

# The dominant occupation of the pastoralism sociology essay



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Pastoralism is the dominant occupation in the Horn of Africa simply because the arid environment, with its scattered, inconsistent and often short and intense rainfall (when it occurs) permits no other consistent food harvest (Herr, 1992). The pastoralists largely obtain their food from their herds of cattle, sheep, goats and in the drier regions, camels. Some of these people cultivate agricultural crops where they can, most do not.

Pastoralist societies in Kenya are in transition. This reality is confirmed by studies on the pastoralist communities particularly on the Maasai, Boran, and Rendille of Kenya (Evangelou, 1984; Fratkin, 2001). The same can be said of the Gabra, the Ariaal, the Sakuye, the Samburu, and the Turkana (Oba, 2001). The transition is due to population growth, loss of herding lands to farmers, ranchers, game parks, urban growth, increased commoditization of the livestock economy, out-migration by poor pastoralists, and dislocations brought about by drought, famine, and ethnic conflicts coupled with privatization and individuation of formerly communally held resources.

The region of Northern Kenya (with an area of 250, 000 km.) is arid and semi-arid. Rainfall is highly variable from year to year and drought is recurrent. Pastoralism is the dominant economic activity, given that agricultural potential is low. Farming is only possible in the few localities with high and medium agricultural potentials. Economic survival of the peoples of the region depends on management of many species of livestock: camels, cattle, donkeys, sheep and goats. Drought, disease and a certain measure of insecurity are all realities. Northern Kenya also borders highly unstable states, including Somalia, Sudan, Ethiopia and Uganda, and the borders with these countries are porous, if they can be said to exist at all. The regional

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dimensions of conflict, and in particular the ease in which groups and arms cross borders has increased the incidences and severity of conflict in the region and led to a commercialization of cattle raiding and cattle rustling. The foregoing points to a near collapse of the traditional pastoral economy and fabrics of the social security systems thereby pointing to an uncertain future (Sobania, 1979; Kassam & Bashuna, 2004). Life in these environments is uncertain, dangerous and tenuous forcing many young people to migrate to urban areas in search of alternative livelihoods.

Given the harsh natural environment, pressure on natural resources, decline or collapse of , loss of livestock, lack of capital, and limited survival alternatives, encamped youths are for the most part destitute. Dislocated youths living in urban areas have to contend with rent, electricity, water and other bills, as well as buying food. This can be particularly challenging for those without a steady source of income. Many engage in petty trade, buying and selling vegetables, second-hand clothes and shoes (mitumba), food items, fuel (paraffin, charcoal, firewood), while others participate in itinerant hawking, boda boda (bicycle ' taxis'), brick making, brick laying and selling water. A few work in factories, others have started small businesses such as brewing illicit liquors and tailoring. Some youths have been reduced to begging or crime in order to survive for lack of valid skills in the salaried sector. They find themselves isolated from family and friends in an environment characterized by inadequate amenities (Livingstone, 1986; Cernea, 1990; Bovin et al., 1990).

Pastoralist youths have suffered serious reverses in economic and social wellbeing such that they are unable to live up to established norms of <https://assignbuster.com/the-dominant-occupation-of-the-pastoralism-sociology-essay/>

supporting their households. This is because dislocation can devalue their shared survival skills whereby vital social networks and life support mechanisms for families are weakened or dismantled. Authority systems are debilitated or collapse (World Bank 1994, Cernea 1993b; 1994a). The proposed study will explore the causes and social consequences of the erosion of the pastoralist livelihood systems as exemplified in urban migration, urban crime, joblessness, substance abuse and other evidence of social and psychological anomie among youths with reference to Wajir District.

