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The Changing Livelihood of the Karamojong People of North-Eastern Uganda and its impact on the Survival of their Traditional Gender Roles

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For my Dear Mother

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Acronyms and Abbreviations

ACHPR: African Commission on Human and People’s Rights

ACWGIP: African Commission’s Working Group on Indigenous Populations

GoU: Government of Uganda

GoS: Government of Sudan

ILO: International Labour Organization

IBEA: Imperial British East African Company

RDC: Resident District Commissioner

SPLA: Sudanese Peoples Liberation Army

SPLM: Sudanese Peoples Liberation Movement

Abstract.

This thesis discuss the changing livelihoods of the Karamojong people of North-Eastern Uganda and how the changes impacts the survival of their traditional gender roles. For various reasons Karimajong people have been historically marginalized and subjugated which treatment is evident since the rule of colonialists and even extended to the post –independence governments of the Republic of Uganda. In their attempt to express their identity as cattle herders, Karamajong people have faced the unfavourable consequences of the government’s development programs since nomadic pastoralism was seen as a back ward mode of cattle husbandry which is not economically viable but rather environmentally destructive. It should be noted that Karamoja sub region is a semi-arid area where people have suffered the worst consequences of drought in Uganda due to global climate change.

Additionally the activity of cattle raiding branded the people of karamaja tittle of warrior who were seen as security threat to the nation. This resulted into neglecting of this area, denial of economic benefits and infrastructure that marked the genesis of discrimination and marginalization of the people of karamoja as some parts of Uganda perceived that the people of karamoja are undeveloped since they never embraced western modernity as early as it was in other parts of the country.

However regardless of their marginalized position, Karamojong people continued to live a way of live that was inherited from their ancestors given the fact that the place was made a no gone zone for other people of the country. The society was organized and activities were shared according to gender and age. I will show the different roles that were traditionally performed by people of different gender and Age. Here I examine if the Karamojong people fit to be indigenous as invoked by international law or even as perceived by the African understanding of indigeneity.

In the year 2006, the government of Uganda embarked on the implementation of affirmative action to the historically marginalized and discriminated societies. Karamoja became one of the targets of this movement. In her attempt to implement development projects in the region, the government of Uganda ensured that the previously closed boundaries of karamoja sub region were to be opened to the rest of the citizens and to the foreign agencies. This called for pacifying and transforming the region through disarming the warriors, encouraging sedentarized agriculture as an alternative to pastoralism, introducing formal education and other undertakings as I will elaborate in this thesis.

However studies show that such changes have greatly impacted on the traditional way of life of the people of Karamoja. Therefore this study tries to analyse if these changes in livelihood will make Karamojong people more marginalized and vulnerable society or resilient and progressive community, able to cope up with the life of other dominant communities. The information included herein is informed by current and historical literature, as well as the author's field research conducted in Moroto district North-eastern Uganda Karamoja sub-region.

CHAPTER ONE: Introduction

1.0 Background to the Study.

Karamoja region of North-Eastern Uganda is a semi-arid where annual rainfall is highly variable and where pastoral karimojong population has adapted to uncertain and hostile environment. The Karamojong cluster lies across the North-Eastern part of Uganda which includes districts of Nakapiripirit, Kotido, Abim, Kaabong and Moroto.

The karamojong group of people is one of the most marginalized, suppressed, underdeveloped and the discriminated group of people in Uganda by other westernized and dominant groups of the country. Drought, poverty and hunger are a recurrent feature of life in Karamoja. The Karamojong have adapted to the harsh environment by focusing much of their energy on their herds of livestock principally cattle, but also goats and sheep, and in a few areas some camels. In addition to being a major source of dietary protein, these animals, especially cattle represent wealth, both economically and symbolically.

