clan boundaries, potential homestead plots. Further, coming from the Italian *appartamento*, meaning ‘to separate’, apartment implies being one part of a larger unit; a single

⁵⁸ See *Space and Place: The perspective of experience* (1977), especially chapter 9, *Time in Experiential Space*.

⁵⁹ Ingold borrows this term from psychologist James Gibson’s classic 1979 text *The Ecological Approach to Visual Perception*. For the concept of the furniture of the earth, see chapter eight.

apartment belongs to a wider collection of homes in an apartment block or large complex. Likewise, an individual clan line is part of a wider complex of clan lines, which collectively make up the ethnic community. In becoming the furniture of a social life, the landscape (and to an extent, the relations with neighbouring clans) goes through what Ingold calls “a process of abstraction and reconstruction” (2015, p. 39). Reasoning that the higher ground of the hills attracts more rainfall, the elders closed off the hills during the rainy season to give the grass a chance to recover and regenerate so it could be used during the next season. The choice to allocate a specific hillock to rainy season grazing is most likely arbitrary but it is informed by the logic of resource maximisation and decided by a social apparatus (i.e. the council of elders). The hillock goes through a process of abstraction (as a potential seasonal grazing ground rather than *just a hill*) and reconstruction (through reasoning and collective decision-making) into an important piece of furniture in the landscape of pastoralism.

While ecological conditions provided the physical parameters of clan life, identity infrastructures determined intra-communal relations of clan life by shaping the organisation of labour.⁶⁰ Labour roles and responsibilities, for example, were based on age sets and gender. In the broader social structure that governed land management (i.e. council of elders, clan leaders, family heads and leaders from other communities), Alice tells us that two important actors were the elders and morans. Relations between individuals within each of the age sets (and genders) was governed by what Mbembe (2001) calls *communal social ties*. A shared collective identity as part of the same clan or ethnic community bound them together and worked as a form of “social tax”, ensuring they work not just for their own personal gain but for the good of the group. According to Mbembe, “the philosophy that underpinned this social tax began with the principle that every individual was indebted to a collective heritage that was not only financial but embraced knowledge, techniques – in short, the material and identitary infrastructure without which the individual could undertake nothing” (Mbembe, 2001, p. 47).

⁶⁰ To continue the apartment metaphor, one could say the identity roles act as the hallways, stairs and lifts between apartments in a complex.

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Because the means of production (i.e. the land) were collectively held, there was an incentive for everyone to cooperate to ensure they were sufficiently well-stocked to support the entire clan and wider community. For example, elders and morans alike benefited from the communal management of the pastures so they were both bound to play their part and accept their identity-based role if they wanted to benefit from it. These identity infrastructures ensured cooperation between community members. Effectively, the morans listened to the elders and carried out their duties of guarding the grazing lands because of what Mbembe calls “a social tax or a multifaceted, never-ending debt owed to the community” (2001, p. 47). When making decisions, the elders were obliged to keep the best interests of the community in mind – not their own personal gain. Likewise, the morans were obliged to carry out their duties of protection if they wanted to retain their status as part of their clan, and the broader ethnic community, and access the privileges it afforded.

In summary, the clan lines, subsistence economy and gerontocratic governance paint a very different picture to the cultural landscape of the present day in which the grasslands and the communal mode of production have largely disappeared. As Chemjor told us, “You’ve now got to grow your own grass”. Many people have moved away from the communal approach and pastoralism is becoming an increasingly individualised pursuit. When and how did this change take place?

Looking Towards Cash

As soon as the population started growing, people started chopping down trees, overgrazing, overconsuming everything. So, people were forced to look for alternative ways of living and they started looking towards cash (Paul).

Paul is telling us about how he saw pastoralism change during his lifetime. A population explosion across Kenya started in the 1960s which continued to climb for the next few decades. Between 1968-86 the population of Ken-

ya doubled from ten to twenty million (World Data, 2023).⁶¹ This explosion didn't just occur in urban areas, but also in the rural counties like Baringo: in 1979, the population density of Baringo was 18.57/km², whereas today it has reached over 60/km² (Population, 2023). In the most rural parts of Baringo, the population density was even lower. In the 1960s, Kibet tells us that each of the seven clans in his community had around 50 members, living on 100km² of land. By the 2019 census, this number had increased to over 4,000 (GoK, 2019b). If these approximations are anything to go by, the population density in his area may have rocketed from 3.5/km² to over 40/km². More people meant more livestock. With an increased population came increased pressure on the land from people "overconsuming everything" in Paul's words: the grass was grazed quicker than it could replenish, and people then started chopping down trees as an alternative source of fodder. Before long, the land was stuck in an unsustainable cycle, having its resources continually stripped bare before it had time to replenish. The population explosion also saw the number of children in school increase. There were barely more than one million children enrolled in primary education in Kenya in 1970. Just four years later, this had already doubled. In the following decade the enrolment numbers kept climbing until over five million children were in formal education by 1986 (World Bank, 2023). And, as Kibet tells Joseph in an interview, schooling was not cheap:

The issue of school fees began in the 1980s. That's when we started to build schools around here... At least, those that agreed that education was important, they started to look for ways to make money. Whether they had grass, honey, cows, or whatever, people sold it to get money to educate their children (Kibet).

When we started building schools in this area, people started to get the hunger for education (Paul).

From the 1980s onwards, one of the main cash-based costs facing pastoralists in Baringo was putting their children through school, which pushed

⁶¹ The population has continued to climb. According to the same data, the population surpassed 50 million by 2023.

them to start selling their produce to raise cash to cover the rising costs. The uptake in school enrolment was driven by a national agenda to modernise the education system and provide universal education for all Kenyan citizens. This started with a pledge by Kenya's first president, Jomo Kenyatta to provide free primary education to all children. The community was expected to mobilise to build and, importantly, to part-finance the schools. This was achieved through the organising principle of *Harambee*, which translates as *Let's pull together* in Swahili. During the national push for universal education, harambee was a fundamental driving force for funding, constructing and running schools, without relying on outside help. Paul and Kibet, are both retired teachers. As some of Baringo's first teachers, they were influential in helping spread education through their communities by raising fundings and building schools.

Keeping the schools open and paying the salaries of all the teachers required to educate an entire nation's youth was beyond the government's financial ability. As such, parents were expected to pay for school fees if they wanted their kids to go to school. Sociologist Claudia Bachmann has shown that schools built and funded by local communities "supplemented the government's provision of schools and offered educational opportunities to children who would otherwise not have attended school beyond the primary level" (Buchmann, 1999, p. 99). Asking the parents to pay for education was a viable option partly because education was generally seen in a positive light. As Paul suggests, formal education was well received in Baringo, creating a "hunger for education" among parents who wanted to put their kids through school. Accordingly, as Buchmann identifies, education was a priority for most Kenyan citizens and, "as a result, most Harambee efforts were focused on building and equipping secondary schools" (1999, p. 98).⁶² Nevertheless, with the upsurge of education, parents were suddenly presented with the need to find cash to pay school fees which represented a significant portion of their household expenses. To cover these new costs, Kibet tells us that many parents started looking at the

62 Harambee has been a common feature of many aspects of community development in rural Kenya, supporting development projects such as cattle dips, irrigation channels, medical clinics. But schools were the most common harambee projects.

goods they produced – be it millet, meat, dairy, or honey – as commodities they could sell to raise cash.

As Paul suggests, the increased pressure on the land meant the previous way of living quickly became unviable so people were “forced to look for alternative ways of living”. With the population growing so quickly, the land couldn’t support all their subsistence needs. Simultaneously, the increasing pressure to pay for education drove people to start “*looking towards cash*” to cover their financial needs. Some agropastoralists started to experiment with growing cash crops like maize and finger millet. Others started selling their livestock for cash. Consequently, cash played an increasingly more important role in the economy:

It was nothing like the 1960s. The price of a goat started to rise to 60, 70 even 100 shillings. Then it went up to 200 shillings. And now a goat goes for 10,000⁶³ ... Most of this money came with traders from different areas. Lots of Kikuyu traders, for example, came and settled in Marigat and set up businesses. Buyers started to come looking for meat from places further afield like Nakuru, Eldoret and Nairobi (Kibet).

As we saw previously, herders used to exchange goats directly for crops with agriculturalists or at market. Since the 1960s, Baringo has seen drastic changes, triggered in part by an agenda to bring economic development to rural areas like Baringo and convert them into modern agricultural economies.⁶⁴ Successive governments have invested in road and electricity infrastructures, formal education and financial institutions such as banks and cooperatives. As the demand for cash increased to cover an increasing variety of costs from schooling to healthcare and food, it became more

63 Goat prices continue to rise, and they can go for as much as 15,000 Kshs. The annual Kimalel Goat Auction in Baringo attracts buyers from all over the country, including high profile business leaders and politicians. At the 2023 auction, Kenya’s president, William Ruto, was in attendance and declared that goats would be sold for 13-15,000 Kshs. For more information, see Koech (2023) *President, DP pay Sh15 million for 1,000 goats at annual Kimalel goat auction*.

64 The modernisation of Baringo’s economy will be explored in more detail in the next chapter. But, for a detailed analysis of the post-colonial political discourses motivating the modernisation of rural Kenya, see Ajwang et al. (2023) *Enabling modernisation, marginalising alternatives? Kenya’s agricultural policy and smallholders*.

prominent, and prices started to rise rapidly. This transition was further facilitated by the introduction of mobile money transfer technology, Mpesa, in 2007. This technology turns a mobile phone into a bank account, allowing users to deposit cash, send money and buy products directly through their phones. Over 30 million Kenyans use Mpesa to manage their money, conducting more than 20 billion transactions per year (Safaricom, 2023).⁶⁵ For rural Kenyans who didn't use banks, in the words of Geographers Rutten and Mwangi, this technology "revolutionized cash flows in social and economic spheres and has changed unsafe, slow and occasional barter trade into a safe, fast and 24/7 mobile-cash-based trade, fundamentally changing the management of the local economy" (2012, p. 80). With this technology, it suddenly became much easier to move money in and out of remote rural regions like Baringo instantaneously. Money-based trade has now become ubiquitous and has virtually replaced subsistence and barter as the dominant economic system.

This period marked the start of a transformation in the mode of production away from the communal approach the elders described in the section above towards a more individualised, cash-based form of agropastoralism. As we will now go on to see, around the same time, people started cordoning off sections of the communal grazing lands to set up private small hold farms.

From Communal to Individual Land

When I was growing up, the land you lived on was temporarily owned because all the land belonged to the community. There was no individual land. Now it's reached a point where almost all the land is owned by an individual (Alice).

Over her lifetime, Alice has watched the Njemps Flats transform from communal grasslands to a patchwork of small farms. In the past half century though, small parcels of land, no more than a couple of acres in

⁶⁵ While there are other mobile money technologies available such as Airtel money, with close to 99% of transactions conducted through Mpesa, it dominates the market (Communications Authority of Kenya 2021).

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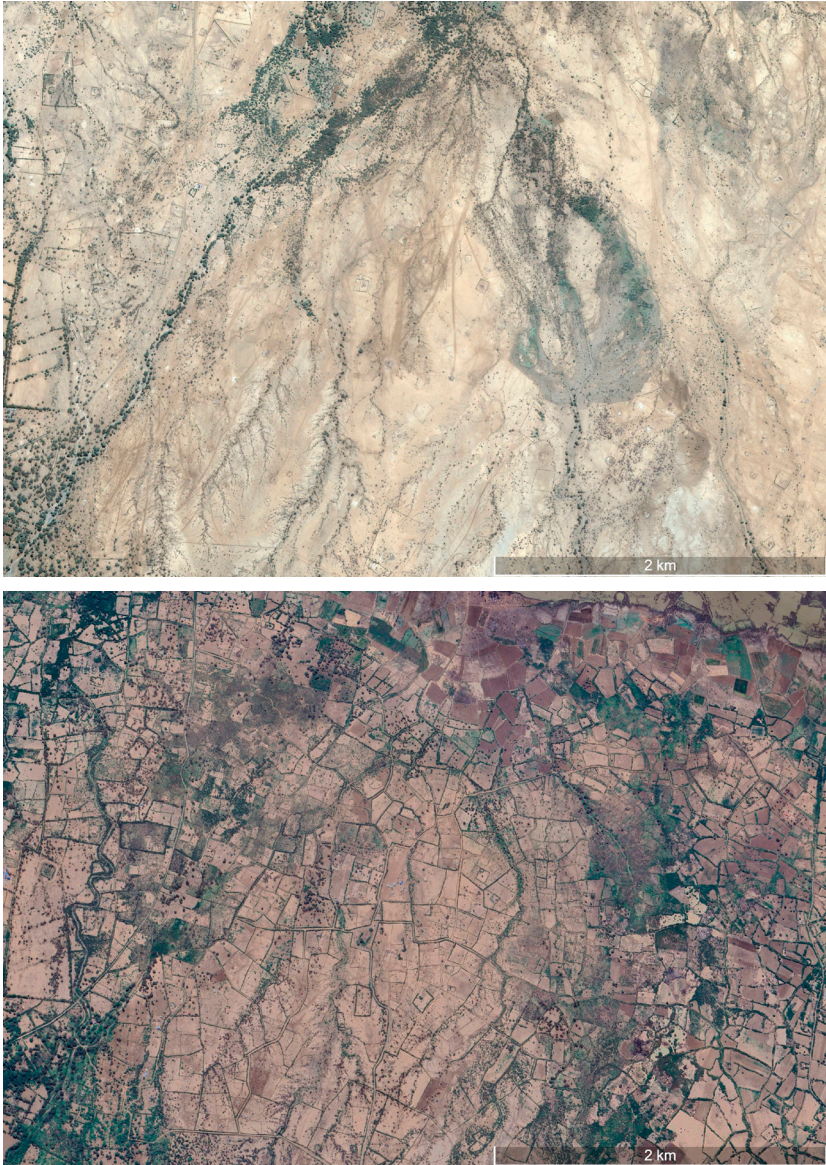


Image 10. Top: Njemps Flats in 2001. Only a few fences are visible and almost all of the land is open grazing pastures. Bottom: Njemps Flats in 2023. The entire area has been fenced off and converted into a patchwork of small farms. Some of these farms (top right) have been swallowed by floodwaters (Google Earth).

size, have gradually been demarcated and allocated to individual families to establish homesteads and farms. Now, Alice tells us, it's reached the point where "almost all the land is owned by an individual". 'Owned' is perhaps not the best word to describe this land proprietorship because, as we have seen, the concept of land ownership did not exist when Alice was growing up.⁶⁶ Nevertheless, if we understand her words in terms of land rights more generally, the pattern she describes is corroborated by satellite images of the same location in the Njemp's Flats two decades apart (see image 10).

In 2001, this area was open plains. By 2023, almost all of the land had been sliced up into small parcels of land claimed by individual families. The first image shows an open landscape in which the rivers, hills and natural contours delineated the boundaries of the communal grazing lands. The second image shows a gridwork of fences delineating the boundaries between each family's piece of land.⁶⁷ Alice tells us how this process got started and how they got to a point where "almost all the land is owned by an individual":

In the 1970s, people started growing small kitchen gardens of finger millet... The community decided together to try it out and they chose four people to do the experiment on one farm. In the 1970-80s, they saw it was successful, then they moved to two people per farm. Then they moved to one person per farm, but only by the rivers and lakeshore. More people were starting to settle... they started to demarcate land for themselves when [they] started maize farming along the seasonal rivers... Because they saw good yields from farming, everybody scrambled to divide up the land. The amount of roaming was starting to reduce because of this. People would

⁶⁶ The use of the word 'owned' could be attributed to a translation error.

⁶⁷ Demarcation has happened at different periods in time across Kenya and at different speeds. In urban areas and their environs, virtually all the land has been demarcated and is owned but in many rural areas, much of the land is still undemarcated and unowned. In neighbouring Nakuru County, much of the rural land was demarcated during colonial rule and allocated to white families for agricultural purposes. In contrast, the demarcation process has barely begun in the vast arid lands of Northern Kenya. Even within Baringo County there are varying rates of demarcation: in the most densely populated areas like the Njemp's Flats, there is virtually no unfenced land left. Whereas Pokotland to the north of the lake still has large areas of open, undemarcated land.

stay on the farm with the family and send a herder off with the livestock. At this time, the area you settled on automatically became yours (Alice).⁶⁸

As Alice understands it, the community started out with a few experimental plots in the 1970s. They were inspired by the perceived success of small hold farmers in neighbouring Perkerra who were supported by the Perker-ra Irrigation Scheme. Set up by the colonial administration, this is a long-established scheme (still going today) to support sedentary farming of cash crops such as maize and wheat along the Perkerra river (Anderson, 2002).⁶⁹

As we will see in chapter six, economic instability in the 1970-80s led to widespread poverty and food shortages in Kenya and much of East Africa. To tackle poverty, pastoralists were encouraged to diversify their livelihoods and invest in sedentary farming of cash crops.⁷⁰ Following suit, Alice tells us that her community chose four families to run the experiment under the instruction of the elders. Gradually, as they succeeded, they increased the number of experimental farms and reduced the number of people running each one. Once they had got the hang of it, a few people branched out and set up their own farms. Rather than the elders overseeing the management of the farms, people started doing it of their own accord. They requested land from the elders and started planting different crops including maize and wheat. From these early days in the 1970s, pastoralists started setting aside more and more land for sedentary farming. Alice stresses that as a natural consequence, “more people were starting to settle, and the amount of roaming was starting to reduce” (Alice).

68 As Alice suggests, settlement played an important role in land demarcation. It is important to stress though, that settlement alone was not sufficient to access land. It was also related to residency and kinship. One could only settle and claim land in one's own community's land. An Il Chamus, for instance, could not claim land in the Tugen lands and vice versa.

69 According to Anderson, the first Il Chamus tenants of the irrigation scheme were signed up to be settled on the scheme in 1952. For more information, see Anderson (2002), especially pages 274-284).

70 The specifics of these policies will be explored further in chapter six. For more information on the history of policies to sedentarise pastoralists as well as the negative impact of settlement and diversification policies in East Africa, see Cochrane & Cafer (2018) *Does Diversification Enhance Community Resilience? A Critical Perspective*.

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Individual Land Tenure

As more people started fencing off tracts of land to plant crops, the land itself became the property of the individual who fenced it. This marked the beginning of a process of the communal grazing lands gradually becoming a patchwork of individual farms. Henri Lefebvre (2022 (1954)) explains that the introduction of modern agriculture into marginalized⁷¹ zones, particularly in developing nations, is typically accompanied by capitalist forms of land ownership, or what he calls *individual private ownership of the land as means of production*. When faced with alternative forms of ownership such as “collective ownership by tribes, clans, or agrarian communities,” he continues, “capitalist ownership subordinates all these ancient forms. It transforms them and reduces them to its own structure using any means available” (Lefebvre, 2022 (1954), p. 81). The way the land is perceived and the new role it starts to play in daily life triggers new conceptions of what land can be. As new ownership structures emerge, new perceptions on what the land is and to whom it can belong start to emerge as well. In Baringo, as more land is gradually given over to individual plots, the communal usage-rights model starts to reduce until the land ownership model is almost entirely transformed into an individual one.

However, it is important to stress that fencing off land and the accompanying introduction of modern agriculture, led to individual land use but *without individual property rights*. As Mafeje highlights, people were able to claim the land as their own, despite having no legal right to do so:

The absence of formal or juridical rights in land have not been a barrier to private appropriation and accumulation once individual families had laid effective claim on their allocated plots of land. This was and still is, achieved through sustained use of the land. In other words, under the African communal system, security of tenure was guaranteed socially and not legally (Mafeje, 1985, p. 34).

In this context use rights are more important than property rights. So, while capitalist forms of land ownership subordinate communal ones, as

⁷¹ Lefebvre uses the term *underdeveloped* but, in this context, I understand the term to be synonymous with *marginalised* in the economic sense of the term.

Lefebvre tells us, they don't create a landowning class.⁷² This is an important distinction because it avoids some of the implications of Orthodox Marxist understandings of the processes of modernisation. Orthodox Marxists like Lefebvre understand class struggle as the primary motor of history: a mode of production changes as a result of friction between classes (e.g. capitalists and proletariat, or landowners and landless peasants). In this model, land ownership is one of the drivers of development and class societies necessarily develop out of pre-class societies. But this does not quite capture all the relevant social formations of pastoralism in Kenya. Following Archie Mafeje, the application of Marxist terms to African settings requires some distinctions because the social conditions that trigger or mediate transitions between modes of production are different to the European context upon which Marxist ideas of value are built. Mafeje argues that certain theoretical concepts such as land tenure "need to be challenged by bringing out the specificity of African social systems, not out of sheer chauvinism but rather with the intention of discerning more clearly the logic of African development or lack of it" (Mafeje, 1991, p. 66). It is entirely possible that a landowning class of pastoralists could emerge through the introduction of capitalist structures. But the point is that this specific set of historical conditions hasn't occurred across most of rural Africa. Before the 1980s, land in Baringo was not a commodity that could be owned by individuals, so there was not a dominant class of landowners.⁷³ Rather, as we saw earlier, it was based on *dominium eminens*

72 That said, a landowning class are starting to emerge now. With more wealthy local people and outsiders showing an interest in land in the area, more people are securing title deeds which acknowledge their legal ownership of individual plots. As Njemps Flats resident William tells us, this is driven in part by population pressures: "I can buy elsewhere if I want. Even now, I have two sons and I'm planning to have another 6-7. So, it will become a problem, so I have to buy so that I can transfer to 2 or 3 sons because this land is not enough for them... I find someone willing to sell and request. 1 acre nowadays is around 60-70,000 shillings".

73 It is important to stress that it could not be owned by *individuals*. Government and other institutions such as churches could own the land. This was a legacy from colonial times when large areas of Baringo (known as reserves) were considered Crown Land, owned by the colonial government. Incidentally, prior to independence the restriction of land ownership applied only to native individuals; settlers coming from Britain were entitled to own the land they farmed. For more information see Anderson (2002) *Eroding the Commons* (especially pages 102-115).

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in which usage rights were guaranteed. No individual could grant or deny access to a specific part of the land on their own. Given this particular set of social conditions, Mafeje identifies that land was merely an *instrument* of production:

In this mode of production, land is neither a subject nor a means of production but rather an instrument of production... pastoralism is a way of appropriating not the land itself, as some writers have supposed, but only its manifestations, vi.z pasture and water (Mafeje, 1991, p. 127).

Only the resources *upon the land* had economic value, in the narrowest sense of being commodities. The land itself was an instrument which supported the production of pastures in an economy based on the movement of livestock, barter and relations between communities. It would have been unfathomable to attempt to put an exchange value on the land because it belonged to the community, not as a resource, but as part of the environment upon which grass grew. Even after demarcation, land still, by and large, belonged to the community. For the most part, it could not be exchanged, bought or sold. So, while land demarcation did facilitate the introduction of individualised land proprietorship, it was not accompanied by the creation of a landowning class as orthodox Marxism might expect.

What's more, land demarcation didn't occur through class struggle. Individual pastoralists setting up farms did not take the land from a landowning class but from the community. One's right to land related directly to residency and ethnic identity; demarcation occurred largely along community lines. Members of a clan and community could only demarcate and lay claim to land within their communal lands (or *clan lines* as Paul called them earlier). After demarcation, the land still belonged to the community in the sense that only members of a particular community could fence off land. This highlights that the identity infrastructure that shaped communal pastoralism continued to modulate access to land. In fact, the strength of these community structures continues to dictate the value of land today. In recent years, more individuals are starting to formalise their individual land ownership and getting official title deeds which recognise their legal proprietorship over the land (cf. Thuo & Om-

bok, 2021). But still, very little land in Baringo has been sold to outsiders who don't affiliate with one of its three ethnic communities.

Fences Undermining the Elders

William, an Il Chamus landowner, tells Osman in Njempisii that individual plots brought new problems within the context of the ethnic community:

Some years back... there were some quarrels within the family. People were moving the boundaries, trying to encroach on our land. So, we put up the fence to stop this. We said, this land is ours, we inherited it from our forefathers (William).

William has had issues with his neighbours from within his community trying to encroach on his land. Initially, the land was informally demarcated, and they didn't have fences. Lacking a visible marker or formal record of where the boundaries between two plots lay, they fought over where the line ought to lay. To resolve the issue, William decided to build a cactus (*Opuntia*) fence on the boundary line to eradicate any doubt over the perimeters. However, William doesn't consider his fence a perfect solution and hopes to upgrade it:

We don't have a permanent fence here. We have this cactus. But it has lots of problems. It easily gets holes, so goats find a way through. So, we prefer to have a real, chain-link fence rather than cactus (William).

Cactus fences are made of organic material so are vulnerable to sabotage. There are several different types of material used to fence land including cactus, thornbush, chain-link and (less often) electric wire (see image 11). There appears to be a hierarchy of status among fences; while they all have their benefits, chain-link fences are considered the best, because they are the most "permanent". Organic fences can be made cheaply because they use material from the environment, but they are impermanent and penetrable: a thornbush fence is relatively easy to remove, and it doesn't take much for a goat to make a hole in a cactus fence.

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Image 11. A selection of fences available to farmers. Clockwise from top left: thornbush, cactus, chainlink, electric. Moving from most organic to most industrial, the hierarchy of fences symbolises the changing aspirations of farmers who want to move away from organic, negotiable relations to more definitive, non-negotiable delineations between neighbouring plots. Photos: Osman Oleparmarin.

Traditionally, disputes over loss of crops or livestock would be settled under the auspices of gerontocracy: a council of elders is set up to make a ruling on the dispute. With the increasing number of neighbours demarcating adjacent plots, boundary disputes were added to the list of issues the elders would deal with. With the increase in permanent fences, though, the elders' role started to change. For one, they started to become less involved in boundary disputes. While permanent fences haven't eradicated the risk of losing land, they certainly increase the chances of keeping land

and, thereby, reduce the need for dispute resolution.⁷⁴ The decision-making processes of gerontocracy are characterised by convoluted negotiations and discussions. The fence erases the need for this lengthy process. As William asserts, “nobody can come and take my land because I’ve already fenced it”. The fence traces a highly visible and immovable line in the land; it was erected to impose a claim to the land which the farmer’s neighbours simply cannot ignore.

The Agency of the Fence

To understand the social function of the fence, it may be fruitful to understand it in terms of *material agency*. The Philosopher Jane Bennett (2010) argues that material objects are not just inanimate objects, but affective bodies with the agency to affect humans and influence social contexts. She calls nonhuman material objects such as fences *vibrant matter*. In the same way other humans can affect us and shape the conditions of social and political life, so can these nonhuman objects. Road infrastructures guide the movement of people and goods, school buildings dictate where learning is performed, digital technologies speed up financial transactions and facilitate an influx of cash into rural regions. Far from dead, inanimate objects, they all actively shape the social structures of daily life. Following this line of reasoning, the fence plays a role in the social dynamics of the community, mediating relations between neighbours and dictating the conditions of neighbourliness. It actively works to establish a boundary and *delineates* the private property of the individual, bolstering and legitimizing their claims to ownership. Following Bennett, agency ought to be understood as distributed throughout an assemblage; it is not attributed to a specific subject. “Each member and proto-member of the assemblage” she writes, “has a certain vital force, but there is also an effectivity proper to the grouping as such: an agency of the assemblage” (Bennett, 2010, p. 24). Things like fences are actors in an assemblage, not social constructions, or inanimate objects. The efficacy of the fence is distributed across the context in which it

⁷⁴ Land can be lost in other ways including a community agreeing to excommunicate a family or individuals bribing officials to change official records or forge title deeds.

finds itself and determined by its relationship with the other entities (humans, environment, laws, social institutions, ideas, etc) in the assemblage.

If William's neighbours are to challenge his claim to the property ownership, they are required to engage with the fence. They can cut it down or cut a hole to let their livestock through thereby committing an act of vandalism on another's property. Or they can go through the formal social channels – be it the assistant chief or government land office – to lodge a complaint.⁷⁵ Either way, they have to engage with the fence as an active participant in the conditions of neighbourliness. Of course, William could install a gate and allow his neighbour to cross his threshold. In fact, it is not uncommon for farmers to allow their neighbours to graze their land for a small fee. But the fence is still dictating neighbourliness. The open gate is an invitation to enter my land, but on the condition that you respect that it is *my* land.

The more central a role an object takes in an assemblage, the more vibrant it becomes (Bennett, 2010). We learnt from William that there is a hierarchy of fences, with metal ones trumping organic ones. In Bennett's thinking, metal fences have more *vibrancy*; they take more place in the assemblage that determines the conditions of land tenure between neighbours. The elders' input is currently quite important for William because he has a cactus fence, which is penetrable, and not a more "permanent" metal fence, meaning the boundaries are not airtight. He can't be sure his neighbour sabotaged his fence to let his goats through or if the goats simply found their own way through. With a metal fence, the issue is less ambiguous: the fence was either cut or it wasn't.

To buttress his claim to ownership over land, William draws on the notion that "we inherited it from our forefathers". By alluding to his direct connection with his forefathers, he is implying he is the rightful owner of the land. This reinforces the point that the social logic of clan lines and residency still holds weight in land disputes and the materiality of the fence has not entirely replaced the sociality of gerontocracy. The elders represent

⁷⁵ There is a formal government structure established to deal with land issues. This starts at the community level with the assistant chief's office and is supported by a hierarchy of county and national land offices.



Image 12. Fencing, tractors and a pastoralist family collectively converting parts of Baringo into a modern landscape. This family are preparing their land to plant grass. They have put up a 1.5m fence, complete with razor wire, all around the farm to keep their neighbours out. Photo: Osman Oleparmarin.

negotiable, transient and fluid social rules; boundaries can be discussed, and consent is agreed on a community level. In this system, there is no hard and fast rule as to how much a farmer should be compensated for such losses. Instead with the elders' support, they agree on a fair settlement. The metal fence, in contrast, represents immovable, rigid and universal rules. They are clearly defined boundaries stamped into the ground that nobody can challenge. As more land is demarcated and fences go up, communal social ties change and can even become less important. Increasingly, as Bennett stresses, "the movements and effectivity of... metals are [becoming more] crucial to political life (and human life per se)" (Bennett, 2010, p. x). Increasingly, some people like William want the rigidity of metal, not the flexibility of cactus or thornbushes and the elders that they

represent. As more permanent fences appear across the landscape, the social weight of the “forefathers” is changing and starting to erode. This, as we will now see, is part of a broader identity change occurring among Baringo’s agropastoralists.

Adopting the Lifestyle of Others

In the past, there was lots of grass, lots of livestock, life was cheap. Now life has become difficult because there are school fees and food costs. Nowadays, we are changing our culture to adopt the lifestyle of others (Alice).

The cultural landscape of Baringo, which has remained relatively stable for over 200 years or so (cf. Anderson & Bollig, 2016), has radically changed within one generation. The population has exploded. The grasslands have largely disappeared and have been replaced in certain areas by individual farms. Now educational institutions can be found in every community and the subsistence economy has given way to a cash-based economy. Pastoralists value grass as a resource so dedicate time to its management, often through socially coordinated efforts. Historically, subsistence modes of production have tapped these resources to provide sustenance for the community. The political visions of the post-independence governments to create an independent modern economy, however, have prioritised the management of natural resources to accelerate economic development and their integration into the market economy. These changes have set in motion a transition towards a lifestyle that the oldest generation of pastoralists, like Alice, do not recognise. Alice experiences the economic changes as forcing them into “adopting the lifestyle of others”. As much as the introduction of the modern economy was an economic change, it also ushered in a cultural change; for Alice it signalled the demise of the subsistence culture and the social systems that upheld it, leading to the beginnings of a more individualised culture.

The changing identity can be seen in the aspirations and lifestyle choices of the people met in this chapter. Watching the economic landscape change around them, they aspired to expand their individual farms, secure

an income and put their kids through school. Already in the early 1990s, this change in values was being seen by Anthropologists such as Elizabeth: "The ideal of education, with the possible future economic benefits it can provide, has become more important than the older ideals of large live-stock herds and good harvests" (Meyerhoff, 1991, p. 20). As a herdsman, grass farmer and retired teacher, Paul perhaps embodies the cultural identity of modern pastoralism best. His livelihood is constructed as a patchwork of animal husbandry, modern farming techniques and formal education. The younger William represents a continuation of this modern identity. As individual plots of land are demarcated by the older generation and inherited by the next, so too are the modern values and aspirations they inspired. In wanting to build a permanent metal fence around his plot, William tells us (and his neighbours) that he plans to invest in his own individual future, irrespective of the actions of the wider community. For him, the chain-link fence is a symbol of this aspiration.