## **1. 2 Statement of the Problem**

In Wajir District it is estimated that 80% or more of the population depends on pastoralism. The district is predominantly arid and semi-arid, has a history of conflict and internal displacement. These are harsh realities that are made worse by marginalization by the government largely due to the district's perceived lack of economic potential as well as a deficient understanding on how to support and promote nomadic pastoralism as a viable and sustainable livelihood. The district is further characterized by chronic drought (RoP, 1965; RoP, 2005). The cumulative result is the breakdown of social support systems rendering the provision of positive opportunities for asset accumulation impossible (Amuyunzu-Nyamongo & Ezeh 2005, Rakodi 2002). These realities have made social dislocation and or urban migration attractive alternatives (Ellis, 2000; Fratkin, 2001). Youthful individuals who experience social dislocation are at risk of social impoverishment. They are exposed to social problems of urban life such as joblessness, urban crime, drug and alcohol addiction. Their experiences may also increase their

dissatisfaction with existing orders leading to an upsurge in crime and violence, accompanied by other symptoms of social and psychological distress (World Bank 1994, Cernea 1993b; 1994a; Oba, 2001). This study seeks to probe the experiences of social dislocation in Kenya with reference to youths from pastoralist communities in Wajir District.

### **1. 3 Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study is to probe the experiences of social dislocation in Kenya with reference to youths from pastoralist communities in Wajir District.

### **1. 4 Study Objectives**

This study will be guided by the following objectives:

To provide an overview of the present challenges facing pastoralists in Wajir District

To provide the patterns of displacement among youthful pastoralists in Wajir District

To examine the difficulties of adjustment socially dislocated youths face in Wajir District

To determine remedies to the problem of social dislocation among youths in Wajir District

### **1. 5 Research Questions**

This study will be guided by the following research questions:

What are the present challenges facing pastoralists in Wajir District?

What are the patterns of displacement in Wajir District?

What adjustment difficulties do socially dislocated youths face in Wajir District?

What are the remedies to the problem of social dislocation among youths in Wajir District?

## **1. 6 Research Assumptions**

The study will be guided by the following assumptions:-

All the respondents will give reliable information without fear or favor.

That major towns in Wajir District have socially dislocated pastoralists youths.

That the findings of this study will assist policymakers and stakeholders to address the pastoralist crisis.

## **1. 7 Justification for the Study**

This study is significant because of the following reasons:

There is limited literature (Ellis, 2000; Fratkin, 2001) on the demasculation and decline in the social capital of the pastoralist economy in Wajir District.

This study, therefore, by documenting this aspect, could immensely

contribute to knowledge and literature on the experiences of social

dislocation and how it impacts on youths from pastoralist communities in

Wajir District.

The findings of this study could be relevant to policy-makers and other stakeholders such as NGOs and CBOs in formulating viable policies and intervention programmes to remedy the problem of social dislocation among youths in Wajir District.

The local community will hopefully benefit when the problem of social dislocation among youths in Wajir District is addressed.

## **1. 8 Scope and Limitation of the Study**

These are the boundaries to any study (Mugenda and Mugenda, 1999). This study will be carried out in Wajir East District in NEP Kenya. This study was prompted by the fact that the issue of social dislocation is a major challenge in Wajir District. The research will not cover broad issues outside the issue of social dislocation in Wajir District.

The study will limit itself to Wajir District. For more conclusive results, all geographical locations inhabited by pastoralist communities would have been studied. However, this is not possible due to financial and other logistical constraints such as time and duration of the study. Other limitations in this study include the tough terrain, poor transport infrastructure and general insecurity making it difficult to traverse the district during data collection. The researcher will make special travel arrangements to overcome these challenges.

## **1. 9 Theoretical Framework**

This study will be guided by the theories of social geometry and social capital.

The theory of social geometry links socially-constructed places, socially-constructed time, and socially-constructed personages in order to grasp routine and ritual activities (Fabian, 1992). The social geometry of a people consists of infinite intersections of socially-constructed spaces, socially-constructed times, and socially-constructed personages. And, for many cultures, the geometry also defines “ who are we?” Research on environmental memories has discovered the near universality of fondly remembered childhood places, representing the intersection of culturally constructed time and place (Altman et al. 1994; Marcus, 1994; Chawla, 1994). Mitigating social dislocation begins by reconstructing the social geometry (spatial and temporal dislocation) of the displaced. This is because attachment to space and time can be a powerful binding force for displaced social groups.