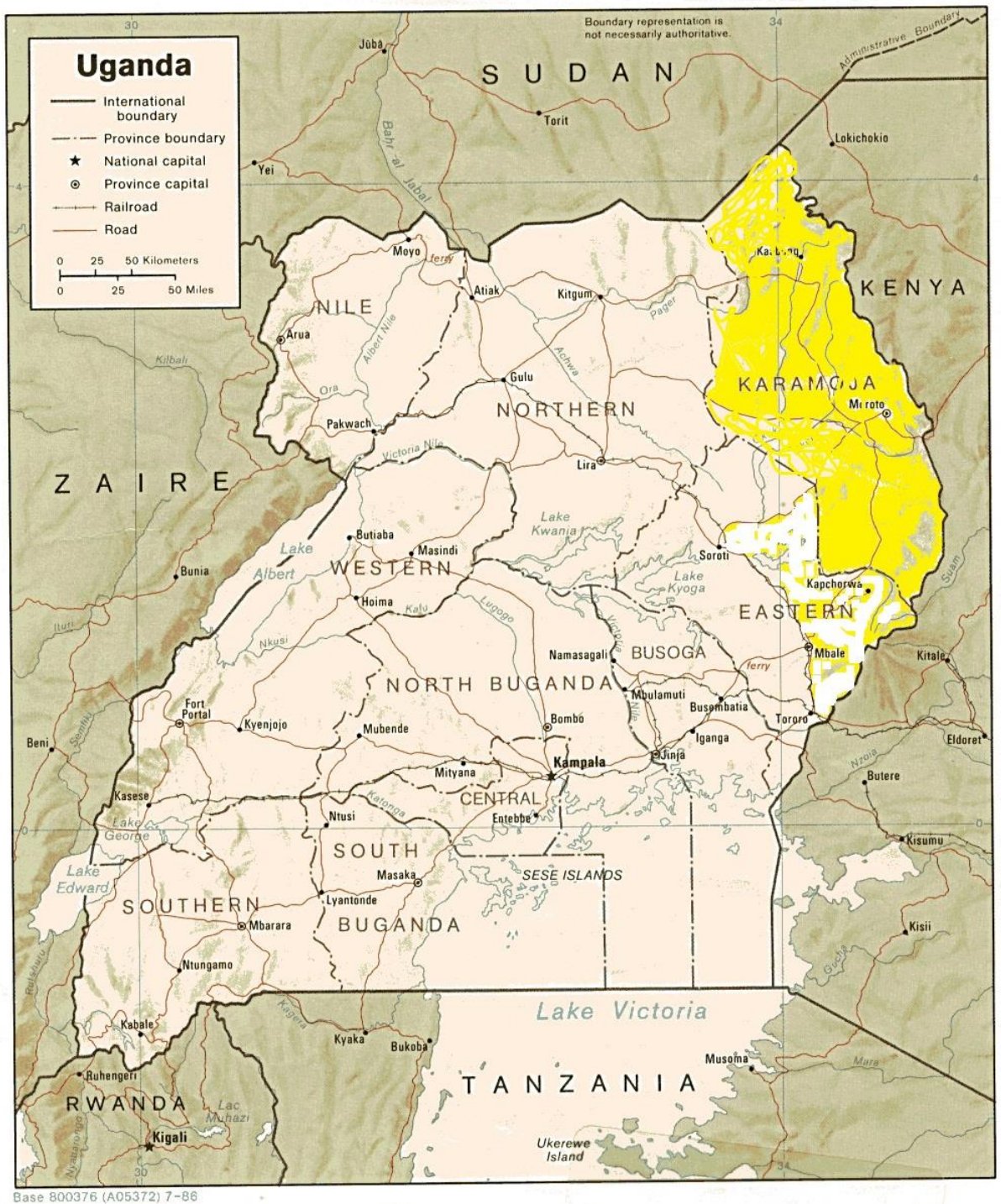
During the long dry seasons, the herdsmen leave their permanent settlements and move their cattle to where there is pasture and water, often crossing forcibly into the territory of neighboring regions of Teso and Sebei. Traditionally Karamojongs take themselves as owners of cattle by divine power and it is used as bride wealth during marriage. Young men have a powerful incentive to establish their reputations and build their own herds through mounting raids on other pastoral groups in the neighbouring districts. Men were responsible for hunting, raiding animals, grazing cattle and women stayed home and took care of household responsibilities, like building huts, gardening (small scale), preparing meals and looking after the children.