Baringo's agropastoralists are relying less and less on the communal structures that previously supported the subsistence economy. In particular, they are becoming more individualised in their livelihood practices and formal education has become highly valued. Individuals are putting most of their labour into generating products they can sell for cash to cover their own household needs, rather than contributing to the upkeep of communal grasslands for the benefit of the clan and broader community. A pastoralist is somebody who makes a living by taking care of livestock and feeding them on pastures. A pastoralist without livestock or access to pastures is like a musician without an instrument: there is not one without the other. In other words, pastoralist identity is relationally defined by their interconnect-edness with land, grass and livestock. To a degree then, the specific nature of the relationship between the pastoralist and their means of production, namely their productive labour, defines their identity and lifestyle. By putting their labour into new forms of production, pastoralists are changing their identity. Their new way of life is characterised by dedicating their productive labour to the market economy. In turn, the cultural identity of pastoralists is also informed by this relationship to the market economy.

What's more, as we saw in the previous section, education played an important role in Baringo's modernisation, and many pastoralists commit-

ted to putting their kids in school. Joseph tells us that this had a detrimental effect on the status of the elders within their communities:

Education is everything. If an elder hasn't been to school, then he knows nothing. Even if he has the ability to build a school and take all his kids to school, people think he's uneducated and ignorant (Joseph).

Traditionally, knowledge was passed down from the older to the younger generations. The community oldest generation were seen as authorities because of their collective knowledge and wisdom. However, if we listen to Joseph, it appears that as formal education became highly valued, the elders started to become *undervalued*. Considering they grew up before the creation of formal education, very few of them have ever been formally educated. Even Paul and Kibet, both of whom played an influential role in bringing education to Baringo, fear that their children's generation see them primarily as uneducated and ignorant. According to them, the younger generation see their knowledge as outdated, a thing of the past which has little real-world application in modern life. The world they navigate is filled with bank accounts, government buildings, phones and modern transport. Elders typically have extensive knowledge of the flora and fauna in the area which can be drawn on to help the clan survive and flourish in a harsh environment. They know which plant to feed your livestock in which season, or how to grind a specific berry that survives in droughts to get nutrients out of it when there is no food.⁷⁶ But this knowledge is of limited use to most people's daily lives today; it won't help them secure a bank loan or pay school fees or hospital bills. Because of the elevated status of formal education, gerontocracy – which was once a pillar

⁷⁶ As Kibet tells us, they also hold important knowledge about the medicinal uses of different plants: "This generation don't have that knowledge. They don't know how to dig a hole to find water. Medicine is another thing, they don't know about. Mothers used to use certain herbs and crush them into a paste. That was our medicine. Nowadays, they just go to see the doctor and get an injection". Previous research in Baringo has also recorded the role of traditional knowledge in veterinary practices (Shivairo 2013), coping with drought (Kimani et al. 2014), weather forecasting (Rotich et al. 2016) and medicine (Kung'u et al. 2023).

of pastoralism in Baringo – is increasingly seen by the community as a relic from the past.

The lifestyle being adopted by Baringo's pastoralist can be understood as a new cultural identity that is explicitly linked to modernity. Cultural Historian D.P Gaonkar (1999) argues that modernisation leads to the emergence of modernities in which individual lifestyles and cultural identities are distinguishable from the traditional identities of the past. Modernity has been identified as first emerging in Europe and America, driven by the modernisation processes that accompanied the industrial revolution. Many great writers – from Marx and Weber to Foucault and Habermas – have concerned themselves with understanding modernity.⁷⁷ The narratives proposed tend to share certain features, linking modernity to a secular mindset, the doctrine of progress and what Gaonkar describes as “individualistic understandings of the self” (1999, p. 2). However, Gaonkar stresses that modernity may have its origins in the West, but modernisation has since occurred in numerous other regions around the globe, emerging out of the specific sociopolitical and economic (and to this, I may hasten to add *ecological*) circumstances of each context:

Modernity always unfolds within a specific cultural or civilizational context and that different starting points for the transition to modernity lead to different outcomes. Under the impact of modernity, all societies will undergo certain changes in both outlook and institutional arrangements (Gaonkar, 1999, p. 15).

As modernisation has taken root in different places around the globe, it has created new forms of modernity. All experiences of modernity (including Western ones) are place-specific. This distinction is important because it denies the possibility of cultural homogeneity and challenges the dominant narrative that sees modern identity as solely individualist. A site-specific reading of modernity enables us to question the Eurocentric assumption that it has to “take the form of an adversary culture that privileges the

⁷⁷ Habermas' *Philosophical Discourse of Modernity* (1985) gives an extensive overview and discussion of the historically most important thinkers and their ideas on modernity.

individual's need for self-expression and self-realization over the claims of the community" (Gaonkar, 1999, p. 15). This is particularly pertinent for understanding African modernities. In Kenya, for example, the pursuit of economic development through modernisation has been the primary political goal of the postcolonial era. Yet, the Kenyan march into modernity has not been accompanied by the mental outlooks and social transformations expected by Western modernity. According to Political Scientist Dickson Eyoh, ethnic identity has played (and continues to play) an active role in modulating modernisation processes in Africa:

The production and renegotiation of ethnic identity and consciousness are shaped by and in turn shape the responses of groups in different spaces to shifts in power relations and conditions of material life that are associated with state expansion and commodification of economic relations (Eyoh, 1999, p. 274).

Rather than identify as strict individuals, many Kenyans associate their identity with the ethnic community to which they belong. This influences how modes of production have developed and, by extension, the material conditions of any one individual's life. The role ethnic identity and communitarian governance structures played in modulating the demarcation of land is a case in point. While communal lands are being chopped up by individuals, only members from within a specific community are entitled to land within their communal lands. This is a stark contrast to the individual land ownership model of the West where anybody is entitled to buy land (or more commonly, a house) as long as they have the financial means.

Nevertheless, it cannot be denied that modernisation has triggered a transition to modernity in Baringo which has brought profound changes in what it means to belong to a community and the social institutions that govern community life. This observation is affirmed by other ethnographic studies of the changing pastoral identities in Baringo. In a paper on the changing identity of Pokot pastoralists, for example, Bollig, Greiner and Österle conclude that "Social organization—particularly in the case of gender roles, customary household structures and gerontocratic governance—

is in the midst of a profound transformation process” (2014, p. 66). This change in social organisations, they continue, “has been induced by the market orientation of the livestock economy, the integration of agriculture and increasing sedentarization” (2014, p. 66). In Baringo, the introduction of capitalist structures of land ownership, the modern institution of formal education and modern technologies have transformed relations between neighbours and diluted the social structures of gerontocratic governance.

Diluting Sociality

The introduction of a market economy for cash crops altered the relationship between community members, partly replacing the sociality of community relations with the transactionality of the market. Through modernisation, neighbours started to see each other more like customers or competitors than fellow clansmen. When the community were co-managers of the land and resources, relationships centred around continual negotiation, communication and cooperation. That’s not to say there weren’t instances of exploitation; the gerontocratic system with its implicit age-based power hierarchy, as we have seen, was built upon dominance. But importantly, these relations were not determined by commodity exchange but by communal social ties which obliged them to work together for the good of the clan and community. They put their productive labour towards the same end goal, namely the production of communal resources and a shared social tax to a collective heritage which required them to work together and see one another as co-producers. Now, the land and the resources upon it are considered more as your personal asset; there is less negotiation or cooperation with the community required to manage it.⁷⁸ This change in what it means to be a neighbour is further reproduced through the materiality of the fences going up around individual farms. Through its material participation in land negotiations, the fence forces neighbours to interact as individual owners of private property rather than

⁷⁸ Incidentally, people are also starting to move elsewhere to buy land, a process which is disrupting traditional cultural institutions of land management to an even greater degree.

the communal owners of shared land that they once were. The family living next door were once exclusively fellow clansmen with whom, in a previous life, you would have shared the resources of the grazing lands. Now, they can also be potential customers who can buy *your* goods, or inconvenient neighbours who try to steal *your* land.

The capitalist structures promoting the change in perceptions of neighbourliness were further entrenched by national land policies and regulation enshrining individual land rights into law which date back to the colonial era. Legal scholar Matende-Omwoma (2018) demonstrates that starting with the Swynnerton Plan in 1955, land adjudication consolidated individual land rights and subsequent post-independence acts followed suit. Whilst the law has since been amended to account for group rights and has been superseded by subsequent acts – such as the 2016 Community Land Act which recognises the right to community land ownership – Matende-Omwoma argues that the earlier land laws had a profound and lasting impact on perceptions on land ownership in rural Kenya: “The commencement of land adjudication in Kenya marked a critical point for shifting the manner in which Kenyans relate and perceive land...creating individuation of land rights from community land” (2018, p. 4). Since the introduction of these acts, the law has recognised the rights of the individual over the claims of the community, bolstering the individual’s self-perception as the rightful owner of his land. Against the backdrop of pressures from the market economy and the insertion of fences as physical barriers between plots of land, this regulatory legacy reinforces the perception of neighbours not exclusively as clan or kin but also as competitors or customers.

The market economy also facilitated the introduction of individual land ownership. With the increase in individual private ownership of land, the community-based institutions governing social life began to corrode. As Lefebvre point out, capitalist structures such as individual land ownership subordinate the pre-existing ownership structures. “By doing so, it corrodes and destroys traditional social structures which often broke down slowly but remained compatible with the practices, habits and needs of the populations” (Lefebvre, 2022 (1954), p. 81). As more individuals lay claim to individual plots of land, the social hierarchies that upheld communal land management, such as the council of elders, are gradually corroded

and replaced by an individual. Collective decision-making and the shared wisdom of the community's older generations are subordinated to the rules of the market: he who owns the land calls the shots.

The materiality of the physical fences enclosing individual plots further contributes to the disruption of existing social hierarchies. Fences play a role of conditioning social life in terms of what Sociologist Noortje Marres calls *Material Participation*. When used actively to bring about a specific social or politic aim, she claims “everyday things, devices and environments may then acquire the capacity to engage and to mediate involvement with public affairs” (Marres, 2016). Material participation, she continues, is “a more or less deliberate effect that is accomplished – or at least sought after – in [practice]” (Marres, 2016 original emphasis). With its conspicuous presence, the fence affects the social conditions of community life, forcing William's neighbours to engage with him in a particular way – as a landowner. Similarly, the fences challenge the social authority of the elders by offering a sort of techno-legal solution to boundary disputes which is more efficient.

As we saw, there is a hierarchy of fences; the more permanent metal fences are considered superior to the organic cactus or thorn-bush fences. To an extent the hierarchy in fences mirrors the changing hierarchy of authority in Baringo. As permanent fences become more established, they further weaken the authority of the elders and, in doing so, push gerontocracy further down the hierarchy. The dilution of the elders' authority was further entrenched by the introduction of formal education. This triggered a large-scale internalisation of the importance of formal education, creating what Paul called “the hunger for education”. With this shift, the educated classes became seen as more qualified authorities and those lacking an education (primarily the oldest generation) as inferior.

While the social structures of gerontocracy have been significantly diluted, they have not been entirely replaced. Individual land ownership has not completely replaced the communal land use rights; and gerontocracy and kinship still play a role in land demarcation and land disputes. Moreover, people still rely on each other, particularly in times of crisis. As we will come to see in the next chapter, sociality still plays an important role in helping grass farmers manage their farms, market their produce and cope with climatic disasters. The enduring relevance of traditional structures suggests

that pastoralism in Baringo has not changed to a fundamentally different form but is going through a transition in which the economic and social structures are in flux. Individual land management, for example, evolved gradually from the communal use model and is still in the process of transforming social structures. Likewise, fences have not replaced the elders in one go. Rather, it is undergoing a gradual transition from the one to the other. At the very beginning of demarcation, gerontocracy was still a living social institution which held significant sway over people. When the first boundary disputes evolved, they leant on the dispute resolution systems they already had established i.e. consulting the elders. This continues to happen today. But rather than the only dispute resolution mechanism, it is often the first step in a more formal system which involves government structures such as chiefs, land authorities and courts.

In conclusion, it appears that Baringo is going through a period of transition in which both communal social ties (exemplified by the elders) and market forces (exemplified by the fences) still play a role. Rather than destroy sociality entirely, the market has diluted and warped traditional social structures, making them a thinner force in organising community relations. In this period of transition, gerontocracy is still important and the elder still play the role of community mouthpiece. But, as more fences go up, the voice of the community is increasingly challenged. As more land is demarcated and more fences go up, individual property rights will inevitably play a larger role in disputes than the elders. In short, sociality is still a vibrant, if diluted, organising principle in Baringo and its new form is market-based rather than community-based. Social structures no longer occupy the role of central social function in community life, and they are heavily modulated by the market, but they are still important for access to land and the success of individual livelihoods – for now at least.

Summary

This chapter has shown that over the past half a century pastoralism has changed drastically in Baringo. The landscape was previously shaped by a communal mode of production in which the land and the resources on it belonged to an ethnic community. This chapter has attempted to demon-

strate that pressures to accumulate cash to cover household costs, fuelled by a population explosion and the introduction of education, pushed people away from a subsistence-based lifestyle towards the market economy. Correspondingly, it has argued that through the market economy, formal education and land adjudication, the capitalist structures of modern agro-pastoralism brought about profound changes in the cultural identity of individual pastoralists as well as fundamental alterations in the material and social structures of pastoralism.

Against this backdrop, grass farming has emerged as a modern mode of production that sets individual farmers in a market economy and provides them with a means of securing a livelihood. In the next chapter, we return to the present day to take a closer look at grass farming today and explore how Baringo's grass farmers are using this mode of production to help adapt to the financial pressures and climatic disasters that plague everyday life in the 21st century.

Chapter 5: Pastoralists Planting Grass

Farming grass to cope with modern economic pressures and climate crises

This is grass-growing country. Grass grows so quickly here. Imagine, people have tried planting maize here. Despite all those people planting maize, not one of them has made it work. But I've succeeded. I've harvested 130kg of grass seed. And the profits have gone straight into my pocket (Simon).

Simon is a Pokot elder who was a semi-nomadic herder for most of his life. In 2008, he started growing grass on 10 acres of land to feed his animals. He has since expanded to 40 acres. He also harvests the seeds from his grass and sells it as a crop to the development organisation RAE. He has watched



Image 13. Grass seed being harvested in preparation for sale. Photo: Osman Oleparmarin.

others in his community attempt to plant maize as an alternative livelihood to herding, but, he claims, none of them have succeeded. By contrast, his grass farm now affords him a comfortable life and has generated enough money to put all his kids through school.

The previous two chapters have shown how climate change and a rapid history of modernisation have made Baringo a precarious place to live. This chapter explores what pastoralists are doing to cope with a changing environment as well as a changing economic landscape. It focuses on a growing number of agropastoralists who, like Simon, have turned to grass farming to make a living. It explores their practices through the theoretical framework of livelihoods resilience and cultural resilience. Focusing on livelihood practices, it frames grass farming as an adaptation to the pastoralist way of life being used to help strengthen their capacity to absorb the impacts of climate change and adapt to the pressures of the modern economy.

The chapter starts with a short history of grass farming before introducing a handful of entrepreneurial farmers who have changed the landscape of farming. From there, it discusses how this livelihood practice has evolved out of the communal mode of production described in the previous chapter and is being used to cope with climate emergencies. It ends with a discussion on how pastoralists are using grass farming to strengthen the resilience of their livelihoods.

A Short History of Growing Grass

RAE's co-founder Murray Roberts has followed the evolution of grass farming in Baringo and even been a central figure in its development. He tells me that the organisation he founded in the 1980s first introduced the idea of planting grass.⁷⁹ A plot of land in the Njemps Flats was allocated by the community for RAE to plant trees that would provide local herders with fodder for their livestock and wood for charcoal. According to Murray, people were hesitant to plant grass and trees at first:

⁷⁹ The organization now called RAE was called the Baringo Fuel and Fodder Project (BFFP) at the time.

We had a community meeting and said we wanted a bit of land to plant trees on. And the people basically laughed and said that trees wouldn't grow. Eventually they agreed and gave us about 10 hectares, I think. And we planted trees, and they grew (Murray).

The idea behind this initiative was that planting trees would help regenerate the denuded pastures by anchoring the soil and encouraging other flora (including grass) to grow. In an area where grass and trees grew on the communal pastures, the idea of actively planting and farming them was an absurd concept to most pastoralists. Indeed, why plant something that grows naturally? But, when people saw first-hand that denuded wasteland could be converted into productive pasture, perceptions started to change. RAE started receiving requests from individuals to rehabilitate their own land:

Everybody was a bit surprised. But it spread from there. We got a lot of requests from a lot of different sub-locations around the lake of people wanting us to plant for them. And grass came into it at some point. And now grass has pretty much taken over. What we have discovered is that if you plant grass, at some point the trees come back anyway (Murray).

So, in addition to the community field, RAE started rehabilitating individual plots of a few Il Chamus and Tugen agropastoralists and helped them manage their land effectively. After three or four years of research, they learnt that planting grass was more effective in increasing biodiversity, soil anchorage and crucially, brought more fodder for livestock. Accordingly, RAE's other co-founder Elizabeth proposed a shift of focus from planting trees to planting grass.

Whilst RAE initiated the growth of grass farming across Baringo, particularly on individual plots, its popularity has been driven primarily by herders seeing their neighbours succeed and deciding to seek help to rehabilitate their own land. RAE were approached by a few Il Chamus and Tugen farmers, asking for help to plant grass on their own private fields. As we saw in chapter four, a number of herders were fencing off land to plant maize. But they were struggling to get a consistent yield from the maize; it wasn't well-suited to the semi-arid conditions in Baringo, and crops often failed

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during prolonged dry seasons. Seeing grass flourishing in RAE's fields, they endeavoured to switch crops on their own fields and start planting grass. Since these first fields were planted, grass farming has grown in popularity in Baringo. As more and more people saw degraded land being converted into productive grass fields, interest and knowledge of grass planting grew. RAE received (and continue to receive) increasing numbers of requests to plant grass across the county: "from the first four fields we did, a while ago, we're here now with around a hundred requests a year for people who want to plant their fields" (Murray). This evolution has happened organically; the vast majority of Baringo's several thousand farmers opt to plant grass because they see the benefits firsthand in their neighbourhoods.

Concurrently, RAE continued to plant and maintain what they call *community fields*. Similar to the private fields, only much larger (approx. 50-200 acres), these fields have been fenced and converted into fodder banks. During the rainy season, they are open to all pastoralists in a given community to provide a buffer against starvation and help them keep their cattle alive until the rains come back. These fields are managed collaboratively by RAE and local community groups made up of pastoralists that



Image 14. A grass farmer storing hay in trees in her field. This traditional technique was originally used on communal pastures to keep hay out of the reach of cattle so it can be saved for the dry season. It has been repurposed by individual farmers to better manage their private grass stocks and livestock herds. Photo: Osman Oleparmarin.

live nearby. The groups oversee and coordinate the management of the fields: they set out grazing and harvesting systems which determine, among other things, who can access the fields to graze their livestock and harvest seed. Agricultural experts working for RAE support the community groups, working closely with them to provide advice and guidance throughout the management process.

Grass as a Commodity

Gradually, a land rehabilitation and management model was developed by RAE and the communities and individual farmers they worked with. This was based on planting a mixture of indigenous grass species which could tolerate the semi-arid conditions and provide sufficient and nutritious fodder for livestock.⁸⁰ While livestock remains the largest source of livelihood, research in Baringo has shown that “households have a greater demand for income from alternative sources and thus turn increasingly to non-livestock activities to help smooth their consumption and meet other immediate household needs” (Mburu et al., 2017, p. 983). In addition to animal husbandry, an increasing number of farmers are using their fields to supplement their pastoral activities with a diverse combination of non-livestock activities: selling grass seed as a cash crop; selling hay for grazing or thatching; hiring out pasture for grazing; and harvesting honey. Selling grass seed is the most common of these secondary activities and is supported by RAE (and a growing number of other organisations) who offer a secure market for the seeds.⁸¹ Unlike livestock fattening, selling seed is an

⁸⁰ *Cenchrus ciliaris* is the most common grass grown in the area, but best practice is to plant a mixture of indigenous species. Because the indigenous grasses they plant have evolved within a pastoralist social-ecological system, they are suited to periodical grazing from livestock and wild grazers alike. The species mix varies depending on the ecozone. On the Njempis Flats, the soil is primarily silt and clay loam, which is better suited to *Cenchrus ciliaris*. Whereas the rocky red soil of the Tugen hills is more suited to *Eragrostis superba*. Having evolved to survive in ASAL environments with little rain, these indigenous grasses are highly responsive to rain and grow aggressively when the rains start.

⁸¹ In Baringo, RAE are the primary seed merchant. Most farmers who own private fields have an agreement with RAE which stipulates that they will sell to RAE and RAE will provide a secure market.

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entirely new market for pastoralists. Yet, it is intentionally designed to complement the livestock fattening market and align with the rotational grazing system that farmers implement to manage their grass.

A grass farmer, Delphine, sees the introduction of grass farming as causing a shift in pastoralists' perception of what grass is:

[A] pastoralist having 10 acres can take 5 acres and plant grass. He doesn't have to wait for the rain to come or even for God to plant grass seed... We now do it ourselves; we don't rely on God. Before people thought that grass just grew naturally (Delphine).

Before, she suggests, people tended to see grass as a part of the natural environment. They didn't need to actively grow it in the way you grow crops; it simply grew on its own. When Delphine explains that pastoralists tended to understand grass as a *god-given* resource rather than a crop that one grows oneself, it's unclear whether she is speaking metaphorically or referring to a literal god as creator and provider of resources – this interpretation is possible given the ubiquity of Christianity in Baringo.⁸² Nevertheless, if we understand it as a metaphor, it's an interesting point of departure for understanding the changing perception of grass that followed the demarcation of grasslands. For the individual, putting time, money and energy into growing and caring for the grass makes it distinctly *his own* grass, not part of the natural environment. Sitting on an individual's farm, the grass is no longer a shared resource but an agricultural input to invest in, manage and sell. What was once the remit of *God* and *Nature* now belongs to the *Individual* and the *Market*.

Entrepreneurial Grass Farmers

As we will see in chapter seven, RAE and other local organisations continue to play a central role in promoting grass farming. But an equally important group of people in grass farming's evolution are the farmers them-

⁸² According to City Population (2019), 97% of Baringo's population identify as religious, of which 90% specifically identify as Christian.

selves. A number of grass farmers across Baringo stand out as pioneers, including Matthew, an Il Chamus farmer whom we met in chapter three. In an interview with Osman, he explains that he has established a system that enables him to harvest grass seeds for sale and use grass to fatten livestock to sell at market:

I planted my grass field in 2005. I saw that grass planting was a good thing... I have a system for managing both cows and seed harvest. I close one of my fields for two months until the seeds can be harvested. Once I have harvested the seeds, I let the cows graze in the field until the end of the second month. Then I take the cows out until the seeds can be harvested again from this field. Then I let the cows in again and don't remove them until the end of the second month (Matthew).

Matthew buys skinny cows, fattens them up on his grass fields and sells them for a profit at the livestock auction in the nearby town of Marigat. Under the right conditions, he tells me he can fatten a cow sufficiently to make a profit within two months. He started this enterprise in 2005 with three cattle and around 2.5 acres. By 2013, he had grown his herd size to 16 and bought another ten acres of land.⁸³ This enabled him to start a rotational grazing system across his three fields to maximise the income from both livestock fattening and seed harvesting. He keeps all his cattle on one field and closes the others while the grass grows until the seed is ready for harvest. After harvesting, he moves his cattle onto one of the other fields, allowing the recently grazed field to recover. He plants grass seeds just before the onset of the rainy season so they will start growing as soon as the rains come. Within approximately two months, the grass produces seeds that can be harvested and sold to a seed merchant. During the dry season, the grass does not produce seeds, so he feeds it to his cattle.

This model is becoming common practice in Baringo. However, some farmers have evolved the model to suit their needs by incorporating new

⁸³ As we saw in the previous chapter, much of the land tenure in Baringo is not formally recognized. It is likely that Matthew went into an informal agreement with a neighbour to buy land without formalising the sale with a legally recognized title deed.



Image 15. Chemjor carrying freshly cut hay from her grass field to feed her cattle during the dry season. Keeping her cows out of the grass field entirely allows her to have better control over her grass stocks and balance the fodder and seed production. Photo: Osman Oleparmarin.

practices. Chemjor, whom we met in the previous chapter, tells Joseph in an interview how she has adapted her farm management approach by switching to zero grazing:

I used to keep my cows inside my grass field. But the cows would graze the grass really low and rip it from the ground. I saw quite quickly that my grass was completely gone so I had to replant. I went to RAE; I asked them to replant for me. But this time, I realised it would be better to cut the grass and feed it to the cattle outside the field. Since then, my grass has been growing really well, and I've been... able to benefit in two ways. I've benefited from the grass seeds and from the grass itself, which my cattle eat... Even if I can't harvest myself, I call people from the community to come and harvest (Chemjor).

Chemjor fenced off a plot of land to start farming grass a few years back. With RAE's help, she prepared and planted her field, but didn't reap the benefits she hoped. By taking the initiative to switch to zero-grazing, she has better control over her fodder stocks. Like Matthew, Chemjor also



Image 16. Women “from the community” planting grass seeds in a farmer’s field. The women told us they appreciate having the possibility of periodic paid work like this. Even if the work is sporadic, it helps them earn cash to put towards food costs and school and hospital fees. Photo: Osman Oleparmarin.

harvests grass seeds from her field. Once the seeds are ripe, they are individually hand-picked and stored ready for sale. This is a very labour-intensive process so, as an elderly woman, she relies on help, calling “people from the community to come and harvest”.

Unlike intensive agriculture, grass farming in Baringo has not been mechanised; most of the work is done by hand and there are time-consuming activities that require a lot of manual labour at each stage of the process. During planting, for example, seeds are planted by hand, scattered loosely to cover the entire surface of the farm (see image 16). Then, when it’s time to harvest, the seeds are hand-picked from every grass plant individually.⁸⁴ Even on a small tract of land, it would simply not be possible for an individual farmer (especially an elderly one) to undertake all these tasks on their own. So, farmers employ people (normally women) from their local community on a short-term basis and pay cash-in-hand to provide additional labour.

⁸⁴ Other labour-intensive activities include ploughing, fencing, cutting hay and weeding.

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Female Entrepreneurs

Many of Baringo's grass farming entrepreneurs are women who have paved the way for other women to manage their own grass farms. Sandra was one of the first women in Baringo to start farming grass. She tells Osman in an interview that she saw an opportunity in grass farming:

As a mother from the Il Chamus community, I was the first woman to engage myself with grass growing. Despite long arguments with my husband on land issues, he finally agreed to give me land to undertake the grass growing programme. I thank him for he has been cooperative, even though women are rendered powerless in our community on land matters... We hear a lot of criticism from the community, people telling him "Why do you let your wife handle the profits you get from your grass seeds..." "why do you let your wife think the land belongs to her when it's rightfully yours?" (Sandra).

Sandra saw her neighbours succeeding at grass farming and was inspired to do the same. But because the land belongs to her husband (in the eyes of the law and the community), she had to convince her husband to agree.



Image 17. Chela harvesting seed by hand in her grass field. She also uses the grass to feed her cattle and her husband's cattle. Seeing the benefits the grass was bringing, he invested in Chela's farm by putting up a chainlink fence for her. Photo: Osman Oleparmarin.

Even though she has convinced her husband to support her as a farm manager, Sandra still faces criticism from her community and her husband suffers stigma for relinquishing control to a woman. So, while gender dynamics are changing and grass farming is presenting an avenue for women's empowerment in Baringo, this is still a contentious issue that brings strong opposition.

Nevertheless, following the example of the likes of Sandra, a growing number of women are now farming grass. They are becoming entrepreneurs in their own right and recognised as owners of the land. Chela, for example, tells Joseph and Osman in an interview that she has incorporated her grass farm into a steadily expanding business with a variety of different ventures:

I asked my mum to give me a few acres that I could plant for myself... The whole family has really benefited from this field. The seeds I harvest support the children and cover our household needs. There's no stress nowadays, there's money coming in... After harvesting and selling seeds, I put half the income in the bank. I use some to pay for school fees and household needs and I put a bit into my small business... I have a grain mill and a small shop. ... I put the rest in the bank and use it to cover my farm costs (Chela).

Without any of her own land, Chela first planted grass on her parents' land, starting with one acre and gradually building up to five. She continues to grow grass to feed her livestock and to harvest the seeds for sale. Formally, the land still belongs to her parents, but Chela manages the farm, and she owns all the resources upon it (grass, seeds, fencing etc). She has since invested her profits in expanding into other business ventures including a small shop and grain mill. Once the household and farm costs are covered, she reinvests the remaining profits from her grass farm into these other businesses.

Thanks to the initiatives of the entrepreneurial pastoralists-cum-dryland farmers like Matthew, Chemjor and Sandra, a fledgling dryland grass economy with multiple income generating opportunities is starting to flourish across Baringo. With the help of RAE and other organisations, these entrepreneurs have paved the way for grass farming to become an established mode of production in Baringo which has benefits for both livelihoods and the environment. As grass farming grows to become a more established

industry with more economic activity, it is providing livelihoods for more than just the individual farmers. As we will now see, this becomes particularly pertinent in times of crisis.

Farming Grass in a Time of Crisis

As we saw in chapter three, Baringo is facing multiple climatic crises simultaneously, including the worst drought in 70 years and record levels of flooding from Lake Baringo. A number of grass farmers are relying on their farms to help them navigate these challenging situations by adapting their farming practices. Where possible, they are also using the produce and proceeds from their farms to help their neighbours and fellow community members cope in times of crisis. This section presents how two entrepreneurial grass farmers – Matthew and Chemjor, interviewed by Osman and Joseph respectively – are using their farms to cope with floods and help their neighbours through a drought.

In 2016, Matthew lost one of his fields to the rising flood waters of Lake Baringo. At the time of writing, it is yet to re-emerge:

Everybody has lost land. But there is a big difference between my land and my neighbours. They have lost land upon which to graze their cattle. This has really hit people hard. Some people have started to sell their cattle and for others, their cattle have died. We've all lost grazing land. I'm fortunate that I've still got fields left. This allows me to continue to harvest seed to sell to RAE and graze my cattle. I've had a bit of luck. But others have really suffered (Matthew).

Matthew used to have three fields which he relied on to fatten cattle and harvest seeds for sale. Even if he is grateful to have two fields remaining, losing a third of his land had a big impact on his income. He implements a rotational grazing system in correspondence with the harvesting season, closing off some fields entirely as harvesting time nears. Losing a field made it harder to rotate his cattle and keep some of the fields closed during harvesting because that would mean his cattle going hungry. The impact on his livelihood is perhaps more acute than normal because the current drought has killed off most of the grass in the area. Losing this land has

forced a dilemma. If he opens up an extra field to keep his cattle well-fed, they eat the grass he was growing for harvest; alternatively, if he keeps the field closed, his cattle risk starving. The flooding also brings additional threats from wild animals. The lakeshore, which was once several kilometres from Matthew's land, now sits in his fields.

With no fence between his land and the lake, hippos and crocodiles can enter his field at night. Matthew tells us this poses a risk to his livelihood: hippos are grazers so are likely to eat his grass; and crocodiles are stalkers so are likely to eat his cattle. In response, he has built a makeshift shelter in his field so he can sleep there to protect his resources until the lake recedes out of his field and he can put up his fence again. Every night, he leaves his family to stand guard in his field, armed with a torch, a makeshift spear (made from an iron rod from a construction site, sharpened into a spear) and a 'rungu' (a traditional wooden club used by Maa speaking herders).⁸⁵

To further counter the rapid loss of grass in his fields, Matthew came up with an additional solution:

We've found a way to use the flooding to help our fields... I've been pumping water to my field for two months now. It's really helped me irrigate my field whilst there have been no rains... When there is no rain, I can pump water from the lake. When it rains, I can stop pumping (Matthew).