Moser (1996) is renowned for making significant contributions to the social capital theory. He argued that communities' ability to cope depends not only on their material well-being, but also on their social capital – the trust, networks, and reciprocal arrangements that link people with their communities. Rural and urban migration often follow long established patterns drawing on networks of information and contacts established by earlier waves of migration. Up to a point, such social capital may be strengthened by economic crisis, but beyond that threshold, networks become overwhelmed and social systems break down with disastrous consequences (Cousins, 1993; Amuyunzu-Nyamongo & Ezeh 2005, Rakodi 2002).



Studies (Moser and McIlaine 2005; Buvinic et al., 1999) were undertaken on the experiences of migrants in urban environments especially with reference to Latin America. These studies established that social dislocation is accompanied by an upsurge in crime and violence, accompanied by other symptoms of social and psychological distress. These study's findings indicate that social dislocation that manifest through the apparent breakdown of collective responses to livelihood erosion is both the result of a decline in the social capital of many pastoralist communities, and a causal factor in accelerating that breakdown by reinforcing social differentiation and decreasing levels of trust between individuals. Traditional, or informal institutions can often no longer maintain order, and neither do the formal institutions of the state command any confidence.

Social dislocation weakens and helps dismantle vital social networks and life support mechanisms for families and communities. Authority systems are questioned or simply collapse in the face of the arising new challenges thereby groups lose their capacity to self-manage and the society suffers a demonstrable reduction in its capacity to cope with uncertainty (World Bank 1994, Cernea 1993b; 1994a). This coupled with the high rate of migration into urban centers and the speed of economic change (not necessarily growth) complicates pastoralists adjustment.

## **1. 10 Definition of Significant Terms**

District – a geographical area defined with a gazetted political boundary and comprises of a number of divisions, locations and sub-locations.

Stakeholders – people/ institutions that are directly interested in the functioning of a school.

Social Dislocation – The emotional, psychological or physical experience by persons who were forced to separate themselves from the circle of people, places and activities on which they had depended (for their livelihoods).

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **2. 1 Introduction**

This chapter review related literature under the following subheadings namely social dislocation, challenges facing pastoralist communities, difficulties of adjustment for socially dislocated pastoralists, remedies to the problem of social dislocation and gaps identified.

#### **2. 2 Social Dislocation**

According to Sutro, Levingston and Downing (1988) people experience social dislocation when they are emotionally, psychologically or physically forced to separate themselves from the circle of people, places and activities on which they had depended (for their livelihoods). The debate on social dislocation revolves around the relationship between human activity and climate. The human-made dimensions of the pastoral plight are attributable to overstocking and other exogenous factors such as population growth, immigration, conflict and government policies. Climate related explanations revolve around drought, famine, decreased rainfall, floods, among others.

Sobania (1979) observes that each year drought results in dislocation of the poor, despite massive hand-outs of famine relief by governments and donors. For him, drought survival involves survival of the fabrics of the social security systems that must depend on survival of livestock, marketing of the produce and sharing the resources.

World Bank (1994) observes that each year, about 10 million people become involuntarily displaced and risk social impoverishment. Causes of social dislocation among pastoralists include limited access to water and pasture resources, loss of traditional grazing land, cattle raiding, lack of alternative sources of livelihood from pastoralism.

Fratkin (2001) observes that dislocations among pastoralist societies in Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda are brought about by drought, famine, and civil war. These problems are intensified by the current trend of government policies that encourage privatization and individuation of formerly communally held resources (Lane, 1989; 1996).

Getachew (1995) and Fratkin (2001) attribute the prevalence of social dislocation among pastoral communities to the deteriorating conditions of food security and the breakdown of the traditional pastoral economy. They further note that worsening conditions of food security are occurring as interventions by states and international NGOs are decreasing. Several reasons exist for this state of affairs. First, development took no notice of the indigenous coping strategies of the pastoralists, their goals and aspirations (Grandin and Lembuya 1987, Hogg 1990). Second, because coherent government policies on drought are lacking, failure to reduce drought losses

is frustrating the development efforts. Third, programs designed to help the pastoralists do not integrate their coping strategies into drought management plans (Huss-Ashmore and Katz 1989).