Governments both colonial and post-Colonial have always considered the Karamojong pastoral system and way of life as chaotic, backward, economically irrational and environmentally destructive. This unfair treatment of the Karamojong people started way back during the colonial period. Colonial actors in East Africa defined the Karamojong, Maasai and Turukana among others as primitive, backward, defiant, and aggressive (Hodgson, 1999). Consequently, many efforts have been made to settle pastoralists, by imposing boundaries closing off their land for game and forest reserves, restricting access to dry season grazing areas, forcibly removing their livestock and promoting intensive agriculture, disarmament to stopping cattle raids etc. The influx of investment and the government ever-shifting approaches to development continue to affect the lifestyle of Karamojong region. The current

debate on the government's sedentarization of pastoral communities is exacerbating the problem of land insecurity given that 80% of land is already gazetted to secure wild reserves, (The Indigenous World 2012). In Karamoja "a series of government –sponsored development programs seek to promote sedenterized agriculture as an alternative to pastorism", (Huisman, 2011 p.65). In addition to government activities, other NGOs both local and from abroad have been concerned about the livelihoods of the Karamajongs. Therefore some have partnered with the local leaders to initiate development programs for the people of karamonja and to negotiate with the government about the rights of the Karamojong peoples. On addition of being a historically disadvantaged region both socially and economically, Karamonja has faced the worst consequences of drought due to the global climate change.

These ever changing circumstances in which the Karamojong people live have made the survival of traditional livelihood of the Karamojong peoples difficult, especially the survival of traditional gender roles among the Karamojong communities. Coping strategies are therefore inevitable for the Karamojong to live in their changing habitus. However, some of these coping strategies have significant implications, especially in line with the survival of gender roles of the Karamojong peoples. As I will discuss later in this thesis, some of these strategies involve the migration of young Karamojong men and women to urban centres in search for "modern" employment. Given the challenge that these changing dynamics pose to the survival of Karamojong livelihood, in particular the survival of their gender and gender roles, this thesis will serve to illustrate whether these changes and the coping strategies associated with them serve to make the Karamojong Peoples a more vulnerable and marginalized community or resilient and progressive community, able to cope with life of other dominant communities in Uganda.

Figure 1: Map of Uganda Showing the Karamoja Region



Source: Google Maps

1.2 Research Questions.

1. How has the climate change and other Governmental and Non-Governmental development initiatives affected the social- economic livelihood of the karamojong people, in particular their gender and gender roles
2. How have the people of Karamoja managed to cope with their ever changing livelihood?
3. Do these changes that they continually experience and the coping strategies associated with them serve to make the Karamojong Peoples a more vulnerable and marginalized community or resilient and progressive community, able to cope with life of other dominant communities in Uganda?

1.3 Previous research.

Many researchers both scholars, NGOs and from public institutions have carried out research from the Karamoja community. In the research “Climate change and conflict in Uganda”, (Jeffery, 2011), issues concerning climate change and conflict were addressed in the regions of the cattle corridor¹ and Karamoja. According to Jeffery Pastoralism is a livelihood and set of cultural practices based on cattle herding that Uses mobility to make maximum use of scarce natural resources in arid or semi – arid environments characterized by limited rainfall. In this study it was generalized that pastoralists are among the poorest Ugandans with high rates of infant and maternal mortality, low levels of literacy and limited political participation. They are also poorly regarded by their fellow citizens and government to be backward and declining. The situation in Karamoja is far more challenging in terms of livelihoods, culture, security, national policy, climate change and conflict. The loss of pastoralist mobility imposed by security concerns threatens livelihood and erodes the traditional social role of both karamojong elders and youths. In Jeffery’s conclusions, there is a need to let karamojong communities to actively participate in the design and implementation of livelihood and food security programs and other development initiatives of both the government and the donors. Climate change adaptations offer the unique possibility of engaging karamojong participation through the explicit incorporation of indigenous knowledge as an important part of coping strategies. This is an opportunity for building trust and strengthening livelihood resilience, while promoting stability and effective climate adaptation which could be seized. (Jeffery, 2011).