Rather than succumb to the flooding, he saw an opportunity to use the water to his advantage during a drought and irrigate his remaining fields. Irrigation is not standard practice in grass farming for several reasons. Firstly, the indigenous grasses have evolved in ASAL environments to be drought tolerant, so they can be rain-fed. Secondly, the cost of pumping water would be prohibitively expensive as a long-term solution for most farmers. Finally, the high alkaline levels in the lake water make it unsuitable for human consumption and unsuitable for growing crops.⁸⁶ With this in mind, he under-

⁸⁵ Matthew argues that his presence and the torch is normally enough of a deterrent but if the hippos are really hungry and there is little grass around, he has the spear to protect himself. Because hippo skin is so thick, he is confident that the spear wouldn't do much damage.

⁸⁶ Nyakeya et al. (2022) show that the PH levels in Lake Baringo have historically been too high to irrigate both grass and crops, partly because of an alkaline hot spring on an

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stands his water pump to be a temporary solution to get him through the most severe droughts. Once the rains return, he can stop pumping water. For now, though, the water pump enables his livestock to feed on lush green grass while the surrounding grasslands turn to dust. This means he can continue fattening them to sell at profit while other cattle are emaciating.

Matthew also supplements his income by renting out the water pump to his neighbours whose land was also degraded by the floods:

I've also been able to help my neighbours with the water I pump from the lake... To get water from the lake to my farm, the pipes run across my neighbour's land. So, they asked me if I could use it to help them. They wanted to plant watermelons and vegetables. So, I helped them out. They plant vegetables and watermelons on their side, and I continue to pump water to my field to grow grass. By helping them out, we're all able to benefit (Matthew).

island in the lake. The excess fresh water filling the lake from the surrounding hills have diluted the lake's acidity for now. But presumably, as the lake levels go down, the PH levels will rise once more.



Image 18. Matthew's water pump sucking water from a man-made canal channeling water from Lake Baringo. He moves the pump as the water level rises and falls with the seasons. Photo: Osman Oleparmarin.

When his neighbours' land re-emerged from the lake, they were hesitant to make any long-term investments like replanting grass in case the lake waters rose again with the next rainy season. Instead, they decided to plant a crop of watermelons and a few vegetables. In return for laying his pipes across their land, they requested access to the water pump to irrigate their crops. Citing the cheap cost of seeds and a short growing time for watermelon (around two months), they were confident they could make a return on their investment and a bit of profit from one yield.

Only farmers living near the lake are impacted by the floodwaters. However, anyone attempting to make a living out of pastoralism in Baringo is affected by droughts. Chemjor's zero-grazing technique, for example, allows her to make hay to save for prolonged dry spells:

Ever since I started this system, my cattle have never died. We even help others, our neighbours. If somebody has a skinny, hungry cow, we cut some grass and go feed it with them... We're all benefitting, including the neighbours... People know that if they are hungry, they can come to us... We really have been able to help people. Even this year, we cut our grass



Image 19. Matthew's neighbours' watermelons irrigated with his water pump. This area is normally too dry to grow water-intensive crops. This farmer has taken advantage of the water source to make some short-term revenue on otherwise idle land (own photo).

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and shared it among our neighbours, so we all managed until the rains came again (Chemjor).

Prior to planting grass, Chemjor would periodically lose cattle to starvation during droughts. Since implementing her zero-grazing system, her cattle have never died from starvation because it enables her to actively manage her fodder levels. If needs be, she can graze her livestock on communal pastures for longer and give them less of her own hay to make her reserves stretch further into the drought period. She also uses the resources on her farm to help her neighbours through the economic lean periods that droughts bring. She makes a point of letting her neighbours know that they are welcome to feed their cattle with her hay if they are struggling.

A Modern Iteration of Pastoralism

Placed in a historical context, the emergence of grass farming can be understood as the most recent iteration of pastoralism, emerging in response to the contemporary socioeconomic and ecological climate. The business model is integrated into the pre-existing pastoral economy but is continuously changing as farmers identify new markets based on the goods they produce, such as selling grass seed and hay. It initially evolved as a way for pastoralist livelihoods to continue which could be conducted on smaller patches of land by individual farmers. In providing additional fodder for livestock, it offered a solution that enabled them to continue to sell their livestock at market without disrupting the supply chain or requiring an entirely new market. Over time, farmers have tweaked the model to suit their needs, incorporating new techniques such as zero grazing. These small-scale adjustments can be understood as an example of what entrepreneurship scholars Mulibana & Rena call *Incremental Innovation*: “a minor change made to existing products, processes, services, the purchasing of a new machine or technology and so forth” (Mulibana & Rena, 2021, p. 426). They explain that it is the most common form of innovation in the African informal sector as it often occurs under conditions of survival, scarcity and constraint. The introduction of new technologies and innovations to the land management model work to keep this mode of production relevant and responsive to external conditions.

Anthropologists Davies and Moore (2016) show that pastoralists in Baringo have a history of adapting their production practices to respond to their surroundings through incremental innovation. Like previous iterations of pastoralism, grass farming builds on what they call *technologies of life* which include strong social institutions of ecological management, cross-region networks and ecological knowledge. Despite now being used to support individual livelihoods, grass farming continues the legacy of relying on kinship structures to govern land tenure, grazing patterns and employment conditions as well as to spread ecological knowledge and income generating opportunities for others.

Pastoralist social institutions have historically been produced to an extent by the spatial and temporal cycles of the landscape. In turn, these social institutions inform livelihood practices, creating a shared calendar for the organisation of social life. This creates, what they call “combined social and ecological cycles... that regulate the management of resources” (Davies & Moore, 2016, p. 69). The interdependence of social and ecological calendars continues with the management of private grass farms. The cyclical fluctuations in dry and rainy seasons govern farm management practices by dictating when specific paddocks are opened and closed. It also governs marketing processes. The harvesting and sale of seeds is triggered by the onset of the rainy season; and farmers like Matthew who fatten livestock buy skinny, cheap animals during the dry season and sell them for a higher price at the end of the rainy season. Further, economic relations are modulated by the ecological calendar. Seasonal activities such as harvesting elicits a large-scale employment of short-term manual labourers, with farmers mobilising their community networks to source labourers.

Because grass farmers come from agropastoral communities, they generally enter their grass growing ventures with a good understanding of the local environment, the characteristics of local vegetation and the needs of livestock. Pastoralists draw on what Anthropologist Gufu Oba (2012) calls *ecological and anthropogenic indicators*, connecting soil and vegetation quality, topography and weather conditions to livestock productivity. Ecological indicators “reflect relationships between biophysical landscapes and livestock productivity” and anthropogenic indicators are “part of human environmental history[,] products of people’s perceptions of local environ-

ments” (Oba, 2012, p. 3). Successful pastoralists, he argues, continually observe and assess changes in their environment and resources. They closely watch changes in the productivity of their livestock and shifts in the environment and take cues from the condition of the forage to ensure it is not overgrazed. This knowledge is used to inform decision-making on land and herd management.

Despite being established on individual farms, grass farming still relies on social institutions of land management such as the clan and the family. Social institutions inform several aspects of grass farming, including land tenure, grazing patterns and employment conditions. Access to land is still largely predicated on patriarchal land tenure systems.⁸⁷ Grass farms are predominantly family-run enterprises, situated on land that belongs to or has been inherited by individual families. Chela, for example, was allocated a portion of her parents’ land to plant grass which was used to support the whole family by covering household costs. The same land tenure systems, with their roots in clan-based land ownership, still play a role in grazing patterns. The community fields which were established by organisations like RAE but used by grass farmers to supplement their own resources, are managed exclusively within specific communities and managed by a community group who all share the same ethnic identity. This communal legacy is also present in the organisation of labour. As Samir Amin (1974) reminds us, the communal organisation of labour closely followed the structures of kinship organisation. In Baringo, kinship structures were used to delineate roles throughout the clan and community: the elders coordinated herding, morans protected the pastures. With present day grass farming, farmers employ manual labourers from within their community. The ubiquity of the market economy has warped social constellations and led to labour being organised predominantly through contractual relationships of an employer-employee kind. Nevertheless, the sale of labour is modulated by kinship structures and ethnic identity.

In short, while the knowledge, practices, economic relationships and gender roles that support grass farming are vastly different to those of the

⁸⁷ Although buying land from neighbours is becoming gradually more common in some areas, particularly the Njemps Flats.

past, the communitarian logic of kinship organisation remains, and the mutually dependent social and ecological calendar persists. This becomes all the more important in an era when climate change is making Baringo an ever more challenging environment in which to make a living.

Tapping into the Technologies of Life

With floods and droughts disrupting their farming practices, many grass farmers are finding it harder to make a living. Nevertheless, some are able to adapt their practices to help them cope. To do so, they are tapping into the management techniques, knowledge and social networks which have historically helped previous generations survive in an extremely challenging environment. These so-called “technologies of life contain inherent flexibilities with regard to movement, innovation and improvisation” (Davies & Moore, 2016, p. 82). Informed by their interactions with the environment and passed down the generations, this same flexibility is being adopted by grass farmers. Matthew’s capacity to cope with the drought-flood crisis, for example, is attributable in part to the inherent flexibility in his land management system. Having multiple fields and multiple income streams provides a buffer to climate variability, such as delayed rains or prolonged droughts, by allowing him the flexibility to open or close his fields in response to the rains. As the climate becomes increasingly erratic and the seasonal changes become more unpredictable, this flexibility becomes more important.

However, beyond this systemic flexibility, Matthew also demonstrates a capacity to improvise his practices in response to the changing environment. Matthew’s immediate response to the floods was “to find a way to use the flooding to help our fields” (Matthew). Succumbing to the dismal choice of feeding cattle or harvesting seeds wasn’t an option. Instead, he looked for a way to incorporate the flooding into his land management system. The floods are undeniably a negative shock to Matthew’s livelihood. But they also present opportunities which he has turned into benefits. By actively engaging with the floods, Matthew is operating with what Tim Ingold (2000) calls *sentient ecology*. This is an acute knowledge of and responsiveness to the environment which comes from a deep connection to the immediate world surrounding you. For Ingold, this kind of knowl-

edge, which he also calls intuition, is “based in feeling, consisting in the skills, sensitivities and orientations that have developed through long experience of conducting one’s life in a particular environment” (Ingold, 2000, p. 25). Through a lifetime of closeness with the environment, you build up a fund of context-specific knowledge, an acute sensitivity to changes in your surroundings and skills honed for practical application.

Improvisation, or the ability to swiftly respond to climatic changes such as flooding, is a skill borne out of sentient ecology. Following Ingold, skill can be understood as a form of practical knowledge that is acquired through direct contact with the world around you. He describes skill as “tacit, subjective, context-dependent, practical ‘knowledge how’, typically acquired through observation and imitation” (Ingold, 2000, p. 316). By installing a water pump, Matthew was not simply introducing a technology to his farm. Rather, he was drawing on an acute understanding of an interconnected set of climatic challenges and sensitivity to the ecological conditions in order to skilfully improvise his land management system. Finding the right balance of irrigation requires sensitivity and orientation to weather patterns. On top of this, he must factor in the behaviour patterns of dangerous wild animals. Through a lifetime of living around hippos and crocodiles, he knows the threats they pose to his resources and what actions are required to mitigate the threat.

Helping Others Through a Crisis

Both Matthew and Chemjor stress the importance of using their farms to help others cope with the floods or droughts. Supporting and relying on their social networks puts them in a better position to cope with crises. As Davies and Moore suggest, the use of strong social institutions “to maintain extensive social networks at times of adversity... seem to have acted to buffer [them] from some of the challenges experienced by others” (Davies & Moore, 2016, p. 69). Nurturing, rather than exploiting social relations in times of adversity, means farmers are more likely to be able to call on one another for help when they need it in the future. For the water pipes to reach Matthew’s farm, they had to run across his neighbour’s land. Rather than exploit his neighbours, he sought out ways to engage them on a win-win

basis. In a sense, the water pipes, which made a physical connection between the two farms, symbolised their social contract. For the water pump to benefit Matthew, it also had to benefit his neighbour; he couldn't expect to intrude on his neighbour's land without mutual benefit or, at the very least, permission. Similarly, Chemjor relies on community members to help harvest seeds because she is too old to do it herself. But she also makes sure she repays the debt where she can. By buttressing this communal approach with an ethic of redistribution, they are able to use their farms to help the most vulnerable members of their community through climatic emergencies.

These strong social networks are underpinned by communitarian values. According to D.A Masolo (2010), across Africa it is common to find people espousing values that promote the importance of community in political and economic concerns and encourage, as a virtue, solidarity with the most vulnerable members of one's own group. Masolo understands these values as part of "an ethic of everyday life and social order" (2010, p. 246) which underpins the practices of its advocates. For those who live by communitarian values, he contends, "the promotion of human well-being is a collaborative and reciprocal endeavour where those who are more able in some domains need to assist those who are less able" (Masolo, 2010, p. 246). Working together with one's neighbours and sharing with people in need upholds the political and economic structures of community life. Through declarations such as "by helping them out we all benefit" (Matthew) or "We really have been able to help people" (Chemjor), they express value judgements, justifying their choices as virtuous because they help to spread the wealth. By underpinning the adaptations and innovative practices of entrepreneurial grass farmers, communitarian values help strengthen communal social ties and circulate and redistribute wealth.

Resilient Livelihoods

As we saw in the previous two chapters, Baringo is facing a raft of ecological and economic challenges which have made it increasingly difficult to rely exclusively on communal pastures to make a living. A growing number of pastoralists are switching to intensive grass farming in response to these challenges. For the most successful farmers, growing

grass provides what Development Scholar Admire Nyamwanza calls *livelihood resilience*:

a process linking the capacities of households and communities to respond to, recover and learn from changes and disturbances and to reinstate, renew and reinvigorate their earnings and livelihood patterns disturbed or compromised by changes and challenges in the social and/or physical environment (Nyamwanza, 2012, p. 4).

An individual, household and community with resilient livelihoods is able to cope financially and continue to earn a living when faced with short-term disturbances such as a flash flood or war and more continual changes to the ecological or economic landscape such as droughts becoming more commonplace or a long-term economic recession. The grass farming business model strengthens the farmer's capacity to absorb the impacts of a disturbance and adapt to an increasingly unpredictable environment. This adaptive capacity involves what Nyamwanza calls "learning from and adjusting to the effects of climate change and variability, through, for example, livelihoods diversification and switching to stress-tolerant varieties" (Nyamwanza et al., 2023, p. 900). By establishing a variety of income opportunities – not putting all of one's eggs into one basket, so to speak – and depending on hardy grass and livestock species, there are buffers against climate emergencies. Livestock fattening allows them to maintain an income source throughout the dry season and the seeds provide income in the rainy season. The indigenous grass species they plant have evolved to flourish in a semi-arid environment, so can withstand long droughts and continue to provide nutrients to livestock and high-quality seed. The livestock auctions in Marigat and elsewhere provide a consistent market for meat; and seed merchants such as RAE provide the farmers with a secure market for grass seeds. Because these revenue streams come at different times in the year, farmers don't need to forego seed sales because seed harvesting doesn't start until the onset of the rains. This allows them to diversify their outputs and maintain earning patterns throughout the entire year with limited compromise.

This resilience is undergirded by land management systems which are flexible enough to allow farmers to be responsive to climatic fluctuations.

Adapted grazing techniques and a continued reliance on communal pastures increase a farmer's capacity to adapt to climatic disturbances such as the unpredictability of droughts and continue to maximise revenue. Adaptive capacity is contingent on what Nyamwanza calls *climate resilient innovations*, which are brought about through "improved climate-specific changes in knowledge, partnerships, capacities and decision-making processes" (Nyamwanza et al., 2023, p. 902). These innovations can be technical or institutional changes that help people cope with a more challenging environment. As we have seen, it is common for farmers to balance livestock fattening with harvesting grass seeds for sale. This is supported by grazing techniques such as rotational or zero grazing which have been adapted to respond to variability in the dry season lengths. Climate resilience is further supported by innovations in the social institutions that have historically supported pastoralism such as communal pastures. Grass farmers continue to rely on communal pastures – some of which are managed in collaboration with local organisations like RAE – to supplement their private fodder. Access to both communal and private grass paddocks permits better livestock management. These fields are typically only opened for grazing at the height of a drought when pasture is scarce elsewhere. The additional source of fodder means not just keeping their cattle alive, but also the possibility of keeping them healthy and well-fed.

Responsiveness to the local environment and changing social context makes grass farming an inherently resilient system. Rather than winding up in a vicious circle of increasing vulnerability to subsequent droughts, it sets them up for a virtuous circle of survival, resilience and perhaps even flourishing. Where does this resilience come from?

Cultural Resilience

The farming practices of the successful farmers we have met in this chapter are informed by their interactions with the culturally specific world they inhabit. Despite living in distinct cultural communities (Il Chamus, Tugen, Pokot), they all share a mode of production informed by a tradition of interacting with the environment, their extend families, neighbours, community and local knowledge systems. Pastoralist ways of being

in the world predispose them towards what Davies and Moore (2016) call *cultural resilience*. Constant exposure to a challenging environment endows them with a capacity to absorb the impacts of disturbances and continuously adapt as the environment changes. Cultural resilience hinges the flexibility to innovate and improvise, which is central to sustaining livelihoods in challenging environments that continually present sudden and unpredictable disturbances like droughts. The predisposition to adapt is not an explicit character trait but is developed and refined as part of everyday life. It emerges out of the practices, values and knowledge they draw on and it runs through the social structures and behaviours that support their livelihoods. In Baringo, the most successful farmers are constantly innovating their management systems, adding new grazing techniques, seeking out new markets and establishing a variety of income generating activities such as selling hay, renting out the field for dry season grazing and incorporating new technologies.

Grass farmers further strengthen their resilience by relying on the ecological knowledge and social institutions that uphold pastoralist systems. As environmental conditions change over time, pastoralists adapt by “incorporating useful new environmental knowledge into mainstream consciousness” (Davies & Moore, 2016, p. 68). This locally specific knowledge provides a foundation upon which the farmers can build their robust grass management systems. Without knowing which grasses to grow in which area, for instance, the farms would be less resilient to the droughts in their area. Grass farmers use this knowledge to build a robust, responsive livelihood system and make quick, informed decisions to navigate ecological challenges.

Continuity and Change

The technologies of life which strengthen cultural resilience are rooted in traditional structures and knowledge but are altered to suit the contemporary context. Given the emphasis on innovation but also the reliance on cultural convention, it is important to stress that cultural resilience comes from establishing a delicate balance between tradition and innovation, or between continuity and change. Processes of continuity and change are a

central theme to Ethnology, particularly with regards to livelihood practices. Classical studies of peasant societies in Finland (Lönnqvist, 1976) and Denmark (Christiansen, 1978) over almost two centuries show a persistent cultural identity established through periods of reorganisation. Recent research on the historical resilience of Sami pastoralists in Northern Sweden (Brännlund, 2015), commoning practices in central Sweden (Sandström et al., 2017), as well as how Sami land-use practices are adapted to cope with contemporary climatic emergencies (Östlund & Norstedt, 2021) emphasise that climate resilient livelihoods emerge out of the dialectic between continuity and change. In a similar vein, the capacity to balance cultural continuity with innovation has seen grass farmers incorporate new technologies and practices when needed and maintain their traditional practices when necessary.

Davies and Moore speculate that resilient societies are “perhaps those which change without explicit articulated recognition of the extent and character of change because flexible adaptation and innovation is a relatively unperceived part and parcel of daily life grounded in practical continuities” (Davies & Moore, 2016, p. 69). The tendency to adapt and change is a feature of resilient communities that persists even if, on the surface, the culture appears to be changing. The mode of production, the economic system and the social structures may change, but the predisposition to adapt remains. This resilience has its roots in a scepticism of new, alien ideas and preference for ‘traditional’ technologies over modern ones from outside. These internal technologies are continuously evolving over time, and techniques are added as the conditions change. Farmers carry a body of knowledge, practices and social networks with them into their grass growing ventures which enable them to adapt and cope with climatic variability. But grass farming requires new knowledge, networks and skills. Accordingly, farmers are adopting new grazing techniques and marketing methods to increase their chances of succeeding and building a robust livelihood. And new entrepreneurial networks are emerging; women now stand at the heart of what was once a male-dominated activity, running farms and strengthening their own livelihood resilience without as much reliance on men. What’s more, communitarian values continue to underpin an economy of reciprocity which ensures this coping capacity extends out into the community. However, these values are now used to

buffer against the pressures of the market economy. This offers a powerful antidote to the capitalist structures, such as individual land ownership and rising costs of living which, as we saw in the previous chapter, promote an every-man-for-himself form of individualism.

Resilient Dispositions

Whilst grass farming builds on an inherently flexible model, more extreme climate events in recent years impact the model's flexibility, making it harder to respond to seasonal changes. In such cases, simply growing grass is not enough to continue to make a livelihood. Yet, some farmers like Matthew still demonstrate a capacity to adapt. Rather than succumb to the floods swallowing his farm, he found a way to use the floods to his advantage and installed a water pump. This suggests his personal actions and choices - the *way* he manages - also has a significant bearing on his adaptive capacity: that is, on his resilience. In this instance, livelihood resilience is informed by a *disposition* to adapt and cope with ongoing challenges. Matthew, we might say, is disposed to find a way to adapt to challenges that threaten his livelihood.

A resilient disposition underpins resilient livelihoods, guiding the application of knowledge and the implementation of adaptive practices. By adopting a technical innovation in the form of a water pump, Matthew has been able to adapt to the environmental challenges of the flood-drought combo. While investing in a water pump shows initiative, the purchase alone does not equate to a resilient practice. The resilience is demonstrated by *how* he incorporates the water pump into his land management system: his forms of knowledge and practice. To make the most use of it, he needs to adapt his current approach and incorporate the pump into his management system in the right way. Matthew's resilience is enhanced by the combination of his local knowledge and his willingness to change his daily habits in the short-term. By acting responsively, bringing his land management in line with the seasons, drawing on his local knowledge and working with his social networks, he has ensured the resilience of the innovation.

For the most successful grass farmers, resilience is a way of being – a constitutional part of their thinking and acting. They are able to flexibly adapt

and innovate their lifeways in response to disturbances that the environment or economy might throw at them. This resilient disposition is perhaps best personified by the female entrepreneurs who have capitalised on the shift towards grass farming to navigate rigid patriarchal systems and improve their own livelihood resilience. As grass farming evolves, the norms holding it up are yet to solidify. This liminal, emergent state provides fertile ground for new management conventions and economic relations. Enterprising female farmers have taken advantage of this liminality, responding with deft and agility to establish their place in the new system. For example, they have broadened the scope of women's roles in production. Traditionally most agricultural labour (sowing seeds, weeding, harvesting, milking cows) has been done by women. The same goes for grass farming. However, a significant proportion of Baringo's grass farmers are women; they manage the farms, control the resources and effectively own the whole process. This ownership over the process means they control how the revenue is used, independently from their husbands. By responding quickly to the lack of rigid gender roles in grass farming and laying claim to grass farming as an arena available to women, they are simultaneously changing the face of farming, and its more traditional roles and responsibilities, as well as forging new economic opportunities for future generations of women.

Summary

40 years ago, grass farming did not exist in Baringo; in fact, the very idea was laughable among the pastoralists of Baringo. Today, it is a fledgling economy that provides multiple incomes and builds the livelihood resilience of thousands of households across the county. As an adaptation on the communal approach to pastoralism of the past, it is an inherently flexible mode of production and builds on communal ways of thinking. Successful grass farmers are continuing to adapt and adjust their practices as conditions change. Moreover, women are finding ways to use grass farming to empower themselves and secure an income in an overly patriarchal society.

This is the end of part two of the thesis which has offered an insight into the changing cultural landscape of Baringo through the everyday experi-

ences of its inhabitants. It has built a picture of the particular challenges they are facing and how they are working to adapt to their circumstances by creating novel livelihood solutions like grass farming. Part two the thesis has been haunted by the presence of an important group of actors whom I have, thus far, intentionally been ignoring in my analysis: the Development Industry. From expediting the arrival of cash crops to facilitating the emergence of grass farming, they have played no small part in the creation of modern day Baringo. It is now time to give them the attention they deserve.

Part three shows how life in Baringo is linked to global discourses on development and the movement of aid money, development practitioners and technologies. It takes us away from the lived experience of Baringo's pastoralists to explore how their world is understood and shaped by the Development Industry. This industry has its own ideas regarding the problems facing Baringo and how to solve them which don't necessarily align with pastoralist perceptions. Chapter six highlights that these ideas are historically contingent on a specific set of social systems, beliefs and values which have their roots not in pastoral communities like Baringo, but elsewhere. Chapter seven explores what happens when these ideas – and the technologies and aid money they precipitate – are brought to the ground and rub up against the prevailing ideas and systems in places like Baringo. It is important to note that chapters six and seven belong together. In order to understand what is happening on the ground in Baringo, we need to know how certain development discourses are created, where they come from and how they have shaped the industry's interactions with development locations around the world like Baringo.

Part III

The Development Industry

Chapter 6: A Pastoralist History of the Development Industry

A history of epistemological marginalisation of pastoralism in global development discourses

Pastoralists are both livestock herders and environmental stewards. Sustainable pastoralism, which is centred on organized herd movements, contributes to food and water security, supports resilient livelihoods and national economies and provides environmental services including carbon sequestration, biodiversity conservation and protection of land and ecosystems (UNEP, 2017).

In 2016, The United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA) met in Nairobi, Kenya and discussed the role it sees pastoralism playing in global efforts to secure a green, just future for our planet. As the world's highest-level environmental authority, UNEA recognized what it called *sustainable*



Image 20. A pastoralist landscape in Kenya. Photo: Osman Oleparmarin.

pastoralism as an important feature of the planet's future because of its potential for supporting resilient livelihoods and protecting rangeland environments. This vision rests on the notion of sustainable development: the overriding ideology that governs the Development Industry. Sustainable development, as it is understood by the Pasture Development sector, is, by and large, synonymous with resilient pastoralism.

This interest affects everyday life in Baringo, through the many projects that the Development Industry have implemented to improve pastoralist livelihoods (and which shall be reviewed in greater detail in chapter seven). This chapter focuses on how pastoralism has been discussed within sustainable development discourses. These discourses are understood broadly as ways of representing knowledge about notions such as progress, democracy, resilience, livelihoods, climate change and conservation as well as classifications of certain peoples as the global poor. The Development Industry's ways of representing the world are explored through the lens of postcolonial discourse analysis. As we will come to see, the endorsement of sustainable and resilient pastoralism is relatively new. At different times in history, the Development Industry has ignored pastoralism or even seen it as dangerous to economic growth and the environment. How did this change come about?

Inspired by Phillipe Bourbeau's (2018) ideas on the genealogy of resilience, the first section of the chapter traces the Development Industry's intertwined historical interests in pastoralism and resilience-thinking. The second section focuses on the industry's historical marginalisation of pastoralism and pastoralists in different development arenas. It draws on Gayatri Spivak's (1988) idea of epistemic violence as well as V.Y Mudimbe's (1988) ideas on discursive formations of otherness to shed light on the images and ideas conditioning development opportunities for pastoralist communities around the globe.

From Historic Relics to Environmental Stewards

The beginnings of the development age can be traced back to the period after the Second World War. At this time, the Development Industry was preoccupied with modernising the economic systems of the world's poorest people. In *The History of Development*, Gilbert Rist pinpoints the inaugural address of then-president of the United States, Harry Truman as a key speech

which “inaugurated the development age” (2014, p. 71). Truman set out an ambition to imbue all the countries of the world with the technical and societal advances enjoyed by the West in a bid to elevate them out of poverty. As Arturo Escobar demonstrates in *Encountering Development* (2011), certain models of production were identified as viable to be modernised and bring the so-called *Third World* out of poverty. Agriculture became central to modernisation because it had already proven itself up to the task in the West: “adequate tools (science, technology, planning, international organisations) have already been created for such a task, the value of which has already been proved by their successful application in the West” (Escobar, 2011, p. 26).

In the follow decade, a number of new institutions were established to coordinate global efforts to bring development to the so-called Third World, including the United Nations Expanded Programme of Technical assistance (which later became UNDP).⁸⁸ Before the independence movement of the 1960s, a large proportion of the world’s rural poor lived in the colonies of Western imperial powers. Accordingly, the United Nations conducted much of their development work through the colonial administrations. These non-self-governing territories submitted annual reports on the economic conditions to UNGA, assessing which economic systems were viable for investment to support the development process. The colonial administrations governing many of the underdeveloped nations in Africa, Asia and Latin America identified agriculture as the vehicle for modernising rural economies. Consider the following report on the economic status of British Somaliland⁸⁹ written by the Colonial Development and Welfare Department:

Natural conditions have led to an economy based on nomadic pastoralism but interest in agriculture is slowly growing ... but opportunities for economic development appear restricted. Outside the towns, nearly all land is used for nomadic pastoralism and is held in accordance with tribal custom; there is, however, a trend towards enclosure of land for agricultural purposes (UNGA, 1959, p. 3)

⁸⁸ For more details on the creation of these different institutions, see chapter five in Rist’s *The History of Development*.

⁸⁹A former British protectorate located inside what is now Somalia.

A PASTORALIST HISTORY OF THE DEVELOPMENT INDUSTRY

UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY



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Fourteenth session

INFORMATION FROM NON-SELF-GOVERNING TERRITORIES:
SUMMARY AND ANALYSIS OF INFORMATION TRANSMITTED
UNDER ARTICLE 73 e OF THE CHARTER. REPORT OF
THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

East African Territories

BRITISH SOMALILAND^{1/}

Image 21. Title page from 1959 UNGA assembly report on British Somaliland. Source: UN Digital Library.

In British Somaliland, agriculture was one of the sectors deemed suitable for investment. Pastoralism, by contrast, was too beholden to “natural conditions” so was deemed too erratic and uncontrollable to be sufficiently scalable to produce food on a scale required to feed entire populations and encourage economic growth.⁹⁰ Modernisation implies a logic of ratio-

⁹⁰ Across East Africa, colonial development plans adopted the same preference for agriculture. In Tanganyika (present-day Tanzania), the East African Groundnut Scheme converted three million acres into agricultural land. As Historian Roderick Neumann highlights, “according to development advocates, the scheme would bring prosperity and social advancement to the territory” (Neumann, 1995, p. 157).

In Uganda, the colonial government established individual land ownership. According to Byakagaba et al., they believed “communal tenure was a disincentive to long-term agricultural investments” (Byakagaba et al., 2018, p. 4). In pastoral areas, such as Karimojong, they encouraged sedentary farming practices. “The intended objectives of sedentarization policies were greater economic productivity and minimization of environmental damage” (Byakagaba et al., 2018, p. 6).

In Kenya, the Swynnerton Plan which encouraged the consolidation and enclosure of land, triggered the individualisation of land ownership and agricultural expansion. It was argued that “it would be easier and more economical for the state to provide agricultural and veterinary services to individual farmers to grow cash crops and to improve the management of their livestock” (Cherop, 2023, p. 273).

nalisation, planning, standardisation and scalability. Its successful application requires certain social and natural conditions which agriculture satisfied, and pastoralism didn't. The social organisation of agriculture is well-suited to modernisation because it is malleable to modern logic: it could be planned, standardised and scaled. Crops could be planned and scheduled throughout the calendar year and the same piece of land could be planted multiple times in a year to increase efficiency. Individual land ownership could increase efficiency in decision-making as well. Without the need for consent between numerous stakeholders, an individual could expand their farm by simply purchasing land from a neighbour.

Exposed to unpredictable weather patterns, wild animals and plagues, the pastoral system was deemed too risky to merit large-scale investments. The refusal of the ecosystem to yield to the tools of standardisation made it too difficult to establish clear planning and organisation. What's more, with resources being communal property governed through social institutions, it was considered too inefficient. As we saw in chapter four, communal land management was characterised by flexibility and responsiveness to ecological conditions as well as lengthy, democratic decision-making processes. Its inherent flexibility makes it difficult to plan crops and standardise output; and its communitarian values go against the modern assumption that individual decision-making brings efficiency. In other words, this logic is too far removed from the rationalisation of the modern market economy to be deemed a feasible candidate for development. The only hope for pastoralists would be to join the encouraging "trend towards enclosure of land for agricultural purposes" (UNGA, 1959, p. 3).