Bonfiglioli (1992) identifies six factors that to him are responsible for social dislocation among pastoralist communities. First, is the issue of climate and ecology – the lack of rainfall tends to set the array of vegetation over time, directly affecting livestock populations and pastoralists. Change in this parameter has worked to push pastoralists of the Sahel south. Second, demographic growth – this factor contributes principally to the push of pastoralists into nomadism. Third, the agricultural impasse – an increased demand for agricultural products has led to less fallowing and the opening up of more lands for agriculture at the expense of pasture land. These practices have led to disruptions in local level farmer-herder interchange. At another level, mega-project agricultural development has expropriated large areas of former grazing land. Fourth, government development policies – this factor is one of central control serving state interests rather than local interests. Additionally, mismanagement, faulty policies and international trade has worked to impoverish pastoralists. Fifth, incorporation into the market economy – essentially, this has been a double movement of increasing dependency and marginalization because of national production/exchange structures and the resulting loss of control by pastoralists over the terms of trade. Finally, insecurity, wars, and conflicts – the interplay of political conflict, ecological stress and resulting food insecurity is present throughout the drylands. Pastoralists have borne the brunt of this crisis both as soldier and victim.

Bovin and Manger (1990) noted that the political and economic dimensions of social dislocation include state policies that are seen to favor agriculture and settlement at the expense of pastoralism.

## **2.3 Challenges Facing Pastoralists Communities**

The Sessional Paper No 10 of 1965 on African Socialism and its Application to Planning in Kenya presented the framework for development and equity in Kenya but also presented great dilemma when it noted public investment would go to areas of highest potential returns and people most responsive to change. This approach was to favour the former White Highlands while perpetuating the marginalization of areas like North Eastern Province and the malaria and tsetse fly infested western lowlands (RoK, 1965).

Little (1997) and Hogg (1988) documented a series of crises that led to losses and impoverishment among the Ilchamus pastoralists of Kenya. The Ilchamus crisis was attributed to loss of pasture to European settlers, market quarantines, farmer encroachment, use of communal grazing by absentee owner and the expansion of cultivation by herders. This reality could equally serve to describe the situation among pastoralists elsewhere in Kenya

Sperling and Galaty (1994) attributed the crisis among the Samburu and Maasai pastoralists in Kenya to the gradual truncation of pastoral relations and narrowing of their access to resources, in land use, labor and livestock networks. Such circumscription undermines the strength of a more collective specialized pastoralism – e. g. access to a range of pasture and an extensive shared labor pool – to the benefit of a privileged minority.

Fratkin (2001) used examples of the Maasai, Boran, and Rendille of Kenya to demonstrate that East African pastoralists are increasingly witnessing social and economic stratification, urban migration, and diminished nutrition for women and children as a result of increased economic diversification including agro-pastoralism, wage labor, and increased market integration.

Oba (2001) observes that pastoralists have to contend with environmental vagaries and conflicts over the exploitation of limited resources. While the traditional practice of cattle raiding was done seasonally as a rite of passage into adulthood, to obtain cattle for bride price, a means of restocking after calamities such as prolonged drought and raids were predictable, infrequent and controlled not to cause death or harmfully affect the lives or livelihoods of the society, today that is not the case any more. The Pokot, Turkana, Marakwet, Tugen and Keiyo raided each other, but lived harmoniously until the onset of multi-party politics in the 1990s, when the raids eventually acquired belligerent and criminal tendencies. As the practice gained political character, raiders disregarded the seasonal aspect of cattle theft. Whereas communities would organize missions to retrieve stolen animals, the introduction of small arms has changed the nature of such custom and undermined traditional conflict management arrangements. Increasingly, communities are amassing weapons for their own security, and to carry out raids and retaliation missions. Any number of armed young raiders can now go on raiding missions, with or without the blessing of the traditional elders who traditionally sanctioned raids

## **2. 4 Difficulties of Adjustment for Socially Dislocated Pastoralists**

Cernea (1990) revealed that social dislocation may lead to eight forms of impoverishment: unemployment, homelessness, landlessness, marginalization, food insecurity, loss of access to common property, erosion of health status, and social disarticulation. These findings were reconfirmed by a wider study conducted by the World Bank. Indeed, World Bank (1994) observes that following the drought of 1984, the phrase “ new pastoralists” was coined to describe the growing number of stockless or near-stockless pastoralists clustered in and around prominent trading centers subsisting on famine relief. The implication is that those pastoralists who become involuntarily displaced and risk social impoverishment. Social impoverishment occurs when the displaced are unable to answer the primary cultural question – where are we? Or rather who are we?