¹ Cattle corridor refers to other districts mainly from the central part of Uganda where there is intensive livestock herding. These include Luwero, Nakaseke and Nakasongola districts.

This research “by Jeffery” tried to address the importance of incorporating knowledge of the local people when implementing adaptation strategies to climate change in their areas. However a lot of other research has been carried out in this region but most of them was relating to general solutions of the country without putting into consideration the unique traditions and local knowledge of the Karamojong people. Such research include “climate change and adaptation options in Karamoja”, (Mubiru, 2010), which mainly gave scientific approaches as adaptation strategies to climate change and little about indigenous knowledge was addressed. Therefore my research will differ a little from the one above by addressing the role of indigenous peoples in the projects which have to directly affect their livelihoods and traditions as they adapt to climate change,

1.4 Methods.

In this study, I mainly used qualitative methods to collect data. This is because most of the required information will be descriptive rather than quantifiable. Given the qualitative nature of this study, I employed an ethnographic approach. As Silverman notes, ethnographic research involves direct observation of the people one studies. (Silverman 2010:15). He further emphasizes that with ethnographic research, it is essential for the researcher to listen to conversations by the actors ‘on stage’, read documents produced by the organization under study and ask people questions. “Yet what distinguishes ethnography from other methodologies is a more active role assigned to cognitive modes of observing, watching, seeing, looking at, gazing at and scrutinizing” (ibid). Consequently, I was involved in a two month period of fieldwork for this study. During my fieldwork, I conducted interviews, focused group discussions and was involved as a participant observer. For the interviews that I conducted, I sought permission from my informants to record them for purposes of future referencing. These have been my primary source of data, coupled with document and textual analysis.

1.4.1 Interviews.

The process of fieldwork requires that one builds a strong relationship with the people that he will study in order to acquire in-depth information about them. As such, I travelled to Moroto (my fieldwork destination) a week before my planned dates for conducting interviews and group discussions. My primary goal was to acquaint myself with the living conditions of the people that I would soon be studying as my informants. Getting to learn about their living conditions would help me authenticate and contextualize the information that I would hope to

gain as part of the interviews and group discussions that I would carry out the following weeks. This earlier visit to the Karamojong community in Moroto district was also very important because it enabled me to make contact and schedule appointments with some of the informants that I would be meeting the following weeks.

Having built a rapport with the community and some of the informants, I interviewed a number of informants for purposes of gathering data for this study. I purposely chose people to interview for this study basing on their descent, age, occupation, gender to mention. The sample of informants that I interviewed for this study is representative of Karaamojong elderly women, elderly men, youth, workers with NGOs and Government of Uganda officials resident in Moroto area.

As part of my fieldwork, I interviewed 49 informants in general. Since this study deals with the impact of the changing habitus of the Karamojong peoples on their gender and gender roles, I ensured that people of different genders, age groups, occupations and social and living conditions are interviewed. Consequently, I interviewed 6 Karamojong elderly men, 8 Karamojong elderly women, 7 school going male youths, 4 school going female youths, 8 non schooling male youths, 5 non schooling female youths, 6 NGO workers and 5 Government of Uganda officials.

For all the interviews that I carried out during my fieldwork, I sought permission from my informants to have them recorded with an mp3 audio recorder. I transcribed these recordings in the process of my fieldwork, and these form a primary part of data analysed for this study.