On the Radar of Ecologists

Pastoralism first started to gain attention from the Development Industry in the 1970s, following a growing awareness, inherited from academia, of its role in maintaining ecosystems. Since this time, agendas concerning pastoralism have been informed by ideas around resilience. As mentioned in the introduction, Political Scientist Phillippe Bourbeau argues that the idea of resilience has multiple, non-linear genealogies: it has entered sustainability discourses at different times and from different places (Bour-

beau, 2018). He distinguishes between two types of resilience. *Engineering resilience* refers to the ability of an economic system to bend and not break thanks to its robustness and endurance. *Ecological resilience* refers to the equilibrium of an ecosystem and its ability to absorb disturbances and reorganise without changing to a qualitatively different state.

Ecological resilience was first made popular by Ecologists in the 1970s and was connected to ecosystems thinking. The Ecologist CS Holling first championed a view of ecosystems as complex, nested systems and explicitly linked ecosystems thinking to ideas around ecological resilience. Holling categorised human populations as one of the moving parts of a system which ought to be kept in balance if the equilibrium of the system as a whole were to be maintained (Walker & Cooper, 2011). A subsequent movement in Ecology was dedicated to assessing the roles and responsibilities of human agents in promoting and maintaining the equilibrium of a wide variety of ecosystems (Machlis et al., 1997), including oceans (Knox, 1984), savannahs, coniferous forests (Clark et al., 1979) and mountains (Fuentes, 1984).

This period saw a boom in ecological research focusing on pastoral management.⁹¹ Ecologists specialising in rangeland and dryland systems studied the micro details of pastoralist management practices, including managing stock levels (cf. Naveh, 1982), grazing patterns (cf. McNaughton, 1985) and interactions with other biomass (cf. Walker, 1974).⁹² Pastoralists and their surrounding environments lend themselves well to ecosystems thinking because it is easy to visualise their life worlds as socioecological systems: the food and economic systems (i.e. livestock) are intrinsically linked to the natural resources (i.e. grass, water and animals) making it difficult to conceive of them independently. The pastoral economy draws on the resources provided by the ecosystem and the equilibrium of the ecosystem relies on pastoralists' stewardship. In East Africa for instance, pastoralists often have multiple species in their herds such as cows, goats, sheep and camels which provide different sources of income and nutrition.

91 A Web of Science search for the term *pastoral management* before 1970 yields only 14 publications. For the date range 1970-79, the same search yields 235 publications, of which 135 come from Ecology.

92 There are parallels to ethnological research at the same time into the land management of reindeer pastoralists in Scandinavia (cf. Paine, 1970).

By the 1980s, there was growing awareness among Ecologists of pastoralism's role not just in maintaining isolated rural ecosystems, but also in national economies. In an essay on the crises facing dryland pastoral economies, Human Ecologist Kenneth Ruddle emphasised what he calls the *economic and ecological importance* of pastoralism. As well as their recognised ecological contribution, he asserts, "pastoral nomadic societies make a great though generally a vastly underrated contribution to the national economies of those developing nations with large tracts of arid or semi-arid territory" (Ruddle, 1980, p. 824). Ruddle was part of a growing number of rangeland Ecologists starting to recognise that domesticated livestock were not only an integral part of the wider rangeland ecosystem but could be a positive contributor to the economy. However, this acknowledgement came with an ecological caution. As Ruddle cautiously continues to proclaim, "when not dangerously intensive, the grazing and simple rangeland practices of pastoral nomads are known to improve the productivity of wild pastures... [and] may also increase its resilience" (Ruddle, 1980, pp. 828-829). If the development of a pastoral economy were to put the ecosystem out of balance, the economic concerns and food security of individual nomadic pastoralists ought to yield to environmental concerns.

Entering the Development Agenda

Thanks to the high profile of the Ecology field, pastoralism attracted attention in the domain of International Development. Following the first Earth Summit in Stockholm in 1972, UNEP was founded as the first UN body with an explicit and exclusive environmental mandate. UNEP experts started to ask: Is the pastoralist way of life maintaining or upsetting the equilibrium? One of UNEP's earliest reports asks this very question:

let us consider some examples and try to detect where vulnerability/resilience points occur... In a nomadic human settlement, the resources (water, food, shelter) are never abundant, their immediate renewability is itself seasonal; nor are they highly diversified... Thus, an Innuite tribe's power to fish and hunt, year after year, causes no stress as long as its toll does not exceed the normal surplus of fish and mammals that safely tops the latter's population-maintenance capacity (Dansereau, 1975, p. 22).

This report was requested by the secretariat of Habitat I, the first UN conference on Human Settlements which led to the creation of UN Habitat, the body specifically concerned with the impact of human settlement on the environment. The report assesses the environmental impact of different ways of life and cautiously concludes that pastoralist systems are relatively non-threatening to the environment.

Pastoralism was thrust further into the limelight both of the Development Industry and the general public by the great drought in the Horn of Africa which killed hundreds of thousands and brought famine to millions in the early 1980s. The consequences of the drought were broadcast heavily into the homes of Europe and USA, captivating Western audiences and triggering a shift in perceptions on aid and development (cf. Berhe, 2017; Kuhnert, 2018). The suffering and starvation gained worldwide attention, prompting a global response to bring food relief, calls for a review of food systems and a slew of pop songs encouraging us to ‘feed the world’. In the same year in an emergency review of response efforts, the UN Secretary General concluded *that* “food production in most African countries is clearly vulnerable to drought, crop disease and pest infestation... [T]his is a serious matter, as it reduces national resilience and preparedness to less than the minimum” (UN, 1984, p. 15). The food systems of drought-stricken countries like Uganda, Somalia, Ethiopia and Kenya became a primary focus of rural development. With this awareness came the first ostensive examples of development interventions targeting rural communities, including pastoralist communities, which made resilience an explicit end-goal.⁹³

The UN General Assembly made a consolidated effort to activate international assistance to drought-stricken Eastern Africa. It requested special reports on the need for economic and disaster relief assistance in the different countries. UN missions based in the region were being advised to “concentrate attention only on those development proposals that would

93 Likewise, in 1986, IFAD identified pastoralists as a target group for intervention: “[IFAD] had identified its target groups; they included smallholders, landless labourers, artisanal fishermen, nomadic herdsman and agropastoralists, as well as poor rural women. The Fund was making considerable efforts to identify those groups in each area and to understand their socio-economic and cultural environment and their self-help potential in the formulation and implementation of its projects and programmes” (UN, 1987, p. 35).

have the greatest impact in reducing vulnerability” (UN, 1981, p. 10). With this, the vulnerability of food systems in Africa was exposed and resilient economies became a primary goal. Regarding pastoral societies, the social institutions that mediated livelihood resources were targeted as development concerns that needed improving if they were to be brought out of the margins and into the mainstream economy (Scoones, 2020). Their way of life was too subject to the volatile conditions of natural disasters and external shocks to be part of a robust food system.

Settlement and Diversification

As exemplified by the special reports submitted from Uganda and Somalia, respectively, two principal models were proposed for building resilience among rural populations: settlement and diversification.

Given the reduced number of cattle and the hardships and suffering of the past two years, many Karamojong are responding to efforts to settle them in a more permanent agriculturally-based way of life... [The] economic and social development of Karamojong depended on a gradual and peaceful introduction of a more settled way of life, based on the production of crops and livestock for both subsistence and market disposal, under conditions of stability and security (UN, 1981, p. 11).

[Considering] the importance of the livestock sector and its vulnerability, it can be readily appreciated that the government of Somalia gives the highest priority to increasing drought resilience in the livestock sector and at the same time to limiting population pressure and national dependence on the rangeland by stimulating the crop production side of agriculture (UNSG & UNDP, 1981, p. 14).

Following the advice of a multiagency UN panel headed by UNDP⁹⁴, the Ugandan government encouraged transhumant communities to shift from a mobile to a partly sedentary lifestyle of agriculture to grow cash crops such as maize and wheat. In Somalia, the report called for diversification

⁹⁴ The panel included representatives of UNEP, UNDP, FAO, WFP, WHO, WMO and UNESCO among others.

away from a reliance on livestock alone through mixed farming systems. In contrast to the Uganda report, the Somalia report acknowledged the importance of livestock to the national economy and, thus, did not go as far as proposing coerced settlement of the pastoral population as the only solution.⁹⁵ Rather, it proposed diversification as the instrument for increasing the resilience of the rural economy and recommended investment in agriculture as an *addition* to the livestock sector.

In both Uganda and Somalia, the UN mission proposals were motivated by resilience-thinking. Settlement promotes secure and stable economic development for the target communities. Stability and security are pre-requisites for resilient food systems (Bullock et al., 2017), making them an essential end-goal of the economic and social development of pastoral communities. Likewise, diversification is intended to minimise risk and build more robust economies and livelihoods. The focus here was on increasing drought resilience of the rural populations in the livestock sector. Diversification was adopted as “an ex-ante strategy for mitigating shocks [which] is used to reduce income shortfalls, by increasing the likelihood that farmers will be able to produce enough to cover expenses” (Cochrane & Cafer, 2018, pp. 3-4). The rationale behind this decision was that by not relying too heavily on one sector, the economic and food systems of rural communities could handle the pressures of external shocks (i.e. droughts and population pressures) without crumbling.

Sustainable Development and Participation

The Brundtland Report⁹⁶, released in 1988, is generally considered the beginning of the era of sustainable development. It defined sustainable development as “development that meets the needs of the present without

⁹⁵ Settlement is still actively encouraged by the Somalia report but, significantly, it is understood as one option among many, not the top priority: “Since government policy is rightly against any increase in the nomadic pastoral pressure on drought-prone grazing land, settlement in one form or another is one of the few available options” (UNSG & UNDP, 1981, p. 16).

⁹⁶ Formally known as *Our Common Future: Report of the World Commission on Environment and Development*.

compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs” (Brundtland, 1987, p. 37). In 1992, in the wake of the report, the Earth Summit⁹⁷ brought global leaders, NGOs and activists to Rio de Janeiro to establish a global partnership for sustainable development and agree on a common pathway for balancing the economic and environmental needs of the planet. The Brundtland report and Agenda 21 (the action plan which came out of the Earth Summit) both identified pastoralists as a vulnerable group and argued for the need to increase their economic resilience.⁹⁸ It was stressed that income creation and employment opportunities could not give way to ecological priorities.⁹⁹

Agenda 21 also established an explicit endorsement of *participatory* approaches to land management. It encouraged governments and NGOs to “promote participatory management of natural resources, including rangelands, to meet both the needs of rural populations and conservation purposes, based on innovative or adapted indigenous technologies” (UN, 1992b, p. 108).¹⁰⁰ Through the mechanism of participation, it was anti-

97 Formally known as United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED).

98 The Brundtland Report declared that food security “can be furthered by land reforms and by policies to protect vulnerable subsistence farmers, pastoralists and the landless groups who by the year 2000 will include 220 million households. Their greater prosperity will depend on integrated rural development that increases work opportunities both inside and outside agriculture” (Brundtland, 1987, p. 17).

Agenda 21 focused on areas prone to desertification. See p. 7: “Many people throughout the world have been affected in recent years by ... a gradual loss of economic resilience in the face of internal or external shocks”. See also, p. 63: “There is an urgent need to develop and strengthen integrated development programmes to eradicate poverty and promote alternative livelihood opportunities in areas prone to desertification and drought”.

99 An Earth Summit report by the UN Secretary General on combatting desertification argues for environmental and economic challenges to be tackled separately, following the logics of the two distinct resilience narratives: “Equilibrium-based paradigms of range management call for more flexible policies based on a new recognition of the resiliency of the rangelands as non-equilibrium ecosystems. Agricultural extension, on the other hand, continues to be a major problem, involving the spread of rain fed cropping to marginal lands more suited to pastoral economic systems” (UN 1992, p. 7).

100 Participatory development was also endorsed in the Brundtland report: “[E]nvironmental and economic problems are linked to many social and political factors.... Hence new approaches must involve programmes of social development, particularly to improve

pated that pastoralists could engage at all scales of the development process, from local resource management to national planning strategies and international policy negotiations. As a response to Agenda 21, ECOSOC's Economic Commission for Africa identified public participation and community involvement as fundamental to strengthening rural economies. When it came to pastoral communities, the report recognised that "popular participation is important for combating desertification" (UN, 1993, p. 61). To this end, it aimed at "giving land users a responsible role in planning and execution processes" as well as "supporting local communities in their efforts in combating desertification, while drawing on their knowledge and experience" (UN, 1993, p. 61).¹⁰¹

SDGs and the Search for Interconnected Solutions

Throughout the era of sustainable development, an awareness grew that the world's challenges are interrelated, which is demonstrated by the creation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), 17 interconnected goals designed to put the world on track towards peace and prosperity whilst protecting the environment. The dual goals of economic and ecosystem resilience are formally recognised in the SDGs.¹⁰² Pastoralism also gained increased recognition for its contribution to national economies and importance in strengthening the resilience of its citizens to an increas-

the position of women in society, to protect vulnerable groups and to promote local participation in decision making" (Brundtland 197, p. 37).

¹⁰¹ Incidentally, economic resilience was also promoted: "In areas prone to desertification and drought, current livelihood and resource-use systems are unable to maintain living standards. In most of the arid and semi-arid areas, the traditional livelihood based on agro-pastoral systems are often inadequate and unsustainable because of the effects of drought and increasing demographic pressure. Poverty is a major factor in accelerating the rate of degradation and desertification. Measures are therefore needed to rehabilitate and improve the agro-pastoral systems for sustainable management of rangelands, as well as alternative livelihood systems" (UN 1993, p. 59).

¹⁰² Specifically with sub-goal 2.4: "By 2030, ensure sustainable food production systems and implement resilient agricultural practices that increase productivity and production, that help maintain ecosystems, that strengthen capacity for adaptation to climate change, extreme weather, drought, flooding and other disasters and that progressively improve land and soil quality".

ingly challenging climate (Scoones, 2020). The Pasture Development sector now sees organisations from different fields work together in a coordinated fashion towards integrated solutions and adopt the same language of sustainability and resilience building. UNEP, for example, historically focused on environmental concerns. As we have seen, in the 1970s, they were questioning how much pastoral lifeways destabilised their ecosystem. Now, with its endorsement of sustainable pastoralism which we saw at the top of this chapter, UNEP is explicitly celebrating pastoralism's ability to support "resilient livelihoods and national economies" (UNEP, 2017).¹⁰³

When the UNEA met in Nairobi in 2016 and endorsed Sustainable Pastoralism, it framed pastoralism as a system of organised herd movement and land management that promotes soil fertility, protects biodiversity and promotes resilient livelihoods.¹⁰⁴ In explicitly referencing pastoralists as "herders" and "environmental stewards", UNEP is suggesting pastoralism play two roles (which the publication calls its *dual roles*) in resilience-building. On the one hand, their activities as herders contribute to "food and water security, supports resilient livelihoods and national economies". On the other hand, their activities as environmental stewards provide "environmental services including carbon sequestration, biodiversity conservation and protection of land and ecosystems" (UNEP, 2017). A sustainable future is understood as one in which pastoralists can help build climate resilient ecosystems *and* economies.

Is this really the happy ending to a turbulent historical relationship between the Development Industry and pastoral communities that it ap-

103 This recognition was formally recognised by UNEP in the report that followed their 2016 meeting in Nairobi: "In resolution 2/24 on combating desertification, land degradation and promoting sustainable pastoralism and rangelands, the Environment Assembly recognized that healthy grassland and rangeland ecosystems contribute to economic growth, resilient livelihoods and the sustainable development of pastoralism, as well as the achievement of the 2030 Agenda" (UNEP 2016, p. 12).

104 The idea that pastoralism is an asset which can contribute to resilient ecosystems is shared by IPBES, as shown in a report published at the same time: "Africa's biodiversity has global importance. Africa is home to many subsistence farmers, small-scale livestock herders and pastoralists who maintain a range of plant and animal genetic resources for food and agriculture, which tends to mitigate the consequences of drought, climate change, pests and changing environmental conditions and strengthen resilience and adaptation to climate change" (Archer et al. 2018, p. xxvi).

pears to be? Or might the discursive formation of sustainable pastoralism have an insidious side?

A History of Violence

The Development Industry's relationship with pastoralism is deeply rooted in a history of epistemic violence. The concept of epistemic violence originates with Gayatri Spivak's (1988) famous essay, *Can the Subaltern Speak*, which defines it as silencing the voices of marginalised peoples. This is done by denying them a platform to speak, destroying their systems of knowledge, or erasing their intellectual input on matters concerning their political and economic conditions. Such violence is not necessarily a singular, intentional act but a function of systems. This section explores the different forms in which epistemic violence against pastoralists has manifested throughout the Development Industry's history and continues to feature in contemporary narratives around sustainable pastoralism.

The development age was conceived in the aftermath of the Second World War when new global power structures were emerging. The United States replaced Britain, France and Germany as the dominant global powers and the nexus of power moved away from colonial dynamics. As Rist (2014) showed us, when Truman inaugurated the development age, he set the foundations for new dichotomising structures to define the world order. Truman defined the poverty-stricken regions of Asia, Africa and Latin America as *underdeveloped*. Rist suggests the term *underdeveloped* inferred that poorer countries were on the same trajectory towards development as the rich West, but just weren't quite there yet:

'Underdevelopment' was not the opposite of 'development', only its incomplete or (to stay with biological metaphors) its 'embryonic' form; an acceleration of growth was thus the only logical way of bridging the gap (Rist, 2014, p. 74).

The phrasing implies development was a necessary and inevitable path that all societies follow. Postcolonial scholar Navnita Behera argues that the defining principle of modernization (the mechanism adopted to bring

development to the so-called Third World) was to “[project] a developmental sequence through which all cultures of societies must pass “as natural and universal”, thereby, defining the key problematique of the third world – under-development” (Behera, 2007, p. 354). Highlighted by its resounding success in the West, modernisation was considered the only possible way of elevating these underdeveloped societies out of poverty and bring them the spoils seen in the West.

While the inauguration of the development age established new dichotomies, they built on and incorporated colonial ideas about Africans, because colonial channels were still being used to coordinate development plans. The schemes of the colonial administrations of British Somaliland, Uganda, Kenya and Tanzania to facilitate a transition away from pastoralism to agriculture were part of broader colonial plans to modernise Africa. However, these ideas built on the colonial dichotomies which reduced pastoralism to a backward system. V.Y Mudimbe (1988) reminds us that colonialism created the possibility for new discourses about the colonised populations which have persisted stubbornly throughout society. According to Mudimbe, in Africa the so-called civilising enterprise of colonialism understood Africans as lesser beings; it was their mission to orchestrate the progress of African societies, economies and cultures in the image of Europe. This produced a dichotomizing system that equated *African* with *inferior*:

Traditional versus modern; oral versus written and printed; agrarian and customary communities versus urban and industrialised civilisations; subsistence economies versus highly productive economies. In Africa a great deal of attention is generally given to the evolution implied and promised by the passage from the former paradigms to the latter (Mudimbe, 1988, p. 4).

Pastoralist societies sat on the wrong side of these dichotomies, variously labelled as traditional, backwards and unpredictable. From its conception, the Development Industry inherited a prejudicing perspective on pastoralism from the colonial administrations through which development plans were coordinated. As development organisations coordinated projects through colonial channels, colonial ideas around non-European soci-

eties filtered into global discourses on development (cf. Byakagaba et al., 2018; Muaz Jalil, 2022). As we will now see, these prejudices continued to shape the epistemological frames of inference of global political powers within the Development Industry long after the end of colonialism.

Rational Managers of Pasture?

By the 1970s, it was being suggested pastoralism should be taken seriously as a productive system that could contribute to a country's development. Ecologists, such as Kenneth Ruddle, were reinterpreting it as a "rational use of marginal resources" (Ruddle, 1980, p. 826) which could support ecosystems. Being framed as rational meant pastoralism was seen in a new light by the development community. Its legitimacy was attributed to its newfound potential for management and planning. As a central axiom of development, planning is the quintessence of objectivity and rationality, allowing developers to direct and engineer poor economies seamlessly in their pursuit of growth (Escobar, 2011). Being *manage*-able and *plan*-able, pastoralism became visible; the stage was set for pastoralism to become a legitimate candidate for development.

However, their promotion as subjects of development came with an ecological caution and precedence was often given to the balance of ecosystems above the economic development of the people living there. As the following ECOSOC report suggests, pastoralists were seen as a factor that could upset the balance by, for example, causing desertification:

Desertification is caused by a complex mix of climatic and human factors. The latter include rapid growth of both human and animal populations, harmful land-use practices (especially deforestation) and civil strife (UN, 1989).

This extract comes from the *Report on the World Situation*, a biennial report which serves, in its own words, "as a background document for discussion and policy analysis of socio-economic matters at the intergovernmental level" (UN-iLibrary, 2024). In this globally influential document, pastoralists were blamed for deforestation because they allowed their livestock to overgraze the land. And they were causing "civil strife"

through ethnic conflicts in which the local environment suffered as collateral damage. With these “harmful practices”, they were causing the climate to fall apart. Despite being framed as adopting a rational use of resources they still posed a significant ecological threat “prone to using ecological services in non-sustainable ways” (Reid, 2012) This language echoes the ecological cautions that Ecologists were proffering at the time and was used to argue that interventions to promote pastoral economies ought to be planned from above.

Policies concerning the economic conditions of pastoral communities were guided by academic experts and the pastoralists themselves were given little space to contribute. The above report, for example explains that it “builds on a variety of sources. Government publications are a principal source, but they have been supplemented by papers and reports from intergovernmental agencies, research institutes and individual scholars”(UN, 1989). Academic experts on the ecological and social conditions in Developing nations were consulted, but not the citizens of the countries themselves.

Influential Ecologists demonstrated an implicit mistrust of pastoralists and framed them as intellectually inferior. Accordingly, their candidacy as development subjects was set against a backdrop of paternalistic warnings and patronising language. The development of pastoral economic systems was foreshadowed by ecological cautions from Ecologists like Ruddle not to allow them to become too efficient in case they damage the environment. The communal land management approach was targeted as the cause of the rapid disappearance of viable pastures because of its supposed inability to keep overpopulation and overgrazing in check. As Haller and colleagues *2016(suggest, “development planners begin to view pastoral people as troublemakers and as a hindrance to development”. This line of reasoning, they continue, “leads to a discourse which legitimises forced settlements and development schemes by characterising them as rational methods of managing pastures” (Haller et al., 2016, p. 410). As was the case under colonial rule, sedentarisation initiatives became a popular method to modernise pastoralists.

The early ecological texts that informed policies played a large role in defining the Development Industry’s conditions of engagement with pasto-

ralists. From the very beginning, they established a system which reproduced an image of pastoralists as intellectually inferior. Consider the following text by Ecologist Richard Bell in the widely read journal, *Scientific American*:

The impact of pastoral man on the grassland, through burning and the grazing of domestic stock, is ancient. It has tended to induce and maintain areas of short grass. In other words, pastoral man has been a member of the grazing succession – not in conflict with the wild animals but in co-operation with them. Indeed, one finds evidence in the Serengeti region today that the largest concentrations of wild animals are in areas of present and past pastoral activity... It is up to man the scientist, who represents the latest human phase, to understand the working of the system as a whole and to suggest integrated patterns of land use (Bell, 1971, p. 93).

Bell places individual pastoralists on the same ontological plane as domesticated animals, barely more human than the cattle they rear. This labelling amounts to what Mudimbe (1988) calls the *discursive formation of otherness*. Mudimbe shows that the image of Africa is a construct of European history; it has been constructed as the other, as marginal and as less than Europe. Colonial Anthropology played a significant role in establishing this image through its classifications of beings and societies (Mudimbe, 1988, p. 16). With its influence on development agendas, early Ecology can be said to play a similar role through its use of patronizing language. Describing pastoralists as “pastoral man”, in contradistinction to “*man the scientist*”, creates an alterity. Pastoral man belongs to a savage universe of uncontrollable climates and wilderness. Like the wild animals he encounters on a daily basis, he is a moving part within the ecosystem, living in and off the pastures. Man the scientist, by contrast, has a degree of epistemic distance from the ecosystem he studies, observing pastoral man’s interactions as if from outside or above.

This distinction functions to establish what Mudimbe calls *epistemological ordering*. As well as producing pastoralists as the other, early Ecology’s perceptions also reinforced a hierarchy of knowledge systems. The knowledge of man the scientist who, as Bell puts it, “represents the latest human phase”, is considered superior to that of so-called pastoral man. This mirrors the way colonial Anthropologists saw African societies as savages. Following

Mudimbe, they were seen as “savage in terms of the evolutionary chain of being and culture, which establishes a correspondence between advancement in the civilising process and ... intellectual achievements” (Mudimbe, 1988, p. 11). Through this connection, pastoralists are portrayed as an earlier stage in the evolution than “man the scientist” who sits at the frontier of human evolution. With this ordering, pastoral man is not just an other to man the scientist, he becomes less advanced and less intelligent.

Tools of Development

The introduction of participatory approaches in the 1990s following Agenda 21 marked yet another a turning point in perceptions on pastoralists. Pastoral communities were invited to participate in development processes and given a say in how the land should be managed. By the time UNEA met in 2016 to discuss transitions towards a more sustainable future and endorse sustainable pastoralism, pastoralists were considered a central participant. But only if they agreed to join as ‘environmental stewards’ and provide “environmental services including carbon sequestration, biodiversity conservation and protection of land and ecosystems” or as herders who bring “food and water security, [support] resilient livelihoods and national economies” (UNEP, 2017). They were invited to participate within preset roles, which reduced their capacity to shape agendas.

Participation was originally intended to bring radical change to the Development Industry by challenging its inherent power structures. In a seminal essay in *The Development Dictionary*, Majid Rahnema clarifies its initial proponents envisioned meaningful dialogue and interaction would “replace the present subject-object relationships between intervenors and the intervened, thereby enabling the oppressed to act as the free subject of their own destiny” (2019, pp. 132-133). It intended to empower the voiceless and provide space for local knowledge systems to bring about novel development solutions. Participation is built around the praxis of *continual dialogical interaction* between participant and development professionals, which is supposed to change the mindsets of both parties and lead to novel ideas to their problems that all parties would feel that they had equal, shared ownership over.

However, as Rahnema argues, the term participation has been co-opted by the Development agencies and reduced to a tool that works to legitimise existing power dynamics without bringing about meaningful change. Participation became a professionalised and standardised mechanism of projects. Rather than establish a process of mutual learning, projects came ready packaged with predefined ideals of change, pre-planned moments for participation and specific roles for the target community. “For the modern construct of participation,” argues Rahnema, “a person should be part of a predefined project, more specifically an economic project, in order to qualify as a participant” (Rahnema, 2019, p. 132). Because agreeing to the conditions established by organisations funding a project is a pre-requisite for involvement, defining how and when participation is permitted reinforces their economic power. The more a development agency controls the parameters for participation, the less room there is to challenge its inherent power structures.

This conditioned engagement mirrors the relationship that colonial administrations had with local subjects, seeing them as tools. Achille Mbembe (2001) reminds us that in colonial Africa, natives were considered animals, not human; they were moved around and used at the administration’s will:

Encapsulated in himself or herself, he/she was a bundle of drives, but not of *capacities* ... At the heart of that relationship, the colonized could only be envisaged as the property and thing of power. He/she was a tool subordinated to the one who fashioned and could now use and alter him/her at will (Mbembe, 2001, p. 26. Emphasis in the original).

Under the colonial administration, the local population moved around and used as labour to suit the administration’s vision of the country. In Kenya, nomadic and pastoralist groups were forcibly relocated to reserves (known as ‘native’ reserves’ or ‘African’ reserves’) while others were forced into indentured labour and made to work on the construction of road and rail infrastructures and on settler farms (Atieno-Odhiambo, 1972). The relationship between leaders and subjects became one of command: the administration told people what to do and they did it. Albeit qualitatively

different, these relations of subjection continued into the independence era. Labour was exploited by postcolonial dictators and the political elites surrounding them to amass wealth. They used state apparatus, such as the army, to force people to work for them (Onyango, 2015). Yet, there was no legal system obliging them to uphold the citizen's rights or pay them back for their services through, say, public spending of taxes. This continued the perception of local populations as tools for those in charge to be used as they willed.

It could be argued that the Development Industry uses the same mechanisms of epistemic violence and subordination to reduce the agency of participating communities to lower than their end goal. As a representative example of this process, let's look at the role pastoralists were assigned by the UN Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD). Created after the 1992 Earth Summit, the CSD annually reviews global progress towards sustainable development. In pushing for participatory management approaches, their 2000 report acknowledges the importance of pastoral systems in maintaining ecosystem equilibrium, thereby strengthening resilience:

The use of livestock, for example, is essential to recycle nutrients and maintain ecosystem resilience in the traditional extensive agro-pastoral systems developed over generations in the drylands of Sahelian Africa, as well as in the modified intensive systems using stall-fed animals in Java, Indonesia and other parts of Asia, where population pressures are high (CSD, 2000, p. 7).

Livestock have the potential to strengthen ecosystem resilience by maintaining the balance of the nutrient cycle. Through participatory management of their livestock, pastoralists are invited to become custodians of the local environment and, by extension, agents for the development end of increasing biodiversity.¹⁰⁵ Through the conversion of participation into a

¹⁰⁵ For another example, consider IPBES who explicitly promotes a "toolkit" approach to land management in which pastoralist knowledge and practices are to be deployed to build resilience: "There is no one-size-fits-all approach to sustainable land management. Achieving success requires selecting from the full toolkit of approaches that have been effectively implemented in different biophysical, social, economic and political settings. Such a toolkit includes a wide range of low-impact farming, pastoral, forest management

tool for development, or *toolification* if you will, the participants themselves also become tools. As participatory tools of development, pastoralists are given no voice in deciding what is defined as development and what the development process ought to look like. Their roles have been pre-determined by the Development Industry. The opportunity for creating novel development solutions and bringing about meaningful change comes through moments of dialogue and mutual learning where both parties are engaged in understanding a problem and tackling it together. With these opportunities, the development process could be interpreted as not treating pastoralists as what Rahnema calls “free subjects of their own destiny” (2019, p. 133) but as agents of a development process which they have no agency to influence.

In short, through toolification, participation becomes yet another mechanism which violates the epistemological and cultural contribution of the African development subject, denying her the opportunity to contribute to her own development as well as the general parameters of development, writ large. Just as colonial authorities didn’t believe they needed to ask the African subject what she wants because she was a void, a similar attitude can be seen shaping Development agendas. In other words, colonialism has created the condition of possibility for the negation of the (African) subject of development. When considering how to implement the vision of sustainable pastoralism and bring about development, it’s a simple, arbitrary step from negation to disregarding/overlooking the African subject’s own views.

Summary

This chapter has traced a historical relationship between the Development Industry and pastoralists. Since its conception, the Development Industry has always dictated the conditions of possibility for development: who gets to be included, what counts as development. In the early days, the indus-

and urban design practices based on scientific, indigenous and local knowledge systems. Integrating different practices into landscape-scale planning, including local-level sustainable finance and business practices, can reduce the impacts of degradation and enhance the resilience of both ecosystems and rural livelihoods” (IPBES 2018, p. 15).

try itself decided who and what counts as modern and, thus develop-able. They have since defined the parameters of inclusion by controlling the discourses of what development means – first through the paradigm modernisation, then later through resilience-thinking and sustainable development. Sustainable Pastoralism is a continuation of a development model which reproduces power structures within the Development Industry and negates the agency of pastoralists. The co-option of certain mechanisms, such as participation, denies pastoralists' intellectual and cultural input in defining the conditions of their own development.

The next chapter takes us back down to the ground, into Baringo, to explore the real-life implications of the Development Industry's epistemological marginalisation of pastoralists. It focuses on development projects that have been implemented in Baringo under the guise of resilience-building but have failed to incorporate local perspectives. It also deals with the agency and practices of agropastoralists, navigating in a life world where resilient discourses and not least development funding are treated as resources to be exploited for the sake of the community.