Displacements in North Eastern Kenya has been due to resource conflict and security operation (Oba, 2001). For instance, in Manyatta Demo, Isiolo district, the pastoral economy has never recovered from the brutal government counter-insurgency activities in the 1960s and raiding by groups from the east in the 1980s and 1990s. Most residents have no capital or stock, and are obliged to produce and sell charcoal, an activity which is precarious, low return, and illegal. Women, on the other hand, have a much wider set of pursuits: collecting and selling of firewood, selling miraa (khat), milk, eggs and honey; gathering wild fruits, herbal medicines and incense; weaving baskets and mats; and making bread.

## **2. 5 Remedies to the Problem of Social Dislocation**

Studies (Bryceson, 1996; Ellis (2000) and Francis et al (2005) observe that livelihood diversification has been widely recognized phenomena in Africa in recent decades as households have sought to sustain themselves by means of a wider array of economic activities. While these processes can be a positive response to new opportunities, they may also reflect a forced shift into more marginal activities as assets become eroded and former livelihood systems unviable. Forms of diversification recorded in their study included shifts to new farm enterprises, to off-farm sources of income, and to non-farm activities.

Several studies in Kenya and elsewhere have laid this to rest (Green, 1987; Atwood, 1990; Carter, Wiebe and Blarel, 1991; Migot-Adholla, Hazell, Blarel and Place, 1991) the common belief that indigenous tenure systems impede productivity and the former mistaken notion of pastoralist overstocking and mismanagement.

McCabe (1990) and Ndagala (1990) recognized that the provision of certain developments such as boreholes and veterinary care have removed some constraints on the potential for herd increase with the possibility for localized forage depletion.

Behnke and Scoones (1992) and Scoones (1995) talked of ecological succession that captured fluctuating stocking rates and migratory patterns of forage exploitation that allow pastoral management to survive and even to flourish, sustaining livestock numbers in good years well beyond the conventional range management recommendations. These sentiments are



supported by Bonfiglioli (1992) who argues that the image of eco-disaster and collapse should be tempered by the realization of the complexities, cultural resilience and the possibilities of pastoral viability. Besides, Sandford (1983) and Homewood and Rodgers (1987) observed that no satisfactory evidence was found for either declining for either declining productivity or overgrazing in either Baringo District, Kenya or the Ngorongoro Conservation Area in Tanzania.

Oba (2001) also opines that development programs might alleviate problems of social dislocation on a sustained basis if the people are helped to revive indigenous means of coping. This has not happened because improved knowledge of indigenous coping strategies, which is essential for developing food security policy, is lacking.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

#### **3. 0 Introduction**

This chapter presents the research methodology for the study including the research design, the study site, target population, sample and the sampling techniques, data collection instruments, validity and reliability of the instruments, data collection procedures and data analysis.

#### **3. 1 Research Design**

The study will use the survey design to explore the experiences of social dislocation in Kenya with reference to youths from pastoralist communities in Wajir District. A survey design is a technique where detailed information concerning a phenomenon is collected by posing questions to the

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respondents such that it becomes possible to find explanations for the social phenomenon in question (Wiersma & Churchill, 1995). Therefore, surveys design concerns gathering of facts or pertinent and precise information concerning the current state of a phenomenon and wherever possible conclusion from the facts discovered. The descriptive survey design is best suited for this study because it is aimed at description of state of affairs as they exist (Kombo & Tromp, 2006).

### **3. 2 Study Location**

This study will be conducted in Wajir District an administrative district in the North Eastern Province of Kenya. Its capital town is Wajir. The district has a population of 319, 261 and an area of 55, 501 km<sup>2</sup>. Wajir district has only one local authority: Wajir county council. The district has four constituencies: Wajir North, Wajir West, Wajir East and Wajir South. Wajir District is divided into fourteen administrative divisions. The researcher collected data from two divisions, namely, Habaswein and Central. These are the divisions that host important urban centres namely Habaswein and Wajir town respectively.