1.4.2 Focused group discussions.

During the process of my fieldwork, I also held group discussions with communities in Moroto region. These group discussions not only gave me a platform to gain insight of individuals that I may have not interviewed earlier, but also were avenue for me to negotiate contrasting ideas that may have been brought up by informants during interviews. These group discussions gave me the possibility of listening to opposing views from members in the same community at the same time. For example, in one of the discussions, some of the members were against western education that is being emphasized by the Government of Uganda while some members were in support of the same. In the general group discussions that engaged both males and females, I noticed that the men dominated most of the discussions. In order to gain

an insight of the females, I rephrased some of the questions in the discussion for the females to specifically discuss how the issues that we were discussing affected them in particular.

1.4.3 Observation.

Since this research project is about cultural change, it was inevitable that as a researcher, I “immerse [myself] in the [culture] ... and experience it first hand in its diverse settings” (Meyers: 1992: 22; see also Clifford et al 2010). As an observer, I lived among the Karamojong community and studied the current livelihood that they are living, comparing it with the livelihood that I read about them prior to my departure for fieldwork as a backdrop. Observation is also an important part of this study because it is a means of authenticating the data that I gained from other sources such as interviews and document and textual analysis.

As Meryers states, this process of participant observation “enhances validity of the data, strengthens interpretation...[and] helps the researcher to formulate meaningful questions” (1992: 29). In my own case, living with the Karamojong communities and interacting with them gave me an insight into the kind of livelihood that they are living as a result of the ever changing climatic and social-economic conditions in the region. However, bearing in mind that the generation of meaning of an event does not necessarily start at the event but in processes that proceed and precede the event, I have used participant observation as a lens and backdrop of authenticating data gained from other sources and tool

1.5 Relevance of the study.

This research will be based one of the most suppressed, discriminated and marginalized groups in Uganda. Since Uganda is one of the former colonies of the Europeans (British), its societies were left in a state similar to those of indigenous people. However it is challenging to tell who is indigenous in Africa since no African country (Uganda inclusive) has ever ratified the ILO convention 169 concerning indigenous and tribal people. Considering alternative definitions of indigenous peoples such as “tribal peoples in independent countries whose social, cultural and economic conditions distinguish them from other sections of the national community and whose status is regulated wholly or partially by their own customs or traditions or by special laws or regulations”, (ILO Convention No. 169, article 1(a)), satisfies the situation of Karamonj peoples in Uganda. They suffer prejudices because of their uniqueness in culture as regards to dressing, religion, livestock herding. This research will serve to illustrate how cultural change caused by natural factors such as climatic changes and other factors such as government development initiatives affects the livelihood and survival of indigenous cultures and cultures. In particular, this research will serve to illustrate whether

these cultural changes and the coping strategies associated with them serve to make the indigenous peoples more vulnerable and marginalized communities or resilient and progressive communities, able to cope with life of other dominant communities.

1.6 Reflexivity.

Although I am a Ugandan citizen, I travelled to Karamoja as an outsider who belongs to one of the dominant ethnic groups (Buganda) of the country. In the first place there was need to create a very good relationship with the people of Karamoja that I interacted with during the process of my fieldwork. This is because of the negative image that they attach to most people from the south due to their historical subjugation and discrimination. I managed to get an introduction letter from my academic department at the University that worked as a good introduction for me among the chiefs of the Karamojong communities that I visited.

Besides having an identity as a member of a dominant Ugandan community, I had with me an identity of a western educated scholar and researcher, traveling from Europe to study the people of Karamoja and publish my findings in the form of academic theses and journals, which in many cases are rarely taken back to the communities from which the data was gathered. Kofi Agawu (2003) presents this moral dilemma experienced by anthropologists and ethnographic researchers. That these researchers move to impoverished and communities living in predicament to conduct their research. After carrying out their research, they (anthropologists) sometimes send copies of their video tapes (research findings) to the natives “Talk about sending video tapes (research findings) while our people [the natives] face war, disease, famine and death” (Agawu 2003:154)

The above experience and condition illustrated by Agawu is one that I experienced in the process of my fieldwork. Being a western-trained scholar, travelling into a marginalized and impoverished community in Uganda, wouldn't my presence in this community present a reincarnation of the situation that Agawu highlights above?