Chapter 7: The Development Testbed

The Development Industry in Baringo

December 2022:

Between Kampi ya Samaki and Marigat, there is a rusty gate floating aimlessly on the side of the road; one part upright, attached to nothing, the other lay on the ground a few metres away (see image 22). The part lying down has a faded painting of an ostrich on it. I must have driven this stretch of road hundreds of times, and the gate has always been there; over the years, the fence slowly rusts away and with it my curiosity grows. I ask RAE co-founder, Murray, what it's all about. Roughly 10 years ago, he tells me, the land was fenced, and the plan was to build a community ostrich farm that would provide income through tourism promotion and the sale



Image 22. Main entrance to a former World Bank funded ostrich farm project, gate lying disused and broken (own photo).

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of game meat. The farm was funded by the World Bank as part of a project to enhance food security and reduce livelihood vulnerability in drought-prone and marginalized communities.¹⁰⁶ As we saw in the previous chapter, global development agendas in the early 2000s were focused on sustainable development and often promoted participatory approaches. Accordingly, this project adopted a community driven development model: the plan was to finance the building of the project infrastructure and livestock and hand it over to a community organisation to run (World Bank, 2003). When the project was initiated, the fence and the accompanying gate were erected. But the project never developed any further than this – it never even received ostriches – and the land lay idle for the next ten years. At some point, the fence fell, and nobody seemed concerned enough to repair or even take it away.

Baringo is littered with the remains of failed projects that we've watched come and go over the years... This place is like a graveyard where development projects go to die (Murray).

Having worked in grassroots development for 40+ years, Murray has seen many development projects come and go over the years, which have not been sustained after the initial funding period has run out. Baringo is somewhat of a testbed for International Development organisations to try out new ideas to tackle the increasing challenges of poverty, environmental degradation and ethnic clashes. In the past 50 years it has seen pilot projects in irrigation, communal pasture management, hydroponics and tree planting, by the likes of the World Bank, FAO and World Vision as well as schools, clinics and cultural centres donated by the overseas development arms of the British, American, Dutch and Japanese governments.

¹⁰⁶ On the gate it is written "Funded by ALRMP II". ALRMP II, which stands for Arid Land Resource Management Project phase two, was a World Bank funded project to assist the county government to improve livelihoods through better management of resources such as livestock. The project distributed \$77M across 22 ASAL counties in Kenya between 2003-2010. For more information, see World Bank (2012) *Kenya – Second Phase of the Arid Lands Resource Management Project (ALRMP II)*. For details on the Ostrich farm project activities in Baringo, see GoK (2013) *First County Integrated Development Plan 2013-2017*.

Once the pilot funding has gone, these projects are formally handed over to the community to run themselves. But without funding, they often represent little more than an additional financial burden in an already laden economy and leave little more than an abandoned project site that litters the landscape. The sheer volume of projects that have been tried out in Baringo and subsequently failed leads Murray to label Baringo a “graveyard where Development projects go to die”.

This chapter tells the history of the development projects which are now littering the landscape of Baringo. It asks how and why so many projects have failed to bring the sustainable development they promised. It also contrasts these failures with interventions from the Development Industry that can be considered successful. By comparing the two, it provides insight into how Development agendas manifest on the ground in local places which will be used in the concluding chapter to initiate a discussion on alternative pathways towards development.

This chapter starts by providing a snapshot of the failed development projects that have been implemented in Baringo in the past half century. It then investigates how they contribute to environmental degradation and the increasing precarity of existence in Baringo. Using the analytical concepts of invasive remains and assemblage, it sheds light on the detrimental effects they have had on the ecosystem and livelihoods. From there it offers an account of two more successful projects that have had managed to sustain and have had less of a negative impact. The chapter concludes by asking what distinguishes the more successful development models from the failures. It draws on Appadurai’s (1990) notion of global cultural flows to conceptualise Baringo as a development landscape and draw out distinctions between the approaches to development that sustain and those that appear to fail.

The Development Graveyard

This section offers a snapshot of the development projects that have been implemented in Baringo in the past half century. It follows me on a road trip around the Baringo Basin to visit various projects. Guided by Murray, I take a drive through five decades of development interventions, stopping

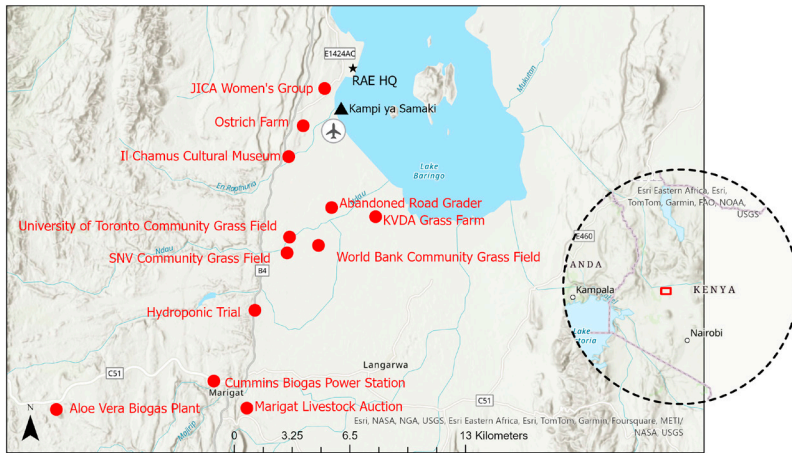


Figure 3. Map of the Development projects across Baringo which we visited on our roadtrip. The vast majority of the projects lie close to the main road (C4) which connects Baringo to Nairobi, which is a five-hour drive down this road (ArcGIS Pro).

at a number of sites to discuss the projects' origins, intentions and impact on the environment and local economy. In total, we visit 11 sites (see figure 3) to discuss the introduction of foreign plant species, abandoned community projects and deserted biogas plants.

Invasive Species

Damn invasive species! They're taking over all the indigenous plants and have killed off the swamps which were once dry season grazing for the local communities... That bush on your left is an indigenous plant species; it can be used to feed goats when there's no fodder left. But that cactus there is invasive. It's really messed things up for people (Murray).

Throughout the drive, Murray points out a whole host of non-indigenous plant species including *Euphorbia tirucalli*, *Prosopis juliflora* and several different cacti such as *Opuntia*. With a hint of desperation and more than a hint of emphasis on the *damn*, he labels these plants *invasive* - a term borrowed from the field of Ecology which understands the term invasive species to loosely mean "non-native plants, with large dispersal capacity and causing negative ecological, economic and social impacts" (Alvarez et

al., 2019, p. 297).¹⁰⁷ The cactus Murray points out, for example, is a type of *Opuntia*, more commonly known as Prickly Pear, which originates in Mexico. It was imported to East Africa and used as a hedging plant. But in the absence of its natural predators, the more aggressive cactus out-competed much of the local flora, replacing them and spreading across the landscape unabated.¹⁰⁸ The most pervasive of these foreign plant species is *Prosopis juliflora* (henceforth called Prosopis). A satellite mapping exercise from 2016 shows that Prosopis has spread from 882ha in 1988 to 18,000ha, meaning 26% of the Baringo Basin is now covered with this invasive species (Mbaabu et al., 2019).¹⁰⁹ Together, these invasive species have, in Murray's words, "really messed things up for people" by killing off all the indigenous flora which pastoralists rely on to feed their livestock. The landscape is now covered predominantly with flora which has been shown to be less nutritious to livestock (Ouko et al., 2020). They have spread to all corners of the Baringo Basin, carpeting the landscape with thick, impenetrable forest of innutritious flora.¹¹⁰ As we saw in chapter three, with less variety, it's now much harder for herders to find the plants they need, such as the indigenous plant species that feed goats when there's no fodder left. It is important for Murray that I understand the origins of these plants:

107 To emphasise the non-nativeness of these unwanted trees, their full technical title is invasive *alien* species.

108 A study on the disaster effects of invasive species brought to Baringo, which includes *Opuntia*, identifies that "their disaster-effects vary and include: causing the death of livestock by poisoning and destroying livestock foliage, accelerating biodiversity loss via suppression of native plants, to increasing diseases by offering a breeding ground for mosquitoes and other insects that carry ailments like nagana and sleeping sickness" (Obiri 2011, p. 417).

109 In fact, the number is probably higher today. The study suggests an average spread rate of 4% per annum. At this rate, the Prosopis coverage in 2024 would be closer to 36% of the land (25,000ha). Mbaabu et al. (2019) use the Marigat sub-region as their study area, which mostly includes the Baringo Basin as well as a small area around the market town of Marigat.

110 This is highlighted by the testimonies of pastoralists we met in chapter three struggling to cope with these trees. It is further corroborated elsewhere by oral evidence from Pokot elders who have observed a change since the 1950s from a landscape of perennial grasses to an Acacia-dominated bushland. For more information, see Vehrs (2016) *Changes in Landscape Vegetation, Forage Plant Composition and Herding Structure in the Pastoralist Livelihoods of East Pokot, Kenya*.

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All these invasive species, they've been brought in by development projects, I want you to know that... [Prosopis] was brought to Kenya and Baringo by the World Bank and FAO. They're originally from South America – from Chile, Brazil, I think (Murray).

In Murray's eyes, the devastation caused by the trees is the responsibility of the Development Industry. Prosopis, for example, was originally introduced in the late 1970s by World Bank as a measure to counter deforestation. Native to South America, the trees were introduced to Kenya to help regreen deserted regions. The first documented case of Prosopis in Kenya was in the port city of Mombasa in 1973 where it was introduced to regreen disused quarries (Mwangi & Swallow, 2005). It reached Baringo in 1979 via a joint World Bank and Government of Kenya project when it was planted on test sites on the eastern slopes of the Tugen Hills.¹¹¹ In 1980, a similar project was also launched on the Njemps Flats as part of a joint FAO and Government of Kenya project called *Fuelwood Afforestation/Extension in Baringo*. A variety of tree species (including Prosopis) were planted to identify which was best suited to the ecozone (Wahome, 1986).¹¹² Endorsing an integrated land use model, the project hoped to demonstrate that fuelwood production was beneficial for both the environment and livelihoods (Mwangi & Swallow, 2005).

The intention was to counter the overexploitation of vegetation that came with a swelling population of people and livestock, to keep the environment green and be able to support the livelihoods of the local pastoralist population (Mwangi & Swallow, 2008). But the Prosopis trees were too successful; they started propagating at an uncontrollable rate and quickly spread beyond the test site.¹¹³ As early as 2002, the Kenyan Forest-

¹¹¹ For details on the World Bank project, see the 1979 report titled *Baringo Pilot Semi Arid Areas: Staff Appraisal Report*.

¹¹² The other trees tested (mostly exotic) included "Parkinsonia eculata, Cordia sinensis, Delonia elata, Acacia aneura (from Vaughan Springs Northern Territory, Australia), Albizia lebbek (from India), Eucalyptus camaldulensis (from Fitzroy River Crossing, W. Australia and from Wrotham Park Queensland and Katherine Northern Territory, Australia)" (Wahome 1986, annex IV, p. 34).

¹¹³ Incidentally, a progress report of the original World Bank project noted that Prosopis was a "progressive invader, but unlikely to be a problem in this area" (World Bank, 1983).



Image 23. This land was engulfed by the lake's floodwaters. As the water resided, *Prosopis* quickly invaded and took root in the denuded soil. In a couple of years, the young *Prosopis* trees (in the foreground) will grow into an impenetrable forest of mature *Prosopis* like those behind. Photo: Osman Oleparmarin.

ry Research Institute (KEFRI) acknowledged that *Prosopis* had spread across the Baringo Basin and was having a detrimental effect on both the landscape and the local economy (Choge, 2002). Simultaneously, there was a collaborative effort between grassroots organisations and community members, spearheaded by RAE, to eradicate the tree in Baringo.

Prosopis is well-known by Ecologists as an invasive alien species, recognised for outcompeting many of the local plant species and upsetting the ecological equilibrium (cf. Becker et al., 2016; Kaur et al., 2012; Mbaabu et al., 2019). Consequently, Ecologists Mwangi and Swallow, who have studied the impact of *Prosopis* in Baringo, go as far as to declare it “one of the world’s most invasive alien species” (Mwangi & Swallow, 2008, p. 130). The tree’s impact on the environment and local livelihoods is acknowledged by the development community and pastoralists alike, triggering a series of actions from both sides to govern and control it. Back in 2006, members of the Il Chamus community started a legal case against the government, seeking compensation for damages suffered because of the introduction of *Prosopis*. This resulted in the tree being declared a noxious weed in Kenya

and a decree to eradicate it was declared in 2008 (Odhiambo, 2016).¹¹⁴ The eradication was never fully carried out and the tree continued to propagate. Acknowledging that *Prosopis* is here to stay, KEFRI organised a national workshop in 2015, part-sponsored by FAO and GIZ, to discuss how to make the most of the abundant tree and unlock its economic potential. This conference was held at a tourist lodge in the village of Kampi ya Samaki and showcased contemporary efforts to promote the tree's management and commercial utilisation. One of these solutions is the biogas plant we will encounter later in the chapter which attempts to convert the trees into electricity. Others include a county government sponsored charcoal production initiative; a joint ILRI and KEFRI sponsored project to encourage the use of seed pods as fodder; the creation of carbon sequestration credits; and cutting down the trees for firewood and timber.¹¹⁵ Given that *Prosopis* forests continue to spread at a rapid rate, it seems none of these projects have made any radical ground in slowing the spread.

Abandoned Projects

On the main road, near the abandoned ostrich farm, we drive past the *Il Chamus Cultural Museum*, a small museum and shop originally built to attract tourists on their way to Lake Baringo and offer a revenue stream for the local community. According to local sources, it was originally funded by the National Museums of Kenya. The centre was built and filled with

¹¹⁴ According to Caroline Tenges, a Baringo County official, "In 2006 the Il Chamus community won the historic civil case No. 281 of 2006 against the government that led to the declaration of *Prosopis* as a noxious weed and eradication order of the same issued on 17th December 2008, by then minister for Agriculture, William Arap Too. The minister declared *Prosopis juliflora* (commonly known as Mathenge) as a noxious weed in the whole of Kenya through gazette notice No. 184" (Tenges 2020, p. 75).

Incidentally, Odhiambo (2016) argues that the Il Chamus community took legal action as an act of social resilience. They used litigation as a coping mechanism against the spread of *Prosopis*. Compensation provided financial support to their livelihoods and formally declaring the tree a weed helped further legal cases and attract additional development initiatives to clear the trees.

¹¹⁵ Conference proceedings (Ochieng et al. 2020) compiled after the national *Prosopis* workshop give further details on all of these projects and more.



Image 24. Il Chamus Cultural Museum main gate. After several years of abandon, signs of neglect are starting to show: the exposed brickwork around the gate is crumbling, the grass thatch has fallen out of the awning and the cactus fence is starting to grow over the gate (own photo).

artefacts, Murray tells me, but it never actually opened. We see a builder enter the gate and ask if we can take a quick look around. Happy to oblige, he tells us he is repairing a bridge on the main road and was granted permission to store his materials in the abandoned museum.

Through the broken windows, I see a handful of cultural artefacts – a calabash, three-legged stools, earthen pots – gathering dust next to the builder's pipes and scaffolding (see image 25).¹¹⁶ Outside, a mudbrick hut is slowly falling apart, the remains gradually being colonised by *Prosopis*. The way

¹¹⁶ A calabash is a large vine fruit, similar to a squash, which is often dried and used as a container or musical instrument. Traditionally, in Il Chamus society, three-legged stools are made from the roots of *Balanites aegyptiaca* and carried around by herders to use as a seat or headrest. As well as their practical functions, these artefacts also have symbolic value as markers of Il Chamus identity. For more information on the symbolic value of Il Chamus material culture, see Osborn (1996) *Cattle, Co-wives and Calabashes*.



Image 25. Left: Il Chamus cultural artefacts left on a table inside the museum along with building materials from the road construction outside. Right: Prosopis colonising a decaying mudbrick hut that was once part of the museum. The abandoned project supports the growth of new roads and invasive species (own photo).

they intertwine, it's almost poetic: the decaying remains of a cultural heritage project providing fertile soil for the roots of a nefarious invasive species.

At the cultural centre, we turn off the main road, down a single-track, dirt road into the Njemps Flats. After a few kilometres, we come across an abandoned grader (see image 26). It has been completely gutted – the engine, tyres, caterpillar treads, even the seat and steering column have been plundered, leaving nothing but an empty shell in which some young Prosopis trees have taken root.

A short drive later, we emerge at an open plateau of bare land. Attracted by a rusty sign lying in the dust (see image 27), I ask if we can take a closer look. I pick up a corner of the sign, swivel it round and wipe off the dust. Seeing no writing left, I turn to Murray to ask what happened:

This was a Dutch project. They planted grass and handed it over to the community, but it only lasted one season... We knew straight away that it wouldn't work; this model of community-based management just doesn't work... We told them that the field won't last long, but they didn't want to listen (Murray).

This field was rehabilitated as part of the nationwide *Kenya Rural Development Programme (KRDP)*. Between 2012-15, the Dutch organization SNV invested €6M in six rural counties in Kenya, including Baringo, as part of



Image 26. Abandoned grader, gutted for all its valuable parts. The quality of the road leading up to the grader is significantly better than the rough, uneven road that we drove afterwards. With the grader abandoned, the march of progress has been stop in its tracks (own photo).

a KRDP project called *Enhancing Community Resilience to Drought through Innovative Market Based Systems* (SNV, 2012a). The project aimed to help pastoralists cope with droughts and improve the resilience of their economic systems. It was part of a €392M aid package from the EU.¹¹⁷

With a view to improve pastoralist livelihoods, the SNV project focused on providing what it calls “sustainable market systems” (Crane et al., 2016, p. 1). With this rationale, the grass field in Salabani was envisioned to

¹¹⁷ This was part of a total aid package of €22 billion from the EU to developing nations. One third of the €392M aid package to Kenya was designated to improve agriculture and rural development and included the KRDP funding. The overall EU aid package was provided under the guise of the 10th European Development Fund which, according to the official EU budget report, “covered the period from 2008 to 2013 and provided an overall budget of €22,682 million. Of this amount, €21,966 million were allocated to the ACP countries [African, Caribbean and Pacific Group of States]” (EU 2008).

The European Development Fund ceased to operate in 2020 when it was incorporated into the EU’s main budget. For more information see EU (2020) *Special Report: EU Development Aid to Kenya*.



Image 27. SNV sign rusting in the dirt inside the fence of an abandoned grass field. Besides the sign, the only remnants of the project are a few bunds which were dug to help irrigate the field (own photo).

“increase participation of livestock producers in markets by supporting efficient production of fodder... and livestock” (SNV, 2012a). SNV invited RAE to submit a proposal to implement the project on their behalf, which involved planting the field, setting up community groups to run the field and training them in land management.¹¹⁸ Upon request, RAE submitted a formal bid for a two-year project which, if it were to satisfy all SNV’s criteria, would cost €250,000. In the end, SNV gave them €18,890 for a one-year project to fulfil part of the project requirements (RAE, 2015).¹¹⁹ The money was used to cover socio-economic and environmental assessments of the area, rehabilitate and plant grass seed on 50 acres of land, train the community group in land management techniques and monitor their progress throughout the year.

¹¹⁸ RAE were invited to implement the project as a Local Capacity Builder, which is effectively a local grassroots organisation that can oversee the day-to-day running of the project.

¹¹⁹ Incidentally, SNV budgeted more than this for their own role in “facilitating” RAE’s work, citing 44 organisational days worked to RAE’s 33.

To achieve its aim of improving community resilience, the project promoted a community-based model to manage the resources which SNV coined as a *co-management model*.¹²⁰ Following this philosophy, the project management was intended to be a collaborative effort between SNV, RAE and the Il Chamus community. SNV defined the parameters of the project, such as the site that will be rehabilitated, the duration of the project and the level and nature of community engagement. They determined that five so-called community groups – made up exclusively of either women or youth – would have access to the land and set up a committee to guarantee everybody had equal access to the resources whilst ensuring the grass would not be overgrazed. *Who* could sit on the committee was left up to the community groups. RAE's role was to rehabilitate the land by planting grass and train up the community groups on how to manage land.¹²¹

From the very beginning, Murray and RAE had reservations about the project. Murray tells me that he vocalised his concerns to SNV management both in person and in writing, encouraging them to rethink the management approach. SNV went ahead with the project anyway. As Murray predicated, it didn't last long: the money dried up after the first year and the project was abandoned. The community groups disbanded because of internal organisational tensions and an unwillingness to put their free labour into it. With nobody controlling the amount of grazing, the land was quickly over grazed. Now all that is left is a few embankments, a lot of dust and a corroding SNV sign lying in the dust. As we drive back to the tarmac, we pass a series of similar abandoned fields with equally as impressive external benefactors – FAO, University of Toronto, World Bank.¹²²

¹²⁰ The project overview page on the SNV website explains that “SNV strengthen livestock markets by implementing the Co-Management Model”. Co-management is understood as a public-private partnership between local communities and government.

¹²¹ The details of this arrangement are outlined in two documents corresponding to this project: (i) SNV (2012) *Expression of Interest for Local Capacity Builders under “Enhancing Community Resilience to Drought through Innovative Market Based Systems” (KRDP I)* and (ii) SNV (2012) *Terms of Reference for Building Sustainable Commercial Pasture Models through Partnership*.

¹²² There are multiple sites dotted across the Baringo Basin with the same story, which can be seen on the map at the top of this chapter (figure 3). They include the following:

THE DEVELOPMENT TESTBED

Murray: It's shocking how many of these projects don't work. Do you know why they don't work?

Billy: Because they're interventions from outside?

Murray: No. Because the people aren't making money on them. They're expected to run the project without getting any money out of it. Would you do that for free?

Billy: Probably not.

Murray: People have got to eat. And if they can't make money off an idea, they're not going to sustain it. 99% of the time, that's the problem. It may be a good idea, but it won't work if people are expected to run it for free.

They may vary slightly in their approach and intentions, but all the community grass fields we pass focus on regenerating communal pastures to improve livelihoods. They are also all abandoned shortly after the project is handed over to the community. Like the SNV project, the community-based model they adopt relies on committee members and community groups managing the grass without payment. But, in a place where poverty is rife, Murray reminds us "people have got to eat". Spread across an entire community, the financial benefits of a communal grass field to a particular individual are marginal so they are effectively working on it for free. Murray is suggesting that people cannot afford to volunteer their time for a project that is not providing them with enough money to feed their

The neighbouring World Bank funded project was established before the SNV field. According to accounts from local people, it used the same community-group model and still lies abandoned today.

The site of the abandoned ostrich farm was also repurposed into a community pasture field as part of the World Bank funded *Regional Pastoral Livelihoods Resilience Project* which ran 2014-2020. This field adopted the same community-group model as SNV and has since been abandoned. For more information see the results page on the Kenyan government's dedicated project website, *Regional Pastoral Livelihoods Resilience Project*.

Another project in Salabani funded by the African Development in 2021 saw the "establishment of commercial pasture and construction of hay shed to store the harvested pasture for livestock production in the area and neighbouring communities" (Kiptanui 2021, p. 2). It now lies empty and fallow.

families. As we saw in chapter four, the pressures of modernity put the financial burden of expenses such as food, school fees and healthcare on the individual household. If the projects fail to live up to their stated goals of improving livelihoods and people can't make money off it, he believes that "they're not going to sustain it". As we will shortly see, there are other reasons why these projects are not sustained which relate to them jarring with the traditions and social structures found in Baringo. Notwithstanding, ultimately, the financial pressures of modern-day life force people to abandon the project and prioritise putting their time and energy into something that will help them make more money.

Deserted Biogas Plant

On the outskirts of Marigat, there is a biogas plant which was built in 2015 and part-funded by African Enterprise Challenge Fund (AECF) to tackle the Prosopis problem by using what it calls "climate smart technologies, i.e.



Image 28. Cummins Power Generation plant sits atop the hill above Marigat, waiting to be fed with Prosopis logs to convert into electricity. The plant was built near a national grid substation so the electricity produced could easily feed into the national system (own photo).

products and services that help rural smallholders adapt to climate change” (AECF, 2014). The power station sits on the hillside, its bright blue exterior jarring against the browns and greyish greens of the surrounding landscape like a monolith from another world. In actual fact, it came from a US engineering firm, Cummins Power Generation, who designed the 12MW biogas fired thermal power station to convert Prosopis into electricity.

Cummins’ business model involved entrepreneurial, technical and business functions which each corresponded to satisfying the so-called triple bottom lines of sustainable development: people, plant and profits. Encouraging individuals to engage in entrepreneurial activity of harvesting and selling wood to secure an income would be *good for the people*. Removing Prosopis would be *good for the planet* by enabling biodiversity to return to the landscape and creating green energy. The business model of selling



Image 29. Cummins power station promo sign. It is common practice for development projects to put up a sign before a project starts, signalling the intention. These metal signs often remain even after the project has ended (or failed). They dot the landscape, providing traces of the history of the Development Industry’s presence (own photo).

electricity to the national grid would be *good for profits* of the American corporation Cummins.

However, Murray tells us, “After two days the machines gummed up and it failed” (Murray). The resin from the *Prosopis* supposedly gummed up the machine and broke it. The company decided to abandon the project and send all their staff home. They reasoned that it would cost too much money to fix the machinery and make the plant unprofitable. All the brand-new equipment – the gasifier, tractors, generators, machinery – were abandoned and the gate was locked for good. At the time of writing, the company has not been back to restart the project, and the compound has started to be colonised by the very trees that it was designed to tackle. As the “*coming soon*” sign outside slowly fades and rusts, so too do hopes that this project may pick up once more.

Failed Development

The sheer number and scale of *failed* projects triggered Murray to label Baringo a graveyard where development projects go to die. Inspired by this observation, Baringo is understood in this chapter as a *Development Graveyard*; a landscape populated by the remains of development projects that have gradually fallen into a state of disrepair, all that remains of them being rusty machinery or half-decaying buildings. With their interwoven impact on both the ecological and social realms, these development remains, littering the landscape, have become a constituent of pastoralist culture and the cultural landscape of Baringo. This section explores the various ways in which different projects have failed over time.

The *Prosopis*, SNV field and the biogas plant represent the remains of the different development paradigms which dominated the Development Industry during the different eras they were implemented. First, *Prosopis* was introduced during the ecological resilience era of the 1970s. *Prosopis* was introduced to regreen the heavily degraded grasslands of Baringo and provide a source of fuel and fodder that would help improve the pastoralist economy. Once hailed as a silver bullet, *Prosopis* is now considered by the development community, Ecologists and pastoralists alike as a pariah that invades the grasslands. As the trees broke free of their original test site,

they spread across the landscape undoing the very work they set out to achieve. Secondly, the SNV community pastures were planted during the community resilience era of the 2000s when local communities were encouraged to participate in their own economic development. They were intended to bring long-term development to Baringo in the form of increased participation in the market economy and livelihoods that are more resilient to climate change. And yet they were abandoned within a year of launching, leaving little more than a rusting sign as a reminder of unfulfilled promises. Finally, the Cummins biogas plant was implemented during the SDGs era, a time which encouraged policy responses and development projects premised on the notion of green growth. The Biogas plant was established as a market-based solution to simultaneously tackle environmental degradation, offer resilient livelihood opportunities to the pastoralists who harvest the wood and turn a profit for the energy company. When it was not deemed profitable, the company shareholders withdrew their investment and left the plant to rot.

These three projects can be understood as a failure because the technologies and ideas they introduced forced people to change their livelihood practices for the worse or they have negatively affected the landscape. However, as we will now explore further in the following two sections, the way in which they failed differs. The SNV and Cummins projects, which both failed to sustain beyond their initial funding periods, represent what might be called *unsustained development*. Whereas the spread of nefarious *Prosopis* across the landscape represents what might be called *invasive development*.

Unsustained Development

The Development Graveyard is, as Murray suggests, “littered with the remains of failed projects”. These *remains* come either from a project being funded for a specific period, after which the implementing body leaves – such is the case with the SNV communal grass field project – or when there is not enough capital to continue investment in the project – such as with the Cummins biogas plant. Nobody is around to keep running the projects, so they fall apart. This lack of ownership gives the projects a sense of abandonment. Incidentally, the cultural museum and the gutted road grader also offer a strong visual

representation of this abandonment. The museum was built and filled with artefacts but never opened. The grader got halfway down the road and simply stopped, never to finish grading the rest of the road.

The crumbling remains of all of these projects, showing traces of a time gone by, resemble Walter Benjamin's (1999) perception of the once-grandiose arcades in Paris as relics of a past social order that is now obsolete. Built in the 19th century, the arcades were temples of consumerism which Benjamin considered to represent the beginnings of the modern age. He further declares of architectural remains that "actualized in them, together with the thing < Sache > itself, are its origin and its decline" (1999, p. 911). If a new building contains traces of an ideology of the time, then its crumbling remains show traces of its ruination. As they corrode and fall apart, the decaying remains of Baringo's failed projects become ruins of times when the Development Industry took it on themselves to make Baringo an industrialised modern economy. The project ruins provide traces of the development ideals that underpinned their construction. Their physical architecture is akin to what Benjamin (1999) calls the *wish symbols* of the architect. In the architecture of the 19th century Parisian arcades, he tells us, you can find modern ideas such as progress, commodification and the individual. Comparably, the SNV project was driven by ideas popular among development agendas in the 2000s such as community-based development, participation, resilience and market-based solutions. Despite, there being little physical remains of the SNV project, traces of these ideas can be seen in the fenced-off field, embankments, rusting sign and written records of the community groups. Echoing Benjamin, "these images are wish images; in them the collective seeks both to overcome and to transfigure the immaturity of the social product and the inadequacies in the social organization of production" (Benjamin, 1999, p. 4). To the informed observer, the visible (and the invisible, social) architecture of the SNV project tell the story of this once-grandiose vision to replace the supposedly inadequate and inefficient systems of organising the production of livestock with a more efficient mode of community-based development. Likewise, the abandoned Cummins factory and its fading sign tell a story of the current development paradigm with its emphasis on green commodification. Perhaps the starkest wish symbol of this project is the gasifier, the

modern technology which promised to turn a once-invasive tree into a green commodity by extracting its economic value.

The remains of these projects also provide clues as to why they failed. The projects' respective ruins have qualities of what Benjamin calls *petrified unrest*: they are simultaneously alive and not living.¹²³ Ruins are physical sites which were originally designated for triggering social change, yet which have been frozen in time. The ideologies that the architecture represents have died with the changing times, but the buildings themselves live on as symbols of clashing ideologies. Both the SNV and Cummins ruins shown signs of petrified unrest and offer us a symbol of clashing ideologies which have been frozen in time. Let's first look at the ruins of the SNV project before moving onto the Cummins project.

Regarding SNV, Murray suggested that "this model of community-based management just doesn't work". Murray is implying that the problem for the community fields lay in the way management is handed over to the community groups. SNV's ideas on how to manage communal lands, which are symbolised by the now-abandoned communal fields, assume a specific understanding of the concept *community* which does not match the community structures as they exist in Baringo today and do not correspond with the predominant approach to land management. As we saw in chapter four, land is managed either by individual farmers or through a system of gerontocracy in which grazing decisions are taken by the oldest (and mostly male) members of the community. The women and youth groups introduced by SNV are a construct originally introduced by development projects.¹²⁴

¹²³ He first used this term to describe the life and works of French poet Charles Baudelaire. For Benjamin, Baudelaire lived in a state of petrified unrest, stuck between antiquity and modernity. Ideas from a previous era that no long bear semblance to the contemporary social order live on in Baudelaire's poetry and inform his way of life. The lines of his poetry are like scars emerging out of this friction which "shows the forces of antiquity and of Christianity suddenly arrested in their contest, turned to stone amid unallayed hostilities" (Benjamin, 1999, p. 366). I would argue that the concept of petrified unrest applies equally as well to the architectural ruins as they are, in essence, symbols of a struggle between two opposing ideologies.

¹²⁴ Women and youth enter development agendas at different times in history. The *Women in Development* paradigm emerged in the 1970s, bringing interventions, particularly in agriculture, focused on empowering women as a marginalised and unseen group in society.