Borg & Gall (1989) noted that the ideal setting for any study should be easily accessible to the researcher and should be that which permits instant rapport with the informants. Wajir District is chosen because it is easily accessible to the researcher. Wajir District is of importance in this study because it has the right composition of the target population given that it has urban centres that have become attractive to dislocated pastoralist youths.

### **3. 3 Target Population**

The target population is the number of real hypothetical set of people, events or objects to which a researcher wishes to generalize his/her findings (Borg & Gall, 1989). The target population will consist of all dislocated pastoralist youths in Wajir District. The study will involve local provincial administration (chiefs), Muslim religious leaders comprising of Sheikhs, Imams, mosque committees and madrassa teachers. Other categories will include representatives of NGOs, CBO officials, government officials and youth groups leaders.

### **3. 4 Sampling and Sampling Procedures**

By observing the characteristics of a carefully selected and representative sample, one can make certain inferences about characteristics of a population from which it is drawn (Kothari, 1995). Mugenda and Mugenda (1999) suggest that 10% of the accessible population is adequate to serve as a study sample. Probability sampling will be used to obtain a sample of respondents to participate in the study.

Since we are selecting two divisions, the figure 2 becomes the benchmark for selection of respondents that will Muslim religious leaders comprising Sheikhs and Imams, madrassa teachers, representatives of NGOs, CBO officials, government officials, youth groups leaders, and village elders.

### **3. 5 Research Instruments**

This study will be based on primary and secondary data. Fieldwork incorporating personal observation will be utilized to obtain primary data. Primary sources of data will comprise field notes and reports made by the

researcher with the help of two research assistants, interviews and observation summaries in the selected areas. The researcher and the assistants will use self-administered questionnaires to collect pertinent information from a cross section of informants.

A self-administered completion questionnaire is deemed most appropriate for the proposed study. This is because questionnaires are easy to administer, friendly to complete and fast to score and therefore take relatively very little time of researchers and respondents. The questionnaire enables participants to feel free to note down their responses without inhibition since they are not being observed.

The study will use closed-ended and open-ended questionnaires, interviews and observation to draw responses from various categories of respondents. Open-ended questionnaires will be used to elicit in-depth information from respondents.

Secondary data will be gathered from official documents, development reports and other published and unpublished materials.

### **3. 6 Instrument Validity and Reliability**

Validity of a test represent the extent to which a test measures what it purpose to measure what it is supposed to be measuring (Orodho, 2005). To enhance content validity, the research instrument will be appraised by the project supervisors. Their contributions and suggestions will be used to clarify ambiguous questions and add new questions that would be forgotten. This will help reduce error in data collection.

Reliability concerns the degree to which the same results could be obtained with a repeated measure at accuracy of the same result concept. A pilot study will be conducted to ensure reliability of the questionnaire and to identify any needs for revisions. Participants of the pilot study will be asked to complete the instrument and to provide comments or suggestions for revising any ambiguous items.

Orodho (2005) observes that if the scores obtained from each respondent in the two tests are identical or quite close the measurement will be perceived to be reliable. The Pearson Product Moment Correlation will be employed to compute the correlation coefficient in order to establish the extent to which the content in the questionnaires are consistent in eliciting every time the instrument is administered. A correlation coefficient of about 0.8 will be considered high enough to judge the instrument as reliable.

### **3.8 Data Collection Procedures**

The researcher will seek a research permit from the Ministry of Education then notify the office of the district commissioner, the district education officer and the local administration. The researcher will then visit the respondents and give out the respective questionnaires to each of the respective selected respondents personally. The researcher will be available throughout to offer assistance to the respondents and make any necessary clarifications.

### **3.7 Data Analysis**

Data collected from the field will be cleaned and prepared for data analysis.

Data analysis will be done using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences

(SPSS). Data presentation will take the form of descriptive statistics (i. e. frequency tables, cross-tabulations, pie charts and bar graphs).

### **3. 8 Ethical Considerations**

A permit will be sought from the Ministry of Education to carry out the research. The researcher will obtain informed consent from the institutions and participants. The respondents will be assured that the information obtained from the data will only b