Clashing ideas around participation are also visible in the social architecture of the project's so-called community groups. The parameters of community participation in the community-based model are pre-ordained from above, by SNV – they decide how many community groups to set up, what constellation they are to take and how often they are to receive training. Moments of participation become pre-determined touchpoints for involvement in the project, rather than interaction points for dialogue and mutual learning. As we saw in chapter six, this co-option of participatory approaches to development reproduces power dynamics. Rahnema reminds us that this means participation acts “like a Trojan horse which may end up by substituting a subtle kind of teleguided and masterly organized participation for the old types of intransitive or culturally defined participation” (Rahnema, 2019, p. 137). This rigid structure leaves no room for the participants to influence the direction of the project or the outcome. Ultimately, though, the dominance of SNV's own ideologies over the design and implementation of these pasture regeneration projects leads to a lack of ownership. The communal fields were given over to the project so the community ceded responsibility for them. The funders also cede responsibility once the project period was over. With nobody to sustain the fields, the infrastructure fell into a state of disrepair and the land was neglected.

Where the SNV project's primary problem related to clashing understandings of community, the problem for the Cummins biogas plant lay primarily in its lack of profitability. As a pursuit of renewable energy, the investment in the plant can be understood as a form of what the Sociologist Christa Wichterich (2015) calls *green commodification*. This revolves around extracting the untapped economic potential of natural resources, with the aid of new technologies, and turning them into commodities that can be sold for a profit. As a green economy concept, Wichterich explains, it gives preference to “technological and market efficiency... [and] the rationale of global connectivity is investment, value chains and return on investment”

According to Geographers Farhall and Rickards, it was “designed to give greater recognition to women's roles in agricultural production and recognize women as legitimate farmers” (2021, p. 2). Christina Olenik (2019) further identifies that a focus on *Positive Youth Development* blossomed in the early 2000s, starting with the World Bank identifying the need for young people to connect to their communities in order to improve economic opportunities.

(Wichterich, 2015, p. 71). Green commodification promotes a development paradigm which relies on the production and use of green technologies as well as incorporating natural capital into the market economy to satisfy the triple bottom line of people, planet and profits. The construction of Prosopis as a green commodity is underpinned by a discursive reframing of the what the tree represents: what was once an invasive species is now being reframed as a renewable energy source. In this green frame of reference, Prosopis is pitched as an alternative to the energy production model of the extractive industries producing energy from coal and gas. Unlike these dirty fuels, it is envisioned that Prosopis can be turned into a clean energy source and still make profit. However, like the extractive industries, biopower generation is premised on the idea of extraction; albeit the extraction of energy from an invasive species that is hindering the sustainable development of the local region. This relies on the same market logic of efficiency, investment and value chains that drives the extraction of energy (Brown et al., 2014). It is contingent on a value chain based on multiple forms of extraction: extracting resources (in the form of trees) from the land, energy from the resources and economic value from the energy. In turning to the market and shareholders to solve the Prosopis problem, this model relies on the same capitalist logic that necessitates the maximisation of profit.

The conversion of Prosopis into a green commodity can be understood as what Benjamin (1999), borrowing from Marx (1993 (1867)), calls a *commodity fetish*. Benjamin talks of architects and designers of commercial spaces as orchestrating the “enthronement of the commodity” (1999, p. 18) and glorifying its exchange value above all else. Through architecture designed to distract, the consumer’s attention is drawn toward the commodity itself, and the processes of production are masked or forgotten. Similarly, what we might call a *green commodity fetishism* can be seen driving the Cummins project. Its architects – perhaps better understood in this case as it engineers and investors – place all their faith in the creation of a green commodity; a product that can simultaneously bring prosperity to Baringo and eradicate the ecological problem brought about by Prosopis. The enormous blue buildings, shiny new machinery and the optimistic signage promising sustainable power generation act as a distraction and mask what is, actually, an extractive mode of production.

According to the green growth logic, the triple bottom lines of people, planet and profits are not equally weighted, and profit takes precedence. As Political Economist Thomas Wanner argues,

the discourse of green economy/growth is part of the increasing marketisation of society where principles, processes and values of competition, profit-making, efficiency, consumerism and the neolibration of ‘nature’ as a fictitious commodity are more ideologically and materially dominant than values of social equity or non-economic human values (2015, p. 35).

The market logic behind green growth initiatives means the profit motive takes precedence over its social and ecological motives. If it’s not profitable, it is reasoned, it cannot be sustained. After the trees gummed up the biogas converter in its first days of production, it was deemed too costly to repair because the high costs would make it unprofitable. Accordingly, the logic of maximising profit for the company’s shareholders was valued higher than the livelihood opportunities and biodiversity benefits of removing *Prosopis*. And now, as the abandoned plant is slowly consumed by the *Prosopis* it was intended to consume, its remains act as a symbol of the risk of green commodity fetishism. They offer a warning of the limitations of development projects overly dependent on the logic of the market and the necessity to turn a profit.

In short, the SNV field and the Cummins biogas plant exemplify the Development Graveyard. However, as we will now see, the image of abandoned projects as static relics of a time gone by does not suffice to explain the ongoing ruin that the *Prosopis* forests and other invasive species impose on Baringo. For this, I propose the term *invasive development*.

Invasive Development

In planting *Prosopis* then leaving, the FAO and World Bank projects of the 1970-80s left the local population to deal with its nefarious effects. The initial projects may have been abandoned when the trees were still contained to their test site, but their remains continue to adversely affect the lives of the people who must exist alongside them. As such, following

Anthropologist Ann Laura Stoler (2008), I understand the ‘remains’ of this particular project as material entities that continue to negatively impact lives. Whereas Walter Benjamin saw abandoned architecture as static relics of a bygone era, Stoler understands them as living constituents of the landscape which continue to shape the social space around them. Rather than just *leftovers*, she argues that’s these ruins are perhaps better understood as what people are *left with*. In continuing to shape the landscape long after the project was abandoned, the development failure lives on in what Stoler calls its “material and social afterlife” (2008, p. 194). The initial project may be dead in terms of its development potential, but they left behind what has now been declared an invasive species. It continues to shape life in Baringo long after the project’s death through what Stoler calls ruination: “a corrosive process that weighs on the future and shapes the present” (Stoler, 2008, p. 194). Through their colonisation of the land, the invasive species continue to contribute to the social ruination of pastoralist lives. Thus, failed development makes Baringo not only a place where projects go to die, but also a place where their death resides.

The politics and materiality of invasive species are a topic of growing importance in Ethnology (cf. Gradén & O’Dell, 2020; Lagerqvist et al., 2024; Olsson et al., 2021). A cultural perspective on materiality lends itself well to exploring the political impact of invasive species because it challenges the assumed division between humans and nature (cf. Frihammar et al., 2020) and emphasises that they are material agents which can shape the social space just like other humans (cf. Barker, 2008; Ginn, 2008). Scientific and political debates on invasive plant species have historically been connected to policies of nature conservation and discourses of biodiversity. Ethnologist Lars Kaijs-er and colleagues (2024) trace scientific discourses on invasive species back to the discipline of Ecology in the 1950s, which framed them as an unwanted natural entity that disrupts the natural balance of an ecosystem. This ecological perspective entered global sustainability policies in the 1980s and today it is explicitly connected to biodiversity concerns through the SDGs.¹²⁵ For

¹²⁵ SDG sub-target 15.8 is to “introduce measures to prevent the introduction and significantly reduce the impact of invasive alien species on land and water ecosystems and control or eradicate the priority species” (UNGA 2017).

Kaijser (2024) these discourses build on a false assumption that humans and nature belong to two separate spheres. This perspective ignores the historical conditions of their movement around the globe and downplays the impact of these species on the so-called human realms of economics and culture. Or, as Kaijser and colleagues put it:

The concept of invasive species is formulated based primarily on knowledge of nature conservation and based on established boundaries in time and space. ... [which] can be perceived as arbitrary, but they are based on historical conditions that relate to human movements and activities (Frihammar et al., 2020, p. 200).¹²⁶

The movement of *Prosopis* into new ecosystems around the globe was coordinated by people. Or more specifically, as Murray reminds us “all these invasive species, they’ve been brought in by development projects”. Specific historical conditions pertaining to global development agendas in the 1970-80s led to *Prosopis* becoming an invasive species. What’s more, once rooted in the landscape, their existence is upheld by a diverse group of interconnected actors: the goats that eat and disperse their seed pods, the seasonal rivers that spread them across ecozones, the pastoralists and their tools who chop them down for firewood and so on. Conventional scientific discourses would say these actors belong to separate spheres – animals and rivers to the domain of nature; and people, with their tools and economic activity, to that of culture. Yet, it is the interactions *between* these different actors which maintain the trees’ existence and give them power over the ecosystem. This suggests, with Kaijser, that “it is not possible to distinguish between what is nature and what is culture” (2020, p. 198).¹²⁷ Rather, the human and natural realms are entwined; and both human and ecological processes are in constant motion. This happens “as humanity’s

¹²⁶ Translated from the original Swedish: “Begreppet invasiv art formuleras utifrån kunskaper om i första hand naturvård, och utifrån etablerade gränsdragningar i tid och rum. ... [som] kan uppfattas som godtycklig, men de bygger på historiska förhållanden som relaterar till människors rörelser och aktiviteter.”

¹²⁷ Translated from the original Swedish: “det inte går att skilja mellan vad som är natur och vad som är kultur”.

way of using the land changes, and as species move to different areas, influencing the landscapes they enter” (Frihammar et al., 2020, p. 199).¹²⁸

This is further exemplified by the fact that the trees impact both ecosystems and livelihoods – both in their indigenous and colonised contexts. As part of its native ecosystems, *Prosopis* has been shown to contribute positively to the ecosystem and help local farmers. It creates what Ecologists calls “resource islands” (Kaur et al., 2012, p. 11) with high levels of nutrients for other vegetation to thrive under their canopies.¹²⁹ Farmers also plant them in fields because they increase the nutrients in the soil so crops grow better below them. With sufficient natural predators and other competitive flora, *Prosopis* is able to coexist in its native ecosystems. In this native context, the tree can be seen to contribute positively to the equilibrium of the system because it interacts well with the ecosystem. This ability to help the ecosystem and livelihoods is what triggered the FAO and World Bank to consider it as a potential tool for improving other areas around the world. When brought to Baringo, the original intention was to regreen the landscape and make the semi-arid wastelands more productive by covering them in a tree with commercial use as fuelwood and fodder. However, in bringing the tree to Baringo, FAO and World Bank thrust it into a new landscape with an entirely different social system and ecosystem. It did not have the same competitors to keep it in check and people couldn’t chop it down as quickly as it spread.¹³⁰

The label ‘*invasive*’ suggests the *Prosopis* trees *take over*, *invade* and *degrade* the land. With the invasive label, aggressive characteristics, typically used to describe human actions, are being projected onto the trees them-

128 Translated from the original Swedish: “i takt med att människans sätt att bruka jorden förändras och arter förflyttar sig in olika väderstreck och påverkar de landskap som de äntrar”.

129 Kaur et al. (2012) use the term resource islands to describe the variety of positive effects of *Prosopis* in their native ecosystems which have been documented in a variety of different studies. Many of these studies were published in the 1970-80s when the FAO were considering the tree’s potential as a tool for development. (cf. Archer et al. 1988; Arthur & Klemmedson 1977; Tiedemann & Klemmedson 1973; Virginia & Jarrell 1983).

130 This process is exacerbated by the trees’ inherent hardy qualities. Being hardwood and thorny, they are difficult to chop down. So, people chop down the softer, more accessible indigenous trees, creating even more space for the *Prosopis* to propagate.

selves, almost endowing them with a superlative ability to shape entire landscapes and economic systems. This anthropomorphising language works to give them agency, suggesting the trees have a capacity to act. Somewhat paradoxically though, the label *invasive*, with its assumptions of activity and movement, was initially a scientific term, yet scientific discourses typically understand plants as inanimate objects. They tend to see the capacity to move and act as traits exclusively belonging to humans and other animals. Recognising that this narrow definition is insufficient for understanding how invasive species actively move across the landscape, interact with the indigenous flora and disrupt livelihoods, Geographers Lesley Head and colleagues (2015) propose the term *plant capacities* to describe the distinct ways in which plants are able to shape their environment. “When acting as ‘invasives’”, they suggest, “plants are understood to be not only mobile but aggressively so, marching across whole landscapes. In the process, they marshal a range of sensing and communicative capacities” (Head et al., 2015, p. 410). Since its introduction, Prosopis has broken free of its tests sites and large forests continue to sweep across the landscape, seemingly of their own accord, engulfing the landscape and suffocating the grasslands.

Thinking in terms of agency and capacity, it seems apt to say that, in the context of Baringo, Prosopis has *invasive agency*. Pastoral modes of production rely on sufficient land and grass levels to feed livestock year-round. Prosopis is not as nutritious as grass and the dense forests it creates are too tightly packed together to allow the (productive) grass to grow underneath it. In replacing the grass, the Prosopis has created an absence of productivity and turned swathes of pastures into idle land. Their invasive agency also extends to impact livelihoods by stripping the landscape of its economic value. Each plant in the ecosystem, as we have seen, plays an important role in pastoralism: the grass is the staple fodder, certain shrubs act as back-up grazing when grass levels are low, and some drought resistant berries can be used as an emergency food source when all other food has run out. Prosopis may be stronger, faster growing, hardier than any other plant species in Baringo. But each plant performs a different function in the pastoralist system so, by taking away these individual plants, Prosopis robs pastoralists of an ecosystem that can serve them and their livestock.

Given they are most potent when spread as a forest, it's apt to highlight that their agency does not belong to the individual trees, but to the collective. Invasive species can be understood as having what Jane Bennett calls an *agency of assemblage*. Bennett tells us that

no one materiality or type of material has sufficient competence to determine consistently the trajectory or impact of the group. The effects generated by an assemblage are... distinct from the sum of the vital force of each materiality considered alone (Bennett, 2010, p. 24).

While an individual tree cannot invade a landscape, a forest can. The invasive agency of *Prosopis* (or its '*vital force*' in Bennett's terminology) is at its most potent when forests reach a critical mass and start to degrade the landscape. It makes little sense to say each individual tree is colonising and degrading the landscape. But by zooming out to the landscape level, their collective actions can be understood as something different: collectively, their invasion is distorting the ecosystem's equilibrium. As individual trees out-compete the indigenous flora, disperse seeds and take root, the forest collectively lays claim to every available space and takes over the landscape.

Fattening Cattle and Selling Seed

Before ending our road trip, we have time to visit two connected development interventions that have not ended in disastrous ruin for livelihoods or the ecosystem. The first is the livestock market in Marigat which hosts a government-run, bi-weekly livestock auction. The auction provides a marketplace for local herders to sell their livestock (mostly cattle, goats and sheep) to abattoirs, butcheries and private consumers. The second intervention is connected to the emerging grass seed economy introduced in chapter five. A number of grassroots organisations such as RAE and KVDA are integrating into this economy as traders and processing agents¹³¹, offering services to grass farmers that otherwise were missing in the value chain.

¹³¹ I use the term *processing agent* to mean any actor who engages in processing and marketing seeds. This includes registered organisations and informal brokers.



Image 30. Marigat Livestock Auction in full swing. There are several livestock yards across Baringo, including Nginyang which is Kenya's second largest and Kimalel where the annual goat auction and cultural festival attracts thousands of buyers, including the president and many other high level politicians (own photo).

Every other Thursday, a livestock auction takes place in Marigat where buyers from within Baringo and further abroad come to purchase cows, goats and sheep from local herders. On auction days, a government-sponsored auctioneer facilitates the sale of livestock and District Veterinary Officers provide certification of animal health for a small fee. As we heard from the elders in chapter four, there has been a market in Marigat since at least the 1960s and presumably earlier.¹³² But the formal infrastructure in its present location was built in 1972 under a joint UNDP/FAO project to formalise the marketing conditions of sheep and goats.¹³³ The marketplace, or “sale yard” to use its official name, is a 10-acre lot with holding

¹³² The Tugen elder, Kibet, told me that “when you went to the market in Marigat, you would sell one goat for one shilling. And one shilling was a lot of money back then!”

¹³³ The marketplace was constructed as part of the Sheep and Goat Project which ran from 1972-1983. For more information, see GoK (1986) *Proceedings of the Fifth Small Ruminant CRSP Workshop*.

pens, loading bays and market stalls for non-livestock vendors selling clothes and electronics.¹³⁴

The marketplace has since been maintained and upgraded by the Ministry of Agriculture & Livestock Development. In 2022, the government received funding from the Drought Resilience and Sustainable Livelihoods Programme to upgrade the market and equip it with disease surveillance facilities.¹³⁵ As the primary market for Baringo, Marigat provides a regular meeting place for pastoralists to sell their livestock to buyers. It offers a secure market and facilitates hundreds of livestock transactions at a time, which has been shown to increase incomes by 13–24% (Green et al., 2006).¹³⁶

Osman and I have come to meet David, an agropastoralists who buys skinny cows, fattens them up and sells them at this auction. Entering the sale yard, we see farmers and traders mill about making deals and inspecting goats as herdsman usher reluctant cattle into holding pens. A cacophony of hawkers shout out their wares, competing with the braying sheep, the cattle bells and the urgent, rhythmic chanting of the auctioneers. The acidity of fresh goat urine and the sweet smells of fried onions meet in my nostrils in a nauseating imbalance. The whole scene is encompassed by a cloud of dust whipped up by thousands of feet and hooves shuffling through red earth that hasn't seen rain in several months.

David has a farm in the Njemps Flats where he grows grass both to harvest the seeds and to provide fodder to his cattle to intensively fatten

¹³⁴ There are no fences around the lot and no clear demarcation of its size. 10 acres is, therefore, an approximation mapped out using Google Earth. The sign posted at the entrance reads “Marigat Livestock Sale Yard. Drought Resilience and Sustainable Livelihoods Programme (DRSLP). Ministry of Livestock, Fisheries and Cooperatives.” For an image of the sign see the project website *Branding of DRSLP Structures Sites in Baringo County*.

¹³⁵ This was part of a multinational programme carried out between 2013–2022 and funded by the African Development Bank Group which aimed to improve resilience to drought by communities in the ASAL areas across the Horn of Africa. For more information, see the project website *Branding of DRSLP Structures Sites in Baringo County*.

¹³⁶ This study counted 164 livestock (cattle goats and sheep) sold in one auction day. The livestock in this study were designated for slaughter (15%), resale (46%), breeding (28%) and other (10%). This study was limited to transactions that went through the official auction channels but there are also many more private transactions happening (which the authors refer to as *dyadic*), so it is safe to assume the transactions reach into the hundreds.



Image 31. Herders ushering cattle into a lorry destined for an abattoir. Livestock are sold to abattoirs, restaurants and private consumers both within Baringo and in cities further afield such as Nakuru and Nairobi (own photo).

them up. He proudly tells me he has sold two cattle at today's auction for 26,000Kshs each, which he bought two months ago for 16,000Kshs. Rather than go through the formal auctioneer channel, though, David is using the marketplace to finalise a sale that he made last night when a buyer came to his farm to negotiate the price. David is one of many farmers bringing their cattle to the marketplace to load onto this same buyer's truck before he takes them to an abattoir in Nakuru. David assures me that bypassing the formal auction is a common and accepted practice:

There are two options for markets - dealers come to buy cattle from the fields or you can go to auction. It's good to have both. The guys that come to the field are serious, they are a secure buyer because they have an order to fill from the slaughterhouse. But the market gives more flexibility to peruse and negotiate (David).

The marketplace is both an auction ground and a meeting point. Most farmers live in remote locations with poor infrastructure making it difficult for a lorry to access the fields. By contrast, the marketplace is located on



Image 32. Women making hot food to sell to hungry traders. Many of the secondary traders move around different marketplaces, looking for an opportunity to make some cash. The regularity of Marigat livestock auction provides a consistent source of income (own photo).

the main road towards Nakuru and has specialised equipment and loading bays, making it a preferred location to finalise a sale pre-arranged in the fields. For David, having the flexibility of two options – the auction and the meeting point – is a positive because it allows farmers more avenues to sell their livestock, depending on their circumstances. As we saw in chapter five, pastoralists often sell cattle at short notice to raise quick cash to cover large urgently needed costs such as school fees or hospital bills. Selling to a buyer who comes directly to your field is a popular option for raising such cash. David sees these buyers as “serious” people who offer a secure market.¹³⁷ By contrast, attending the auction may not always result in a definite sale but it offers more flexibility in negotiating prices. For

¹³⁷ David specifically mentions their connections to slaughterhouses. But they can also come to buy livestock on behalf of other individuals, companies, or to grow their own herd.

David, regularly perusing the auction is part of his livestock fattening model: he assesses the options on offer and buys skinny cows when he sees a good deal. Being able to wait until he finds a good deal enables him to maximise the turnover on an individual cow. Neither of these two options is ideal. Some farmers express frustration at buyers not fulfilling their promises (cf. Mutua et al., 2017, p. 103), changing prices during times of drought, or refusing to come directly to the fields in rustling prone areas (cf. Kinyua et al., 2011, pp. 130-131). Others express frustration at the high transportation costs, certification fees and taxes at the market (cf. Barrett et al., 2004, pp. 24-30). And, as we saw in chapter three, the lack of documentation means cattle raiders can use the markets to sell stolen livestock with relative ease. However, having both options provides herders with greater flexibility and a higher chance of securing a satisfactory price.

David tells us that the livestock market creates income and jobs for more people than the herders themselves:

No cows means no jobs. This market has brought jobs for many people, not just farmers... the farmers have money when they've sold cattle. So, they maybe want to buy things - chickens, clothes, sugar (David).

The vast majority of livestock transactions are conducted using cash, meaning there is an abundance of cash floating around the marketplace on auction days. The marketplace attracts a host of secondary trade on auction days looking to cash in on this surplus. The marketplace infrastructure is designed with this secondary trade in mind. Around the edge of the holding pens there are both formal and informal vendor spaces. Market stalls stationed at the entrance overflow with second-hand clothes from Europe and electronic goods from China and India. Around the edges of the holding pens, women sit around fires making food to sell to hungry traders while hawkers float through the crowds selling crooks, rope, snacks and traditional medicine. This additional trade creates an important source of income for these secondary vendors and keeps much of the cash inside Baringo's economy.

Like many of the grass farmers we met in chapter five, David tells me that he uses his farm both to fatten his livestock and for harvesting grass

THE DEVELOPMENT TESTBED

seeds, balancing the two activities to maximise the income he can make from his farm. As we saw in chapter three, the current drought is drying out all the grass in Baringo and forcing some pastoralists to feed every remaining blade of grass to their livestock in a vain attempt to keep them alive. Given the ongoing drought, I ask if he has had to compromise his grass harvest in order to fatten up his cattle:

Even if the drought continues, I'm never going to completely graze my fields. I would rather reduce the amount of cattle and feed them outside the fence. I can always buy and sell cattle more easily. Seed is a bigger, long-term investment (David).

Despite my assumptions, David appears to prioritise his grass seed over his cattle. Rather than give the remaining grass to his cattle, he chooses to keep it in hopes that he can produce enough seeds when harvest time comes. He reasons that he can feed his cattle in communal grazing lands “outside the fence”. Although, as we have seen, there is very little grass available in the communal pastures, particularly during the current drought. But still, he would rather attempt this or reduce the number of cattle he owns by selling them off than overgraze his grass. With this, David is demonstrating the importance of the emerging grass seed economy we heard about in chapter five. This takes us to the second successful development intervention in Baringo.

The Seed Economy

The seed economy is supported by a collection of public and private actors who help pastoralists like David retain confidence in long-term investments in seed. In the early days, this trade was established with the support of RAE who helped local farmers plant grass on their land. RAE also facilitated the growth of the seed economy by promising to buy the harvested seeds back from farmers, thereby providing them with a secure market. The seed is then sold in bulk to larger buyers, such as conservancies and large-scale ranches looking to replenish their grass stocks. In Baringo, RAE have rehabilitated over 1,000 farms for individual farmers, all of whom can use the grass as

fodder and sign an agreement to sell their seed to RAE. Farmers supported by RAE have documented making up to \$4,825 per year from fattening livestock and up to \$2,200 per year from selling grass seed (Meyerhoff et al., 2020).¹³⁸ Grass fields have also been shown to build more resilient livelihoods by “allowing households flexibility in responding to the challenges of climate variability, land degradation and poverty” (Githu et al., 2022, p. 8). The possibility of having multiple sources of income from a field helps farmers to mitigate the livelihood risks posed by droughts and hold onto their income-generating assets (i.e. their grass fields and their livestock).

RAE offer these farmers continual land management support in the form of training and guidance, a secure market for their seed, as well as the subsidised use of additional pastures and agricultural equipment such as tractors and hay balers. As Elizabeth stresses, their guiding philosophy is to *listen to the people*:

Just as the people are continually adapting their livelihood strategies to their situation, we try to do the same. We put a tremendous amount of energy into monitoring, assessing and evaluating the changing socio-economic and environmental dynamics so we can make informed decisions... like rainfall records, planted and regenerated tree and grass species survival, the local use and importance of indigenous plants, and field offtake, management and income generation. Over time we have changed the services we offer, with flexibility central to what we do. For example, we only rehabilitated community fields in the past but started planting individual farms when people requested this... by monitoring field use and benefits we have established best practices which enhances our training programme (Elizabeth).

Elizabeth wants to emphasise that as the people's needs change, RAE strive to respond and adapt. For her, this principle is key to their longevity as a

¹³⁸ The most recent RAE records (December 2024) show that they have rehabilitated 1,024 farms and over 2,850 hectares. Previous research showed that by 2020 they had rehabilitated over 2,400 hectares of land in Baringo, “comprising 924 private fields (each 0.5-16 ha) demarcated and fenced by long-term residents and managed by individual families and 75 community fields (0.5-200 ha) managed by communities or groups, including shareholders' and women's groups. In addition, thousands more hectares have been rehabilitated with RAE grass seed” (Meyerhoff et al. 2020, p. 152).



Image 33. In their roles as field officers, Joseph and Osman carry out regular visits to the grass farmers in their respective communities. They check up on the status of their farm, discuss their land management, offer advice, and arrange any additional support/services. Depending on the need, they either do a spot check or a more intensive monitoring (own photo).

grassroots organisation. When making strategic decisions, she tells me, she makes a concerted effort to consult the 40+ years of local research data they have compiled. As the person in the organisation responsible for conducting most of their research as well as planning, she sees the research as a tool to help them adapt to changing social, economic and environmental trends. As I understand it, she sees this as an integral part of an inherently flexible development model. It is a way of formalising the philosophy of listening to the people into an institutional practice so they can continually react to the needs of the farmers they work with.

While RAE are the largest player, a growing number of NGOs, government departments and parastatal organisations now support the grass seed economy. A mapping study of the Baringo grass seed economy identified the roles each actor plays in the value chain – the full range of activities needed to make a product – of Baringo's seed crop (Lugusa et al., 2016). A number of parastatals including Kerio Valley Development Authority (KVDA), Kenya Agricultural and Livestock Research Organisation (KALRO) and National Drought Management Authority (NDMA) were found to have joined the

supply chain in recent years, setting up seed banks to provide local farmers with an additional supply of grass seeds (Lugusa et al., 2016).

RAE, KVDA and KALRO are registered with the government regulatory body Kenya Plant Health Inspectorate Service (KEPHIS) as seed merchants. They process the seed and sell it on to large NGOs such as World Vision as well as large ranches and conservancies outside Baringo. KEPHIS impose regulations which permit merchants to only sell high quality seed. According to the Seed and Plant Varieties Act, only seed with a minimum 50% germination rate is acceptable (i.e. for every kilo of seed sold, half of it must grow into grass if planted correctly).¹³⁹ This requires the merchants to incorporate quality control and checks into their seed processing. As Murray tells me, these quality controls help them ensure they sell grass seeds that will grow into high quality pasture:

We're very careful with the quality, there are a lot of quality controls that we have in place from the very beginning. The seed is inspected very carefully from each out-grower's output, then we do a germination on each batch of seed that comes in, so we ensure that what the buyer is getting at the end of the day is a very high-quality product... High quality seed guarantees that you will end up with a product. Poor quality means you will end up with half a product or no product at all (Murray).

KEPHIS regulations act as a minimum assurance of quality by ensuring that merchants only sell seeds that they know will give their buyers a high yield. This minimum standard encourages merchants like RAE to incorporate quality controls into their process. As a result, the quality of the seed they produce often tends to be higher than the minimum standards. They have an internal standard of 60% germination rate and pride themselves of achieving up to 100% germination at times.

The seed merchants work in collaboration with a number of other institutions. A small number of commercial banks such as KCB and BORESHA SACCO offer loans to farmers as well as financial management train-

¹³⁹ The seed merchants in Baringo sell five species of indigenous grass seed. Only two of these – which are also the most sold – are currently registered and regulated by KEPHIS: *Eragrostis superba* and *Cenchrus ciliaris*. For a full list of regulated seeds in Kenya, see GoK (2012) *Seeds and Plant Varieties Act, Chapter 326*.



Image 34. Left: RAE field officer checking seed quality before buying from a farmer. Photo: Dan Besley. Right: Seed packaged and stored ready for sale. Photo Osman Oleparmarin. There are several stages in the quality control process. The seed is checked during purchase, weighed, rechecked, repackaged. It is then stored for a year before it can be sold in order to break its dormancy period.

ing. The Ministry of Agriculture & Livestock Development also offers workshops to train farmers in new technologies and employs extension workers to regularly visit seed producers to provide advice and guidance where needed. Overall, Lugusa et al. (2016) found that this collection of public and private actors played complimentary roles, providing a broad range of services to grass farmers and supporting the overall value chain of grass seeds.¹⁴⁰ This is reinforced by David's view on balancing seed with cattle trading. He prioritises his grass fields as a source of seed rather than a source of fodder to fatten his cattle because he sees seeds as a bigger, long-term investment. With the support of private and public institutions, he recognises the seed industry as an established economy which he is confident will give him a secure, long-term source of income.

Working With and For the People

When required, RAE offer interest-free loans to farmers who cannot raise the capital to cover the costs of agricultural inputs such as harvesting or replanting a field or even other unrelated costs. Sandra, a grass farmer we met earlier in an interview with Osman, was granted a loan by RAE:

¹⁴⁰ They did find, however, that grass farmers expressed frustration at the agreements required by processing agents which offered a fixed price and no room for negotiation, thereby reducing their flexibility to sell at a time they deem best and to sell to the highest bidder.

When the rains recently came and the grass started growing, I visited the RAE office and asked for an advance loan which I used to pay school fees. Once I had harvested the seeds and sold them to RAE, they deducted the loan amount. So, I must say that RAE have really helped us through grass planting and the seed industry (Sandra).

Sandra has been supplying seed to RAE for several years. During the recent dry season, she planted grass (which she purchased from RAE) in her field and signed an agreement that they would buy the seeds she grew back from her once they were ready for harvest. Before she had harvested, however, she needed to pay school fees for her children. So, she approached RAE to request a bridging loan to cover the school fees on the condition that they would get the money back once she sold the grass seeds to them. She was able to pay the school fees with the loan, meaning she didn't have to take money that was otherwise allocated to farm overheads and risk closing down her operations before she could harvest. This interest-free loan stopped the school fees becoming a financial burden that jeopardised her livelihood whilst still enabling her to make a small profit from her grass farm. It was also in RAE's interest to offer this loan because it ensured Sandra would be able to continue supplying seed to them. They had invested money in Sandra by planting her field on the expectation that they would receive returns in the form of the seed that she provides to them which they could later sell on. Being involved in both the supply and purchase of seed incentivises seed merchants to support seed producers financially and ensure they provide a steady supply. Without the loan, they may have lost not just their initial investment in her but also one of their regular seed suppliers.

Seed producers have the possibility of selling seed to regulated merchants like RAE or KVDA or to unregulated grass seed traders (or *brokers* as they are often called). But William, another agropastoralist we met earlier, tells Osman in an interview, brokers tend to be less reliable trading partners:

You know, we have a problem here with seed brokers... Their market is not reliable. But we know that RAE always has a ready market... The brokers bother us the whole day trying to buy seeds. But we refuse, we say

no. We sell to RAE. We trust them... A broker will never plant your field for you, and you cannot find seeds at planting time. A farmer can return to the broker and say "I sold my seeds to you and today I want to plant the field. So can you sell to me?" The broker will say "I don't have any seeds, I have sold all my seeds, go and try [RAE]" (William).

Brokers often offer a higher price and are willing to negotiate prices, unlike the seed merchants who tend to maintain a fixed price.¹⁴¹ But William suggests their market is not reliable as they are not always available and cannot always offer a secure market. It's important to remember that William is telling this to Osman – a RAE representative – so there may be a chance he is telling Osman what he wants to hear. Nevertheless, his point is reinforced by previous research. Lugusa and colleagues (2016) call brokers "seasonal market actors"; they turn up during harvesting season and offer to buy seeds from the farmers and don't necessarily return to provide seeds during planting season. In contrast, they define licensed merchants as "well-established institutions", stressing that "unlike the independent grass seed traders, these institutions offer fixed prices for seeds but are a source of seed markets regardless of the seasonality in production" (Lugusa et al., 2016, p. 11). Because their operations are physically located in the local area and they provide farmers with a variety of services in the seed value chain throughout the year (ploughing, planting, processing, buying), they are a permanent presence. For William, this reliability is important because it ensures a secure market and gives him the confidence to invest in his grass field, knowing there will be a seed merchant ready to offer their services whenever he needs it throughout the year.

This marks the end of our road trip around the Development Graveyard. What do all the failed (and successful) projects tell us about the way the International Development Industry interacts with marginalised spaces?

¹⁴¹ That said, RAE continually review and adjust their prices in accordance with the economic climate, market rates and the financial burdens of their buyers.

A Global Development Landscape

Our road trip around Baringo has taken us through a landscape shaped by half a century of development interventions. We've heard about the introduction of *Prosopis* by the FAO and World Bank in the 1970s and witnessed its subsequent impact on the landscape and economy. We've seen the remains of abandoned project sites like the SNV community fields, cultural museums and biogas plants which have turned Baringo into a development graveyard. We've also seen examples of projects in the live-stock auction and the seed merchants which have stood the test of time and continue to help pastoralists integrate into the market economy and build resilient livelihoods. The large volume of interventions and their impact (both positive and negative) on the physical landscape and livelihoods speak to the influence of the Development Industry in turning Baringo into a testbed for development. Given their international character, these projects represent an era of rapid globalisation in which global flows of capital and technology can be transferred around the globe at speed with relative ease. They are the result of ideas, capital and technology from diverse national and international sources such as the World Bank, FAO, EU and AECF converging on Baringo.

To understand the disproportionate role these external organisations have played in Baringo, it may be helpful to return to Arjun Appadurai's (1996) ideas on *global cultural flows*. He conceptualises globalisation as a series of flows or '*scapes*' sweeping around the globe in irregular yet fluid patterns and moving in and out of physical locations. With this lens, the development landscape can be understood as a series of fluid, irregular and overlapping flows and the different *scapes*, both entering and leaving Baringo, represent its constituent elements. These include *ethnoscapes* (the movement of people), *technoscapes* (the movement of technology) and *financescapes* (the movement of money) among others. Following Anthropologist Manzurul Mannan (2015), these various flows may be collectively conceived of as a *developmentscape*. The different flows each have their own constraints and logics, driving their movement around the world which are not necessarily connected to one another, but they interact and converge to establish a global development landscape.

The *ethnoscape* of Baringo is populated by the three ethnic communities of pastoralists who call it home. As we saw in chapter four, they have relatively stable identities which are rooted to the areas that belong to their communities. The Development Industry brings an additional population to Baringo, namely development practitioners, some of whom also call Baringo home, including grassroots organisations such as RAE, parastatals such as KVDA and KALRO and government officials from the ministry of agriculture and livestock development, as well as the auctioneers, veterinarians and handlers connected to the livestock auction. The implementation and maintenance of international development projects like the Prosopis pilot, the SNV fields and the Cummins biogas plant further brings a steady flow of NGO workers, United Nations consultants, academics, government officials, embassy workers and foreign dignitaries who all move in and out of Baringo. Large organisations often have several projects on-going around the country at the same time which are all administered from a central hub. To determine project sites, development professionals are sent on short visits – often driving (or flying) in for one or two days – to scope a potential field site, assess a project's progress, or promote it as an example of best practice. The temporariness of their stays in a project location led the Development scholar, Robert Chambers (1983), to call them *Rural Development Tourists*. At the end of the project, the practitioners inevitably leave, go back to their organisation's headquarters or onto the next project in another marginal location.

The road plays a significant role in the construction of the development graveyard because, in Chamber's words, "most rural development tourism is by vehicle. Starting and ending in urban centres, visits follow networks of roads" (Chambers, 1983, p. 13). Baringo is well-placed and well-equipped to accommodate Development Tourists. The main trunk road, the C4 puts it less than five hours away from Nairobi by car, making it feasible to visit for a short period. The tourist village of Kampi ya Samaki lies just off the main road on the edge of Lake Baringo, making it a convenient hub to enter and leave from. The centrality of the road creates what Chambers calls a *roadside bias*. In offering a route in and out of Baringo, this trunk road also shapes the way Development Tourists design projects and allocate funding. Given the constant movement between field locations, ac-

cessibility and convenience are important features when considering the viability of a development destination. In Baringo, this has resulted in most of the failed development project sites being situated close to the road (see figure 3).

The *technoscape* of Development is constructed upon a global configuration of technologies coordinated by the Development Industry and directed towards project destinations in the developing nations. Many projects attempt to provide a technical solution – be it nature-based like *Prosopis* or mechanical like the Cummins gasifier – to the economic and ecological problems facing marginalised communities. Projects are constructed around a variety of technologies, whose own constituent parts and knowledge stem from different locations. The Cummins gasifier, for example, was engineered in the US, assembled in China and incorporates component parts sourced from different manufacturers around the globe. The fluidity of the development technoscape hinges on moving new technologies to areas that are perceived to need it the most. Thanks to a sophisticated mechanical and informational infrastructure connecting most areas of the planet, Appadurai stresses that technology “now moves at high speeds across various kinds of previously impervious boundaries” (Appadurai, 1996, p. 34). Taking *Prosopis* as an example, a tree species that was once confined to the South American continent can now, with relative ease, be shipped to and distributed throughout Africa. After first taking root in Mombasa, *Prosopis* started popping up at different dryland locations across Kenya including Tana River, Turkana and Baringo in the 1980s (Mwangi & Swallow, 2005)¹⁴². Hosting the largest port in East Africa and a complex infrastructure of road and rail ports, Mombasa is a natural gateway for technologies coming into the region.

The *financescape* of Development is disposed of a flow of aid money from the Global North to the South via what Appadurai calls a “global grid” (Appadurai, 1996, p. 34) of capital transfers and currency exchange.

142 Mwangi & Swallow highlight that “these introductions were uncoordinated and seeds sourced from commercial suppliers without reference to origin or quality” (2005, p. 19). With this in mind, I’m not suggesting that the Mombasa project was the source of the invasive species in Kenya. Rather, commercial suppliers would have used the infrastructure connected to Mombasa port to transport their seeds across the region.

The financescapes of Development are, to some extent, defined by the parameters of the nation-state; United Nations bodies, including the FAO, receive their funding from its member states. However, once the funding enters the coffers of multilaterals, the power of the nation-state starts to diffuse, and the multilateral organisations dictate the global flow of aid. They determine which countries receive donor support through their pre-approved list of recipient countries. The SNV project is representative of this top-down funding model. The multilateral aid agency of the EU distributed a €22 billion aid package to developing nations, of which €392 million went to rural development in Kenya. The international NGO SNV was designated to facilitate a €6 million development programme across an arbitrary number of project sites (six in this case). At each site, a grassroots organisation is selected to implement part of the project. As the implementer in Baringo, RAE received less than €20,000. This top-down model creates a financescape of aid money which follows what Appadurai calls “nonisomorphic paths” (Appadurai, 1996, p. 37) whereby money and ideas flow down to project locations like Baringo in irregular patterns. Much like a river flowing in reverse, the funds start as a bulk package – often in the realms of billions of euros – deviating via urban hubs and gradually separating into ever thinner rivers and funding streams that trickle down to the project destinations. As it is divided up along the way, it creates new pathways via government bodies and NGOs in capital cities. At each turn, the funds filter through layers of facilitating NGOs who take a small percentage to cover their administrative fees before splitting the funds into several funding streams and redirecting them onwards to the multiple project destinations. By the time it reaches rural areas like Baringo, the multibillion-euro bulk package is transformed into a thin trickle of cash funding small, individual projects.

The *ideoscape* of Development is made up of ideas, philosophies and development approaches constructed at the global level. As we saw in chapter six, the master narrative of sustainable development governs the Development Industry and provides the ideological driving force behind initiatives. This paradigm is built around a series of interconnected ideas such as resilience, participation, democracy, planning, conservation, bio-

diversity, settlement and countless more.¹⁴³ These concepts enter the realm of international development along different avenues and at different times. They often establish competing ideoscapes, many of which leave their mark on the landscape of Baringo. The numerous Prosopis-based initiatives, for example, have been inspired by different strands of resilience-thinking such as the ecological and economic. They have variously introduced the tree to counter deforestation, removed it to foster biodiversity, or harvested it to promote livelihoods. The SNV project also exemplifies the current (global) paradigm of sustainable development: it is driven by ideas imported from global agendas on sustainable development such as *co-management* and *innovative market-based systems*. It promotes a development approach constructed around ideas of resilience-building, participation and community ownership, simultaneously bringing these lofty ideas to the ground, painting them on signposts and designating grass fields as their official locus.

The ideas informing the design of projects are inspired by the development agendas of the donor countries and multilateral bodies that fund them. In identifying the SNV community fields as a “Dutch project”, for example, Murray hinted at the significance of the national identity of foreign NGOs running development projects. This act of giving the project a national affiliation reveals the origin of the funding for the project, but also says something about the origin of its ideas. As Appadurai stresses, ideoscapes are “often directly political and have to do with the ideologies of states” (Appadurai, 1996, p. 36). SNV is headquartered in the Netherlands and, as its former official ODA arm, remains closely linked to the Dutch government.¹⁴⁴ Yet, the wider funding for the project came from the European Union under the scope of improving rural development in the developing nations. As such, I would like to add to Appadurai’s reflection on the

¹⁴³ *The Development Dictionary* (Sachs, 2019) offers an authoritative discussion of a wide variety of ideas that are popular in Development, with a particular focus on their role in shaping power relations.

¹⁴⁴ SNV was originally the international development arm of the Dutch government. They formally separated from the Dutch government in 2002 to become an NGO. They still have strong ties to the Dutch government and receive almost half of their funding from them. For more information see SNV (2022) *Annual Report 2022*.

political nature of ideoscapes by suggesting it has to do with the ideologies of both states *and* multilateral political bodies; they are, in a word, *global*. The Development Industry engineers an interplay of ideas between the national and global levels, enabling ideas of sustainable development to move back and forth fluidly between national donor NGOs and multilateral organisations before they head to recipient countries. After travelling between these various levels, the ideas finally land in project locations and appear on project signposts dotted throughout the landscape.

A key feature of Appadurai's ideas on global cultural flows is that the way they interact with one another is deeply disjunctive: the movement of people, ideas and technologies all flow in different directions around the globe, following their own logics and motives. Technologies follow the logic and pathways set out by the global logistics infrastructure, coming to Baringo as freight via international seaports and airports. Project funding is guided by the international financial system, flowing through the bank accounts of donor nations and multilateral organisations like the World Bank in Washington, before arriving at an international NGO's account in Nairobi. Development practitioners' presence in Baringo is constrained by their employment conditions and obligations. In essence, developmentscapes are not constructed as a coherent organisation of development experts, aid money and innovative green technologies coordinated by a centralised system and directed in a uniformed manner towards project locations. Rather, the developmentscape is to be found in the convergence of this series of disparate, overlapping flows which are subject to their own conditions.

A Legacy of Failed Development

As a testbed for development projects over the past five decades, Baringo has seen a disproportionate number of failed projects implemented by external funding agencies. The abandoned projects and invasive species paint the picture of a development graveyard and offer a symbol of the disconnect between the Development Industry's good intentions and their failure to have a meaningful impact. This graveyard is the result of the various flows of ideas, money and technologies not aligning as they enter Baringo from outside.

The efficiency of the Development Industry's ideoscapes and technoscapes is complicated by the nature of its financial transfers. The industry proffers lofty, noble goals that hope to elevate the world's poorest out of poverty, but the nonisomorphic, top-down funding model constrains the transformative potential of these ideals. Each twist, turn and filter in the funding channels creates a disjuncture between the ideals of sustainable development that drive the Development Industry's praxis and their real-world impact: every euro that splits away from the pathway to a specific target location is a euro less that is unable to contribute to the transformative potential on the ground. The SNV project didn't receive enough funding to subsidize the field management, and the Cummins gasifiers didn't have enough investment to deal with mechanical issues. Insufficiently funded, these unsustained projects produce half-realised ideas and abandoned technologies littering the landscape.

Ideoscapes evolve at the global level with a certain level of coherency; the terms and ideas that make up its lexicon connect and make a certain level of sense together. But, as these ideas follow the funding around the world to different project locations, they incorporate into different political contexts of recipient countries. As ideoscapes enter new realms, they go through, in Appadurai's words, a "careful translation from context to context in their global movements" (Appadurai, 1996, p. 36). Consequently, the internal coherence that held them together at the global level falls apart, causing problems of translating the ideas into the local cultural context. SNV community fields, for example, were inspired by ideas on community-based land management which called for women and youth-driven community groups which clash with the patriarchal and gerontocratic hierarchies that govern social life in Baringo. As I have argued, this community-based development model is a participatory mechanism. The notion of participatory mechanisms, as we have seen, entered the ideoscape of sustainable development at the global level, through global pacts such as the Earth Summit and its attendant Agenda 21 which encouraged the participatory management of natural resources such as grasslands. The idea of participation entered Baringo in the form of SNV's *co-management model*. As the ideas manifested into a tangible project in the local context of Baringo, they were translated into a specific form;

namely, community groups delineated by age and gender. The project may have had noble intentions of encouraging the participation of the historically marginalised groups of women and youth in resource management, but their misalignment to the predominant social structures undermined these very intentions.

The translation of global ideas into local contexts is further complicated by the timescales of their creation and emergence. Even though ideas move rapidly across the globe, it often takes a long time for them to become entrenched in global development discourses. This creates what we might call a temporal disjuncture. The time they take to move from local contexts up to the global sphere and back down to different global contexts as solutions, differs from the timescales at which local economic formations and development challenges change. Ideas emerge from different local contexts as a response to specific challenges. For example, as we saw in chapter six, the 'community models' concept emerged when community modes of production were dominant but threatened. But it took decades before they became entrenched in global agendas. Ecologists raised awareness of pastoralism in the 1970s, followed by grassroots initiatives around the globe with new models for community development. This approach was only fully recognised in the global agenda following the Earth summit in 1992. By the time they became a standard development model being rolled out in marginalised rural regions around the globe, many of these contexts had changed and these ideas were less relevant. In Baringo, as we have seen, community modes of production have largely given way to individual ones. The community models being proposed by the likes of SNV were outdated before they even began.

Failing to Localise the Global

Developmentscapes are the creation of an inherently global, yet uncoordinated landscape defined by a disjunctive and, at times incompatible, series of global flows. The abandoned projects littering the landscape and the invasive technologies ruining it represent occasions when the disjunctive nature of the multiple, overlapping development flows leads not to sustainable development, but a failure to address local problems with global solu-

tions. As they leave the global sphere and enter the local context, they run out of funding, lose their sense of meaning, or disrupt the ecological system.

The global prism of developmentscapes casts technologies in a particular light – as *global* technologies – and dictates their movement around the globe. As foreign aid funds the transfer of technology across the globe to solve local problems, the technoscapes of Development also transcend the boundaries of nation states. Taking Prosopis as an example, the trees may have come from South America but in the Baringo context they ought to be considered a technology of the global Development Industry rather than any South American state (hence Murray’s proclamation “all these invasive species, they’ve been brought in by development projects”). Accordingly, it may be appropriate to expand the notion of development technoscapes to include *speciesscapes*. Ecologists have defined the term as “a spatial plane of species interactions that combines with resources and habitat structure to drive species’ distributions” (Fisher et al., 2013, p. 241). To this, I would add that within the Development context, the speciestscape is not just a spatial plane, but equally a *global* plane, informed by the various cultural flows of the international developmentscape.

Prosopis started life in a particular ecological context affiliated to its indigenous nation-state; once picked up by the Development Industry, it adopted a global ontology, becoming a universal nature-based technology ready to be transported around the globe. Some trees have a clear affiliation to a country and play an important role in the cultural identity of a nation, or community – the maple in Canada, the Banyan in India and even the California Redwood spring to mind. When transplanted to another country, their foreignness is clearly affiliated to their national identity: the Indian Banyan tree in a botanical garden in London, for instance, is ostentatiously planted there as a foreign species. The Prosopis’ journey, by contrast, did not follow this logic of national identity. Rather, in being shipped from South American to Baringo, the trees underwent a transformation from an organic component of a specific dryland ecosystem to a global technology. The trees are an *alien* technology that don’t belong in this landscape. They come from a different world: the Development world. Their alienness, their foreignness, is not attributed to their land of origin, but to the emissaries who uprooted them and converted them into a global technology of Develop-

ment. The Prosopis initiative passed through the World Bank headquarters in Washington and FAO headquarters in Rome and Nairobi, ambivalent to the interests of the American, Italian or Kenyan state. Now part of the arsenal of global development technologies, the tree is ready to be transplanted wherever it is needed in the fight against poverty and land degradation. Under the guise of poverty eradication, the trees are on their way to the *global* poor whom, in this instance, happen to be in Baringo.

The transfer of development technologies throughout the world is further refracted by international ideals such as alleviating poverty and re-greening the world's degraded lands. Prosopis was identified as a tool for countering deforestation because it is tolerant to arid and semi-arid conditions and an important resource for local pastoralists. Its potential as a tool for Development was considered universal: if it can improve conditions in one dryland environment, then it can do it in any. With this reasoning, the tree was stripped of any national identity and relabelled an instrument of *international* development. This conversion into a global technology simultaneously stripped the tree of the ecological context in which its potential for countering deforestation evolved. When the trees were absorbed into the arsenal of global development technologies, it was done so out of context and extracted as a standalone tool. The World Bank and FAO attributed the tree's potentiality as a tool for good to its botanical traits and ignored the significance of its interconnectedness. It was assumed that the traits that made it successful were those that were inherent in the tree itself – hardiness, fast growth, fodder potential and so on. The other flora and fauna in the ecosystem from which it came – those that kept its growth in check – were ignored. As the tree moved from the global sphere and into the local context of Baringo, it disrupted the ecological balance upon which pastoralist livelihoods depend.

Successful Projects – What's the Difference?

In a sense, all development interventions are intentionally antagonistic: they actively seek to propose new social systems, agricultural practices and economic inputs. As we saw in Chapter six, the Development Industry's ambition is to bring sustainable development to pastoralist regions. The

introduction of each of these interventions requires an active fight against the state of affairs to disrupt the flow of the cultural landscape and bring transformative change. The extreme negative impact of certain interventions suggests this transformative potential has been undermined. What failed projects represent, then, is an antagonism that has not harnessed this transformative potential but a noxious form of under-development. By contrast, we have also seen some interventions from the Development Industry which can be considered successes. The livestock market in Marigat and the seed merchants which trade grass seed with local grass farmers appear to have a less detrimental impact on livelihoods and the landscape and can even be seen helping pastoralists make a living.

As we saw in chapter five, the pastoralist economy incorporates a variety of interconnected income generating activities, which increasingly revolve around the production of grass on individual farms. Grass is grown both to harvest the seeds and to fatten livestock for meat and to produce dairy products, all of which are profitable commodities. Increasingly, farmers are also growing grass to sell hay, rent out their pastures for dry season grazing and pollinate honey-producing bees. The livestock auction and the seed merchants incorporate into this interconnected set of activities by providing services that otherwise would be lacking. The livestock auction provides essential infrastructure to the trade of animals, providing a meeting place to formalise transactions and secure an income. Similarly, seed processors offer a secure market for grass farmers in an economy which has emerged largely as a grassroots enterprise driven by pastoralists themselves. By integrating into this market system and providing services which fill a gap in the market and promote well-established trade systems, the grassroots organisations and parastatals behind these initiatives are able to add value to the emerging economy.

These projects are characterised to a large extent by *local* flows of money, people, ideas and technologies. Both seed trade and livestock auction services are conducted by permanent local institutions facilitating a continual flow of local extension officers, auctioneers, vets, traders, tractor drivers and herdsmen through the farms and markets of Baringo. Far from a short-lived flux of Development Tourists, they are an enduring presence in the landscape. For the likes of Murray, Elizabeth, Joseph and Osman

who work in this space, Baringo is not just a project location but the place they call home and have done for several decades. This local presence makes it viable to implement their inherently flexible development model of *listening to the people*. They are able to follow the evolution over time of local ideas around personal and private identity and respond to the subsequent transformations in livelihood practices and the pastoralist economy. As we saw in chapter four, Baringo's pastoralists have undergone a shift from a more collective to individual identity, triggered by the modernisation of the economy and education system. Seed merchants used to buy grass seed exclusively from community groups who harvested the communal pastures. As seed merchants gained more requests to buy seed from private field owners, they adjusted their business model. RAE, for example, started to offer ploughing services, training and individual loans predominantly to individual farmers.

At the risk of mixing metaphors, it might be helpful again, to return to Jane Bennett and think of this economy as an assemblage of sorts. Bennett adopted the term assemblage to account for the new combinations of relations emerging in the highly interconnected era of globalisation. While globalisation has turned the planet into an interconnected space, connections between some parts are more concentrated than with others. Accordingly, assemblages are "ad hoc groups of diverse elements... living, throbbing confederations that are able to function despite the persistent presence of energies that confound them within" (Bennett, 2010, p. 23). Seed merchants, indigenous grass species and auction infrastructures are all constituent parts of a local context which have emerged together and organically, rather than being imposed abruptly from outside. In the local pastoral economy, money flows between individual farms and livestock auctions, circulated primarily by the local market economy. Whereas the failed external projects impose their own conditions upon the assemblage and drastically change the constitution of the whole, successful projects integrate into the economy and emerge with it. As cash flows through the marketplaces, banks and institutions occupied by the local population, successful projects direct their own finances to follow suit. Processing agents offer loans to farmers and deduct payments from their seed earnings, giving both parties an incentive to ensure the continuation of the

farmer's livelihood. With cash being the dominant form of currency, the speed and direction of financial flows is dictated largely by physical transactions between farmers rather than international financial mechanisms. The internal financial flows of the pastoralist economy are lubricated by the technological infrastructure of the livestock auction and the seed processing agents. The auction also offers a space for secondary trade, encouraging newly earned cash to continue to flow around the local economy and into the pockets of small-scale goods and food traders.

It's important to emphasise that these more successful projects are only *partly* characterised by local cultural flows. Like their failed counterparts, these projects are also part of the global development landscape and, therefore, embroiled in the movement of ideas, money, people and technology around the globe. They're constrained by donor funding, rely to an extent on foreign technologies and commit to ideas from the global master narrative of sustainable development. Both the seed merchants and livestock auction encourage pastoralists to integrate into the market-based economy and promote the commodification of seed and livestock. In doing so, they exacerbate the financial pressures and poverty that plague the poorest members of society. By propping up a market system based on the commodification of natural resources, seed merchants and the livestock marketplace are actively supporting a move away from the more communal, barter-based system of the past – which, as we saw in chapter four, was more egalitarian – towards an inherently more inequitable system. Arguably, no development project can avoid reproducing this system; the more successful projects just don't do it as extremely as the others.

A project's success, then, appears to lie in its ability to localize the various global flows that constitute the developmentscape. What makes the more successful projects stand out is how much they are influenced by local rather than global cultural flows. Failed projects represent a predominantly outward-looking approach to development: a series of development organisations looking towards universal technological solutions, global ideas of sustainable development and international financial systems for an answer to Baringo's challenges. These are juxtaposed against the more successful inward-looking projects which are inherently flexible and responsive. They react to the changing local context and find a place to slot

into the local economic system and fill a gap where services and technologies may be required. In other words, if the cultural flows producing failed development are external and global, then those producing successful development appear to be predominantly *internal* and *local*. Despite succumbing to the inescapable pitfalls of modernity in Africa and their dependence on external cultural flows, these projects appear to have found a more indigenous way to harness the transformative potential of intervention by looking inwards, towards the local cultural system for solutions rather than outwards to the global development landscape.

Chapter 8: Conclusion

This thesis has offered a cultural analysis of the roles climate change, modernisation and the International Development Industry have played in shaping the landscape and livelihoods in Baringo, Northern Kenya. There have been two interconnected aims with this project. The first has been to understand how these processes impact pastoral livelihoods. The second has been to open up a discussion about how pastoralists' knowledge about climate change and practices of resilience might contribute to future sustainable development agendas. The thesis has asked what environmental, economic and political challenges pastoralist communities face and what they are doing to cope with the impacts of poverty and climate change. It has also asked how Development organisations have shaped livelihood opportunities in the region and what role local knowledge has played in informing different development initiatives.

These questions have been explored through ethnographic research conducted over four years, primarily in Baringo but also at global development conferences and in United Nations archives. Using a grounded approach, it has explored how economic, ecological and political processes are experienced, interpreted and navigated as part of pastoralists' daily lives. It has combined ethnological and postcolonial perspectives to understand how these processes, which are both global and local, shape lived experiences and livelihood opportunities. It has demonstrated that historical efforts to modernise the economy by subsequent colonial and postcolonial governments have failed to bring the growth and prosperity they promised. The thesis further highlighted that, since the 1980s, Baringo has been thrust into the global economy without the financial and social structures needed to thrive. Combined with the impacts of human-induced climate change, this has turned Baringo into a marginalised landscape plagued by

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poverty, violence and environmental degradation. At the same time, the thesis has shown how pastoralists are coping with this precarious state of affairs and establishing innovative livelihood opportunities such as grass farming. What's more, it has shown that the international Development Industry demonstrates a general tendency to ignore pastoralist voices and overlook their knowledge and adaptation practices, both when designing global agendas and implementing local projects. By critically analysing Development initiatives in Baringo which have attempted – with varying degrees of success – to help pastoralists improve their livelihood opportunities, it has shown that externally funded projects tend to be informed more by global Development discourses than local knowledge and socio-economic trends. It has contrasted these with locally rooted projects which have been shown to be informed more by the local cultural context than global agendas.

By way of conclusion, this chapter discusses the implications of these findings for the people of Baringo and International Development agendas. It also highlights some key themes and concepts this thesis has explored and discusses how they relate to previous research. It starts with a discussion of the changing landscape of Baringo and the responses of the people living there. Through this, it highlights contributions to a tradition in European Ethnology of doing research in (and for) marginalised communities as well as to the growing field of resilience research. It ends with a discussion on what lessons can be derived from this thesis for Development Studies and how they might be applied within the Development Industry and for global governance post-Agenda 2030.

Baringo's Postcolonial Landscape

Baringo has changed drastically over the past half century. The communal grasslands have all but disappeared, replaced by a desert of bare, degraded land which is interspersed with a growing patchwork of individual farms and forests of innutritious, invasive trees. Communal pastoralism has given way to a sedentary form of agropastoralism in which livestock are supplemented by the production of cash crops, including maize, beans and grass seeds. The economy has moved away from a trade and barter-based

system towards a market economy which is heavily reliant on cash. Through this, livestock and grass have become commodities to be bought and sold for individual profit. New markets in the form of grass seed and fodder have emerged which provide a variety of income streams. The modernisation of the economy has also triggered changes in the cultural institutions governing social life. Communal land access determined by ethnic identity is being replaced by individual land ownership. With this, the gerontocratic system in which the elders managed the communal resources is giving way to a form of individualism dictated by market logic. Collectively, these changes paint the picture of a landscape which has seen fundamental shifts in its ecological, economic and cultural make-up.

In her book *No Landscape is an Island*, Ethnologist Katarina Saltzman emphasizes that cultural landscapes are in a constant state of change which is informed both by human and ecological processes. "In the landscape", she argues, "local and global, human and nature, economy and ecology, ideology and practice are intertwined in relationships where every small detail can affect the whole" (Saltzman, 2001, p. 246).¹⁴⁵ As these multiple, overlapping processes – which are in perpetual movement themselves – meet in a physical location, they continue to form the landscape as well as the cultural practices, modes of production and social constellations of the people living there. No landscape is an island, Saltzman stresses, in either space or time. In an increasingly globalized world, ideas, events and practices that have occurred in the past continue to make their mark in physical locations; as do investments, technologies and climatic conditions from geographically separate regions of the world. The ecological, economic and cultural changes that have occurred in Baringo over the past half century point to the continually changing and interconnected nature of its cultural landscape. Its landscape is influenced as much by the events and ideas occurring today as it is by the legacies of political ideas, economic formations and traditional customs of the past. Drawing on Appadurai's (1990) ideas of global cultural flows, this thesis has emphasised the impor-

¹⁴⁵ Translated from the original Swedish: "i landskapet är lokalt och globalt, människa och natur, ekonomi och ekologi, ideologi och praktik sammantvinnade i relationer där varje liten detalj kan påverka helheten."

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tance of globalisation in shaping Baringo. It is also influenced by international markets, global political events and economic turndowns as much as any part of the world. The physical changes in the landscape are shaped as much by herders overgrazing the land and farmers putting up fences as they are by development projects bringing new plant species and global warming causing prolonged droughts and warping El Nino in the Indian Ocean to bring excess flood waters inland.

This thesis has built on a tradition of landscape research in Scandinavian Ethnology which started with Åke Campbell (Campbell, 1936) and has been maintained in recent years by the likes of Katarina Saltzman (2021)¹⁴⁶ and Frida Hastrup (2018). This thesis has expanded the scope of this tradition by studying areas (i.e. Kenya) and communities (i.e. pastoralists) it has typically not focused on. Further, by combining ethnological and post-colonial perspectives to frame Baringo as a postcolonial cultural landscape, it has brought new perspectives to the field. As the next section shows, this novel perspective has enabled this thesis to shed new light on traditional ethnological themes such as modernisation and modernity.

Marginal Spaces in an African Modernity

Baringo is now a part – albeit on the peripheries – of Kenya's national economy, which itself is fully integrated into the global economy and has all the trappings of a modern market-based society. Kenya has universal education, a democratically elected constitutional government, multiple market-driven economic sectors (agriculture, tourism, manufacturing, energy) and a growing cosmopolitan middle class. With sophisticated fintech like Mpesa, over 100 universities and more mobile phones than people, science and technology are being fully embraced to support Kenya's economic progress. It is not just the urban centres of Nairobi and Mombasa that are fully integrated into the global modern economy; rural counties like Baringo have also been swept up in the modernisation process – as is

¹⁴⁶ This paper, written with Svensson and Sörlin, explores the concept of trail landscapes in Scandinavia. Saltzman has also researched urban landscapes (Qviström & Saltzman 2006) ecosystem services provided by landscapes (Tengberg et al. 2012) and environmental management of landscapes (Head et al. 2016).

demonstrated by the changes in pastoral modes of production with their conversion of grass and livestock into commodities. As I demonstrated in chapter four, Baringo's journey to modernity started with a process of modernisation initiated over a century ago by the colonial administration. Their efforts to turn rural Kenya into a modern economy by establishing an agricultural industry based on cash crops were pursued as vigorously by subsequent postcolonial governments. Throughout the latter half of the 20th century, this process led to large areas of the communal grasslands being chopped up into small farms, schools pocking the landscape, sophisticated road and electricity infrastructures and market towns like Marigat hosting several banks. In the 21st century, this transition has been accelerated by the proliferation of digital technologies and an attendant digital literacy among the general population. Mobile money transfer technologies like Mpesa, for example, are now a ubiquitous function of daily life, facilitating livestock and seed sales, bank transfers and salary and school fee payments.

Cultural Historian D.P Gaonkar (1999) points out that Western notions of modernisation have tended to assume there is only one version of modernity and one path towards it (namely, the European model of industrialisation with its attendant market-driven economies, separation of state and society, and rule of law). Progress was understood to hinge on a shift from organic to mechanical division of labour as well as from a disparate collection of kin-based communities to nation states administered by centralised governments, and from an irrational belief in the supernatural towards a rational belief in technology and science. In actual fact, suggests Gaonkar, as modernisation has rooted in different landscapes across the planet, it has nurtured different forms of modernity which are unique to their socioeconomic and ecological context. State capitalism in China, American modern liberalism, capitalist theocracy in Saudi Arabia or the potentate state in Africa all share the key features of modernity, but they are all very different types of society. This heterogeneity is no less pertinent across the African continent. The influence of Islam in the Arab states of North Africa has led to economies more similar to the Middle East than the more secular states of Sub-Saharan Africa. Differences even appear across Sub-Saharan Africa. Political ide-

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ologies of African socialism in Tanzania and Ghana lead to villagization and state-controlled companies whereas apartheid capitalism in Southern Africa created a racialised economy.

Previous works in Ethnology have demonstrated how modernity has affected different areas of society in different ways and shown how modernity theory can be applied in a wide range of cases (cf. Ekelund & Jönsson, 2011; Löfgren, 1992; O'Dell, 2001). This thesis adds to this tradition by opening it up to experiences of modernity in Africa and exploring the context-specific historical processes of modernisation in Baringo. It has tapped into a body of postcolonial scholarship which challenges the idea that modernity is a homogenizing monolith that imbues all the world's societies with the same institutions and social conditions. Combining these postcolonial perspectives with an ethnological gaze on lived experiences of modernity has helped elucidate the context-specific nature of modernity in Kenya and intimates there may actually be as many modernities as there are communities.

A key attribute of Western modernity is the separation between different areas of social life, such as the state and the market or public and private life. By drawing on postcolonial theories on modernity, this thesis has highlighted that no such separation has occurred in Kenya, and the social and economic realms are in fact entwined. Political power, legal infrastructures and economic resources have historically been organised through ethnic identity and communitarian values. In Sweden, for example, modernisation led to the state playing the role of social security and welfare provider. Social democracy programmes in the latter half of the 20th century established nationwide institutions to provide free healthcare and education to all, no matter their creed, colour or class. By contrast, in Kenya the construct of the ethnic community has been actively institutionalised to facilitate the provision of services. As was shown in chapter four, the self-help philosophy *Harambee*, which promotes communities to self-develop and limits state involvement, became an essential vehicle for introducing and providing formal education.

Western Marxist critiques of modernity have claimed that the emergence of modern agriculture brings capitalist structures, such as individual land ownership, which corrode social relations absolutely (cf. Lefebvre,

2022 (1954)). This thesis has deployed a Marxist analysis of the historical conditions in Baringo which led to the individualisation of land. However, postcolonial theory reminds us that the social conditions in which modernisation take place in Africa are different to the European context which produced Marxist theory. In particular, a growing body of research highlights the relevance of ethnic identity in modulating processes of modernisation across Africa (cf. Eyoh, 1999; Mamdani, 2018; Masolo, 2010). This thesis adds to this literature by applying a specifically *Africanist* Marxist analysis of the material conditions of land ownership. Inspired by the ideas of Archie and Mafeje and Samir Amin, it has highlighted the significance of social institutions such as gerontocracy and communal land ownership in questions of land. With this lens, it has confirmed that, while capitalist structures have a potent effect in accelerating individualism, community structures are dampening this transition.

A central aspect of modernity that this thesis has shown to manifest in rural areas of Africa is the marginalisation of the people, places and knowledge systems. Previous ethnological research has shown how processes of modernisation have impacted marginalised groups (cf. Daun, 1969; Hansson, 2019b; Ristilammi, 1995). This thesis adds to this body of research by exploring marginal spaces in an African setting and applying an Afrocentric perspective. As we saw in chapter three, Baringo is now a landscape defined by multiple, overlapping crises and violence. The virtually unmanageable disturbances of droughts, floods and violence, as well as the crippling instability of poverty, are defining features of modern pastoralist life. These conditions create of Baringo what I have previously called a postcolonial marginal space, a concept which builds on the ideas of V.Y Mudimbe and Achille Mbembe. It is worth recalling Mudimbe's definition of marginality as that which "designates the intermediate space between the so-called African tradition and the projected modernity of colonialism" (1988, p. 5). The social systems and economies of the past have been eradicated by efforts to bring modernisation and progress. Yet, the extreme poverty, precarity and ecological collapse suggest that the projected modernity has not been achieved and may never be. As we saw in chapter three, pastoralists are stuck navigating this in-between space, incapable of reaping the benefits of either system. For Mudimbe, an in-

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dividual or community's experience of marginality is defined by social and economic events. Given the omniscience of global warming and the rise of climate induced disasters in recent years though, I would suggest that Mudimbe's reflections need to be complimented: marginality is defined by social, economic and *climatic* events.

Furthermore, the omnipresence of overlapping crises suggests that Baringo is not experienced as a singular marginal space but as a multiplicity; a collection of qualitatively distinct marginal spaces which interpenetrate and shape one another. Where Mudimbe sees Africa's history as dialectical (two opposing ideas – 'traditional' African ideas and Western colonial ideas – clashing to inform the present state of marginality), Mbembe understands it as entangled and multiple. The legacy of 'traditional' social hierarchies, post-colonial independence ideologies and contemporary autocracies co-mingle with global financial flows, international legal structures and climate change to create the economic systems and social formations that define postcolonial Baringo. By using perspectives which emphasise the significance of globalisation (i.e. Appadurai's global cultural flows) as well as Mbembe's multiplicity perspective, this thesis demonstrates that the marginal spaces of Baringo are indeed multiple and entangled. For the vast majority, the failed attempts to replace the social and economic systems of the past with a modern system has led not to material wealth, prosperity and a just society, but to insufficient economic opportunities, an absence of a functional justice system and a dearth of appropriate knowledge to deal with present challenges. Applying this multiplicity perspective to Baringo has enabled new understandings on marginality by shedding light on new variations of marginal spaces. The disappearing grasslands and lack of economic opportunities represent economic marginalisation. The conflict zones, which provide fertile ground for violence to spread, represent life on the margins of the justice system. And the corrosion of the gerontocratic system, which was dependent on the knowledge and wisdom of the elders, represents epistemological marginalisation. This thesis has argued that the most pervasive of Baringo's marginal spaces is the economic. Failed modernisation efforts, combined with droughts and flooding, have triggered an irreversible shift away from the subsistence economy of the past without providing the conditions to create a flourish-

ing economy which lives up to the projected vision (both colonial and postcolonial) of modernity.

In summary, by combining ethnological and postcolonial perspectives, this thesis has offered new understandings on modernity. It has shown that Kenyan modernity differs from Western conceptions. Rather than a separation of state, society and market, there is a convergence of public office, ethnic groups, commercial interests and the legal system. Rather than a society of individuals and organisations, there is a confederation of communities defined by ethnic identity and communitarian values. And rather than a smooth trajectory towards economic development for all, there is prosperity for the few and deepening marginalisation for the majority. The entangled sectors of social life, communitarian structures and market forces have become the very essence of Kenyan modernity, converging into a unified motor of history to drive society forward while entrenching inequalities and exacerbating hardship.

Cultural Dimensions of Resilience

To an extent, Baringo has always been a tough place to live. Hardship has remained a constant feature across pre-colonial, colonial and postcolonial eras of its history. In each era it has manifested in different forms, constituted by the social, cultural and ecological features of the day. For example, in colonial times, hardship came in the form – amongst other things – of oppressive rule and forced taxation. In the postcolonial era, it comes from economic instability, the threat of ethnic violence and climate disasters. But tough places breed tough people; the history of Baringo speaks of a people overcoming these hardships to establish and sustain a productive livelihood system. In a word, this is a history of resilience. This thesis has confirmed the findings of previous research that previous generations of Baringo's pastoralists demonstrated resilience not only to establish a subsistence system in harsh terrain but also to adapt and consolidate their economic systems, networks and cultural institutions in the face of a challenging political and economic climate (cf. Anderson & Bollig, 2016). Historically, this resilience has meant the hardships facing Baringo have been somewhat manageable; now modernity and climate change is making

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it even harder to make a living from the same way of life. Rather than nurture their resilience, their environment is corroding their ability to cope by accentuating instabilities, uncertainties and inequalities.

This thesis has demonstrated how pastoralists in Baringo have reorganised their livelihoods in response to the challenges of modern-day life. The communal pastoralism of the past no longer provides the majority of Baringo's inhabitants with an adequate standard of living. So, they are looking for new ways to secure a living. Whilst this partly involves using ever more extreme strategies like violent cattle raiding, it also includes more robust innovations in the mode of production such as the shift to growing grass as a crop. Previous research by Davies and Moore (2016) argues that the resilience demonstrated by Baringo's pastoralists ought to be understood as a form of *cultural* resilience. They understand resilience as a shared set of practices, knowledges, flexibilities, values and strong social institutions which have evolved over generations and between social networks. This thesis confirms this perspective and demonstrates that grass farming is the most recent iteration of pastoralism and shares many of the resilience features that were present in previous versions. It has shown that while the cultural resilience of Baringo's pastoralists is undeniably under threat in the current climate, traces of it live on: the practices may be different, but the guiding philosophy of adaptation is the same. Rather than giving in to the pressures of modern life, a number of trail-blazing pastoralists can be seen diversifying livelihood practices and reorganising their cultural institutions and economic systems to suit their ever-changing reality.

With a cultural resilience lens, this thesis has highlighted that new pastoral livelihood practices emerge through balancing tradition and innovation in order to flexibly adapt to a continuously changing environment. Rather than implement wholesale change, pastoralists have tweaked and adjusted their mode of production in order to make more cash out of it and cover the increasing costs of living. With an ethnological gaze which addresses continuity and change, this thesis has elucidated how community structures have adapted to accommodate this new economic system. To do so it has drawn parallels to cultural institutions from previous versions of pastoralism and shown how they have adapted. Using the concept of clan lines, for example, it has shown that land tenure has become indi-

vidualised but is still governed by community membership. With land becoming individually owned, access to land has shifted from a birth right of every clan member to a patrilineal inherited right and yet people can only inherit land within the parameters of their traditional communal lands. Likewise, using the concept of gerontocratic governance, it has shown how the council of elders have changed roles yet continue to govern social life. Their primary role previously included the negotiation of land between communities, but they are now increasingly being called upon to negotiate land disputes between neighbours. This thesis has also shown that the core pastoral knowledge system has changed by balancing traditional knowledge systems with formal modern education. By applying Tim Ingold's (2000) concept of sentient ecology, this thesis has shown that, like with previous generations of pastoralists, an acute understanding of the environment is learnt by working and living in the landscape. Yet it has shown that this knowledge is primarily obtained through modern institutions. Essential skills required to manage in the modern agricultural economy, such as budgeting, marketing and biochemistry, are learnt at school or through formal agricultural training institutions. Knowledge about the environment is picked up on-the-job through socially embedded learning and from organisations like RAE.

By applying the concept of technologies of life to grass farming, this thesis has further highlighted that, like their forefathers, grass farmers display a capacity to consolidate and thrive through hardships by leaning on innovative practices, the application of knowledge and use of social networks. It has shown that reliance on social networks, acute knowledge of the landscape and socially embedded learning are all features of a cultural resilience which enables pastoralists to continue to mitigate risk in times of hardship. By linking these skills, knowledge and innovations to a logic of resource management for the sake of survival, this thesis has shown that the same flexibility and reliance on social institutions underpin the shift towards grass farming. However, by framing them as situated and practical, I have also been able to shed light on how they manifest differently. In the past, flexibility in movement enabled herders to weather the dry seasons by moving around in search of pasture. Today, flexibility in their innovative practices enables grass farmers to navigate the erratic nature of droughts and

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floods and helps them cope with increasing living costs by maximising the income possibilities of a single grass farm. Collectivist approaches to land management once ensured everybody within the clan and community had equal, if limited, access to resources. Today, the collectivist philosophy of relying on social networks manifests as spreading the wealth among neighbours and hiring women. In the past, reading the landscape carefully enabled herders to adapt by destocking to get through a drought. Today, the same skill is being used to maximise grass crop revenue.

For Davies & Moore, cultural resilience is situated in the practices and social networks that guide pastoral livelihoods. However, this thesis suggests that resilience also lies, in-part, in the mind. By drawing on African philosophies of the mind, this thesis has framed cultural resilience as a *disposition* towards adaptability, flexibility and continual change. Rather than *exclusively* an emergent property of the social context, resilience is an attribute that the people themselves demonstrate; a mindset which is inclined to keep going in the face of adversity. For Philosopher Kwasi Wiredu (1995), the mind is a capacity to respond to stimuli that we encounter from the world. The mind (as a part of the person) is socially and environmentally constituted, meaning we form ideas and concepts through our interactions with the world around us. The mind is shaped equally by the sociocultural traditions we inherit and the landscape in which we live. By extension, our *mindset* - the way we are disposed to interact with the world around us - is also socially and environmentally constituted. This understanding of mind as both a structural and individual question is similar to ethnological perspectives which emphasise that dispositions are not static, deterministic attributes but tendencies to act in a certain way that are acquired through socialisation and influenced by the structures of one's context (cf. Borda & Lundin, 1986).¹⁴⁷ As this thesis has shown, pastoralists learn the knowledge, practices, norms and values that make them adept at responding to challenges by growing up in a pastoral culture; their dispositions are connected to their community's

¹⁴⁷ It may be important to note that Borda & Lundin don't use Wiredu's conception of mind. Rather, they draw of Bourdieu's theory of practice which also emphasises that dispositions are acquired through socialisation.

economic and ethnic history, wisdom and forms of knowledge that have helped them remain resilient in the past.

The findings from this thesis suggest that cultural resilience ought to be understood as both an emergent property of the cultural context *and* a mindset. This perspective joins a growing body of practice-based theories of resilience (cf. Buthelezi, 2017; Nyamwanza et al., 2023; Uekusa & Matthewman, 2022).¹⁴⁸ On the one hand, resilient dispositions are context dependent. The extent to which farmers can rely on their ability to cope in the face of adversity is determined by social experience and access to resources. Too much hardship from extreme climatic variability, economic pressures or exposure to brutal violence and resilience gets corroded. But with enough financial stability, strong social institutions and an adequately stable environment, resilience is able to thrive. On the other hand, resilient dispositions are personal attributes. Agropastoralists who have prospered in their attempts to make a living by growing grass, despite all the challenges they're up against, have done so, in part, because they are disposed to adapt to ongoing challenges and to look for solutions (be they technological or social).

Further, findings from this thesis affirm that mindset and cultural context are mutually constitutive. Like Davies & Moore, it stresses that personal attributes which promote resilience “are not fixed but operate through continuities of practice” (2016, p. 68). The tendency to adapt in the face of challenges and find flexible solutions emerges from the very acts of adapting and problem solving. The more time and effort you put into adapting, the better you get at it and the more it becomes ingrained in your way of being. They are also passed down between generations. In this light, the practices of successful grass farmers can be understood as driven by a mindset which has been inherited from their forefathers and cultivated through a life of having to adapt themselves.

This resilient disposition is, arguably, best represented by the entrepreneurial spirit of female grass farmers. A growing number of grass farmers are women, despite legal limitations on their ability to own land (Meyer-

¹⁴⁸ Uekusa and Matthewman for example, propose that “resilience could be understood as human nature, yet it is contextual, resource-dependent and unpredictable” (2022, p. 9).

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hoff et al., 2020). As this thesis has shown, they borrow land from their husbands or family members to plant grass. In doing so, they technically become land managers rather than land-owning farmers, but the resources (grass seeds, hay and livestock) and any eventual income belong to them. These female entrepreneurs show a remarkable ability to navigate discriminatory barriers presented by both customary and formal land laws and also cope with the patriarchal structures of modern-day society. Cultural expectations towards men having financial control over a household's finances present women with barriers to their economic freedom. Yet, more women are securing their own income through managing farms or employment and, by extension, securing more financial freedom, independent of men. Further, as the thesis has demonstrated, because women tend to be responsible for domestic costs, having their own income also increases the likelihood of essential costs such as food and school fees being covered. While women are still undeniably disadvantaged, the female entrepreneurs populating this thesis demonstrate resilience by skilfully and flexibly navigating the legal, economic and cultural barriers to their economic and social development. It's important to note, though, that while female grass farmers have played a central role in this research, the thesis has not analysed their livelihood practices and challenges through a gender perspective. Given the importance of women in the emerging grass economy, more research is needed into the cultural, economic and legal dynamics shaping their livelihood opportunities.

In summary, in the rapidly growing field of resilience research, this thesis has highlighted the importance of cultural resilience. Using an ethnological perspective on the everyday experiences of hardship, it has shed light on the specific tools, knowledge and skills that contribute to cultural resilience and how these have evolved with the changing cultural context. In borrowing ideas from African philosophy, it has also shown resilience ought to be understood partly as a disposition which is shaped by continually changing cultural processes. By linking resilience practices to the emergence of modern forms of pastoralism, this thesis also joins a growing body of research into the effects of modernisation on people living in vulnerable situations. Ethnology has a strong tradition of exploring vulnerability and how processes of modernity exacerbate hardship (cf. Als-

mark, 1979; Eleonorasdotter, 2021; Hansson, 2019b; Hellmark Lindgren, 2006). This thesis has illuminated, however, that hardship is experienced as a double-sided coin; it creates both vulnerability *and* resilience. Despite ethnological perspectives emphasising the agency of marginalised groups, the discipline has been slow to explore cultural practices through an explicit use of the term resilience and related concepts such as cultural resilience and technologies of life. In applying ethnological perspectives on this overlooked topic, this thesis brings new understandings to what it means to live through hardship and helps to broaden the scope of the ethnological subject matter.

Ethnography and Development Studies

This thesis builds on the tradition of field working Ethnologists; a tradition which Lars Kaijser tells us has evolved in response to the growing importance of globalisation. “In recent years, global relations and the mobility of people, goods, and ideas have gained prominence in discussions about fieldwork” (Kaijser, 2011, p. 40).¹⁴⁹ If, as he tells us, ethnological fieldwork is about exploring the processes that shape people’s realities, it’s no surprise Ethnologists have started to study disciplines interested in global processes. This thesis demonstrates that this grounded approach is compatible to research in Development Studies. As climate change, marginalisation and economic inequalities embed deeper into the structures of rural societies, further research will be needed to understand the emergent challenges and people’s responses. Ethnological research is well-suited to keep up with the changes, in part because of its ability to offer perspectives from within the world’s most marginalised spaces. Continuing research in the world’s marginal spaces will not only help to keep Ethnology relevant to future concerns in this increasingly globalised world; it will also help to keep the experiences of the most marginalised at the centre of Development studies agendas.

¹⁴⁹ Translated from the original Swedish: ”I senare års diskussioner om fältarbete har globala relationer och rörlighet vad gäller såväl människor som varor och idéer haft en framträdande plats.”

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The ethnographic approach used in this thesis has implications for how development knowledge is produced in and about marginalised spaces. It belongs to a broader field of studies which Arturo Escobar calls “ethnographies of the circulation of discourses and practices of modernity and development” (2011, pp. 222-223). These studies provide inspiration for alternative pathways to development which come from real world examples happening in concrete local settings. They offer a start point for “interrogating current practices in terms of their potential role in articulating alternatives” (Escobar, 2011, p. 223) which can be used to inform global development paradigms as well as specific policies at the local level. They shed light on how global policy ideas translate in local contexts through the location-specific interplay of social, economic and ecological processes.

This thesis has explored the role of collaborative approaches in ethnographic research. Inspired by decolonial motivations, this collaborative ethnography hoped to open up the research process to include the participation of local actors. Collaborating with RAE provided access to their long-term research on the changing social and ecological conditions in Baringo. It also gave the research a vantage point on development processes from below. This positionality was further made possible by the use of modern technologies throughout the research process. Joseph and Osman’s digital literacy enabled them to conduct video-based interviews. Cloud technology enabled us to share footage almost instantaneously. Voice over IP technology allowed us to hold analysis workshops and supervision meetings via WhatsApp calls. The everydayness of these technologies made it possible to bridge the gap between Sweden and Baringo when Covid-19 restrictions made it impossible for me to physically be there. Moreover, making Joseph and Osman co-researchers enabled their ideas, perspectives and interests to steer the research direction. This hyper-local knowledge system has helped to root this thesis in the landscape of Baringo. It provides a blueprint for future development research by showing how collaboration with grassroots partners, aided by modern technologies, can lead to more inclusive knowledge production. That said, it’s important to note that decolonising research methods through collaboration can only take us so far. What defines decolonialism is its redistributive work: to be truly decolonial, academic research needs to lead to the repatriation of indige-

nous land and/or the empowerment of marginalised groups by, for instance, furthering their inclusion in the political structures of their country (or the Development organisations) which govern their lives. Without this important step, decolonial methods risk becoming little more than symbolic gestures; they stay confined to the research project and do little to challenge repressive structures in the lives of those under investigation.

Working with grassroots organisations has provided this research project access to long-term research, local networks and expertise, all of which have made a more inclusive research process possible. This research project alone may not be able to claim to dismantle the structures that uphold inequitable power structures in the Development Industry. But it can offer future researchers inspiration for alternative ways of accessing knowledge in and about marginal spaces.

Lessons for the Development Industry

The Development Industry has a historical relationship with Baringo stretching back at least 50 years. As a testbed of Development, the region has seen countless projects which have tried to improve livelihoods. Contemporary initiatives are driven by ideals of sustainable development and aim to provide the conditions required to foster economic growth, promote human wellbeing and protect the environment. Resilience thinking stands at the core of this current paradigm. With climate change and poverty making life in marginalised regions like Baringo all the more challenging, it is imperative to find ways to strengthen the livelihood resilience of the most at-risk. But the failed projects littering the landscape of Baringo suggest the Development Industry doesn't have the best track record of building resilience. How might the industry move from a legacy of failed projects to a future of supporting resilient forms of pastoralism?

As an issue of common concern, the promotion of sustainable development is primarily a question of governance. This thesis has shown that the Development Industry has historically been governed through a top-down model. Global discourses regarding pastoralism have had significantly more influence over development initiatives than ideas emanating from recipient communities. Despite efforts in recent years to establish more

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inclusive approaches, this model still appears to reign. Participatory approaches, for example, promised to open up decision-making to marginalised voices and give subjects of development the agency and power to control their own development. Yet, this thesis has shown that the idea of participation has been co-opted by a number of influential international NGOs and funding bodies to retain power over decision-making processes. Using the concept of toolification, it has shown that participation has been converted into a mechanism which denies subjects of development the opportunity to define the conditions of their own progress. The lessons from this thesis suggest that future governance models would benefit from a shift towards more place-based, flexible and collaborative approaches which engage with the target development space (in this case, Baringo) at the landscape level.

The challenges facing Baringo are unique to this landscape. Drought, flooding, poverty, invasive, species and ethnic violence occur in many places. But their particular manifestation and the specific way in which they shape livelihood opportunities are unique because they are borne out of a specific entanglement of social, political and ecological processes. Likewise, the opportunities to strengthen resilience are determined by the context-specific entanglement of social institutions, cultural knowledge and modes of production which are unique to Baringo. Grass farming, for example, is a resilient and viable livelihood option in Baringo because of a specific set of historical circumstances which includes the accelerated rate of land demarcation, the presence of local organisations providing a market for seeds and government investment in the Marigat livestock auction. Elsewhere, the challenges and opportunities are different. Even in the neighbouring pastoralist regions of Samburu or Turkana, land has not been demarcated into smaller plots to the same extent, meaning the social institutions of communal land tenure are perhaps stronger, but individualised grass crop production is not yet a viable livelihood solution.

However, to focus on the context-specific nature of a region is not to ignore the commonalities across similar landscapes. Pastoral communities tend to share similar social and economic structures which have evolved to support animal husbandry in equally harsh terrains without overexploiting the resources. What's more, most pastoral communities, especially

those in the same parts of the world, have followed similar historical trajectories. Notably, almost all pastoralist societies share a history of marginalisation through the 20th century, with their economic systems deemed unsuitable to modernisation as well as environmental challenges exacerbated by global warming. And with international financial systems moving vast sums of money around the world's financial centres, the vast majority never reaches these places on the margins of the global economy, making them hubs of multi-generational poverty and precarity.

At a landscape level, sustainable development can be thought of as a process of change in the region which encourages equitable economic growth among its inhabitants, promotes peace and tackles climate change. Given that every landscape is an amalgamation of ever-changing, context-specific processes and features, no path towards sustainability looks the same. As economic circumstances evolve and the landscape changes, the pathways towards development change with it. For example, Baringo used to include well-managed communal grasslands so opportunities for strengthening resilience lay in buttressing the communal land management system, perhaps by finding ways to make it more profitable or tolerant to prolonged droughts. Now, with the plethora of individually owned grass farms, resilience-building initiatives ought to connect to making individual farms more profitable and drought tolerant.

Because of the global nature of the cultural flows, thinking through landscapes means identifying the ideas, technologies and money that make up a landscape, following these flows back to their sources and working together with these actors and institutions to see to it that their input helps to improve the overall material conditions of the landscape. A landscape cannot be conceived of as sustainable until the global and national processes contributing to poverty, inequity and ecological degradation are held in check. This implies global emissions at controllable levels, fair and transparent global financial systems and inclusive national policies.

Whether they choose it or not, marginalised communities like Baringo's pastoralists are part of the global economy, sitting on its edges and forced to scrape out a living from its scraps. The global economy's dominant capitalist paradigm encourages an aggressive winner-takes-all approach to the allocation of the world's resources. It is reliant upon a global infrastruc-

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ture which directs wealth towards an increasingly wealthy minority. This only works to entrench inequalities and further marginalise the world's most vulnerable communities. To bring marginalised communities away from the margins, sustainable landscape development must help to reign in this free-wheeling growth and foster gradual, holistic and considered change. A sustainable future for the planet necessitates that all landscapes, not just those peopled by the wealthiest, have systems and structures that foster growth and wellbeing such as: economic infrastructures to allow equal opportunities to trade and ease of access to markets for even the hardest to reach; affordable healthcare systems and educational provision relevant to the cultural context; ecosystems with flourishing biodiversity; and a functioning justice system.

The landscape perspective calls for a shift towards more localised approaches to Development. Sustainable development requires guiding the money, people, knowledge and technology that flows into, out of and within the landscape (i.e. the developmentscape) in the right direction. This calls for policies designed to guide these various flows to buttress the economic, social and ecological systems which have the best potential to promote sustainable livelihood opportunities. This necessarily involves more context-specific, flexible and collaborative approaches to Development which continually adjust with the ever-changing local circumstances, yet without neglecting the influence of global processes of change.

Lessons from this thesis suggest that the best opportunities for localising development come from buttressing the systems and structures that people are already using to improve their livelihoods. With regards to resilience-building, localising development calls for a shift away from a focus on the resilience of ecosystems and economies as separate entities to a focus on *cultural* resilience building. Thinking through cultural resilience starts from the premise that pastoralists have the disposition as well as the ecological, economic and social systems required to build resilient livelihoods. Efforts to improve livelihoods must necessarily engage all of these components as an interwoven collective. The work of development organisations is to help strengthen their cultural resilience by supporting the social institutions and infrastructures upon which pastoralist resilience currently relies. As the goalposts of sustainable development are constantly shifting, local-

ised approaches require mechanisms to read and respond to changes. As the primary mechanisms for development, local institutions need to be flexible enough to respond to the changing landscape and build versatility into their service provision. Their role in strengthening livelihood resilience, for instance, would require them to provide different services, depending on the state of the existing infrastructures and the needs of the community. Sometimes, they may need to facilitate the construction of infrastructure. Other times may call for banking, training or marketing services.

Localising governance means moving power and influence away from the global actors and funders and giving more control to local institutions. It means being guided not by global development agendas but by the inherently flexible, place-based strategies of long-term organisations like RAE who are willing to adapt to the changing context and work with the people to enhance their development opportunities. Given the global nature of the developmentscape, this task calls for coordinated governance between government and the Development Industry at the regional, national and global levels. Long-standing grassroots organisations ought to be seen as the brains of the International Development Industry, providing the knowledge and insights provided to inform strategies. However, they are still dependent on the financial backing of international donors who have a history of redacting funding on a whim. As such, regional government bodies who are less dependent on external funding ought to be seen as the beating heart of the development, with long-standing grassroots organisations filling in the gaps that existing institutions and government services don't provide. To fulfil this role, they require more resources and greater control over the development agendas in their areas.

For multilateral donor organisations, localising funding means a move away from short-term, project-based funding agreements with local institutions and a commitment to long-term funding. Such commitments could be reinforced by government regulations which require that foreign development capital come with long-term investment windows. To ensure flexibility and responsiveness to the changing landscape, financing requires mechanisms for continual monitoring and evaluation of the relevance of development projects and periodic reassessment of agendas. It also requires mechanisms for connecting donors to the lived experiences of recipient

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communities and encouraging them to come down to the ground more often. If collaboration between donors, local institutions and recipient communities happens primarily on the ground, it will make donors more acutely aware of and sensitive to the challenges and opportunities which are most pressing. It is imperative that expert local voices with an acute understanding of the context stand at the heart of these processes.

In 2015, major players in the Development Industry such as FAO, World Bank and UNDP signed up to the 2030 Agenda and agreed to use the SDGs to govern their actions until the year 2030. Inclusion has been a central pillar of this model, with governments and organisations promising to help eradicate poverty, reduce inequalities and build societies which leave no-one behind. In this period, significant progress has been made towards achieving the global goals. But, as a global community, we are far off creating the sustainable, inclusive future we hoped for and there is still much work to be done. As the agenda comes into its final years, preparations are underway to conceive of the next paradigm through which to build a more sustainable future. The timing provides an opportune moment to reflect on alternative models of governance. This thesis has demonstrated the importance of placing marginalised communities and places at the heart of sustainable development governance. Moving towards a model that is place-based, collaborative and inherently flexible has the potential to produce transformative and inclusive agendas across the planet which, if nurtured properly, may well blossom into genuinely sustainable development of local landscapes.

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Interviewee	Date	Interviewer ¹⁵⁰
Alice	09.12.2022	Osman
Chela	08.12.2021	Joseph
Chelangat	13.12.2022	Joseph, Billy
Chemjor	08.12.2021	Joseph
David	08.12.2022	Osman, Billy
Delphine	10.12.2021	Billy
Elizabeth	Ongoing	Billy
Francisw	13.12.2022	Joseph, Billy
George	13.12.2022	Joseph, Billy
Kibet	09.12.2022	Joseph, Billy
Matthew	08.12.2021 01.12.2021	Osman, Billy Osman
Murray	10.12.2021 10.12.2022	Billy Billy
Brian	08.12.2021	Osman
Paul	09.12.2022	Joseph, Billy
Sandra	08.12.2021	Osman
Simon	07.12.2021	Osman
William	08.12.2022	Osman

Table 3. Interview correspondences.

¹⁵⁰ Where more than one name is present, the first name denotes the lead interviewer.

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Droughts, Floods, Violence and Poverty. The drylands of Northern Kenya are not an easy place to live. Up here, pastoralism has been the dominant way of life for centuries. But over the past half a century, the grass has all but run out, the ecosystem has fallen apart, and extreme poverty is the norm. And yet, some people have found a new way to get by. A growing number of people are switching from traditional forms of pastoralism to intensively plant grass on private farms. By feeding fodder to their livestock and harvesting the seeds, they are thriving in the face of crippling financial pressures and an increasingly erratic climate. At the same time, millions of dollars of aid money have been poured into the region via projects to improve livelihoods and rehabilitate the environment. Very few have succeeded. Only a handful of locally run projects have managed to make an impact by helping grass farmers build resilient, environmentally friendly livelihoods.

This thesis tells the story of pastoralism and Development in Baringo, Northern Kenya. It explores the social, political and ecological processes which have marginalised the economy and investigates how pastoralists are adapting their way of life through grass farming. It also critically examines the International Development Industry's attempts to bring sustainable development to the region, asking how and why so many have failed. By contrasting these failed attempts with more successful local initiatives, it hopes to trigger a discussion about how we might move towards more localised, collaborative approaches to Development in the world's most marginalised landscapes.