In addition, western education is one of the factors that has contributed to the continued disruption of Karamojong livelihood, in particular their gender and gender roles as I will illustrate in Chapter Four. Wouldn't my presence as a western oriented scholar influence the nature of data that I would gain from my informants?

While in the field, I often explained to my informants that my identify with this study both as scholar and an advocate. I often let my informants know that the nature of scholarship

in Indigenous Studies that I am pursuing involves discourses that advocate for the rights of indigenous people such as the Karamojong. As a researcher, I often reiterated to the communities that my research project will serve to contribute to the aspirations of the Karamojong communities and indigenous peoples in general, since it will contribute to the literature about the Karamojong peoples in Uganda and indigenous peoples in general and such information will be freely available to different stake holders to access. In addition, I plan to send copies of my research findings to the communities for purposes of their own future reference and use.

1.7 Ethics

In the contemporary world of academia today, ethics and ethical considerations of the researcher is one of the most challenging aspects of research, more especially in research activities involving minorities and marginalized communities. As a researcher, I had an obligation to take caution on how my fieldwork process and research process in general would be carried out in a community that has undergone years of predicament. As a researcher, I must be aware that the way I write about the people that I study may have lasting implications on their social, economic, political and psychological livelihood. Yet as a researcher, I only spend a very small amount of time with these communities while I carry out my fieldwork. As Bagele Chilisa (2012:86) rightly notes, a researcher especially dealing in indigenous peoples and minority peoples issues should be concerned about their codes of conduct, especially with the protection of the researched from physical, mental or psychological harm”².

In line with the view above, I do not disclose names of my informants in this thesis, given the fact that the Karamojong communities in which I conducted my research have small populations and it would be very easy to identify such individuals in case their names are published. In addition, I often sought help from my interpreter about the code of conduct among the communities that I may not be out of place.

Before I travelled to Karamoja for my fieldwork, it was important for me to reflect on how my background as someone from one of the dominant communities in Uganda and who attained western education would impact on the people that I was studying. It was important for me to keep it in mind that I was to carry out fieldwork in a community with a

² Definition of research ethics by Bagele Chilisa, *Indigenous research methodologies.*, (Chilisa, 2012. P. 86).

different social structure and language from my own. Although I am Ugandan, the factors highlighted above emphasized my position as an outsider in the fieldwork process.

My position as an outsider was often emphasized by the fact that I do not speak Karamojong language and had to depend on a translator for all the interviews and discussions that were not conducted in English. As a researcher, this experience opened my eyes a major challenge ahead of me. A challenge of translating and representing information that may be new to my audience and readers in a manner that would enable every reader to understand what I was talking about. It is important to note that English may sometimes have limitations in projecting the indigenous intended expression and meaning.

Given my identity as someone from a city, Kampala, and who was at the same time a student in Europe, many of the people I encountered in the field had hope that I could be someone to address some of the challenges that they experienced. As Diehl notes, informants undergoing difficulty and challenges “expect visitors to become active advocates for their cause” (2002:9). During fieldwork, some of the informants requested for money from me to buy basic necessities such as food and water. Others requested me to help present their grievances to authorities such as the Government of Uganda. I often had to explain my role that I was only a student carrying out a fieldwork study and that possibly I would not be able to meet all their requests. My assurance to them is that my research would contribute to literature that would be used by different stake holders for the benefit of the Karamojong community.

The situation illustrated above is highlighted by Georg Henriksen when challenges the role of anthropologists and indigenous scholars as advocates. He emphasizes that “the scholar should not make the people that she studies into clients” (Henriksen, 1990:124). Henriksen emphasizes that when they take on a role as advocates, anthropologists and indigenous scholars dominate the decision-making process and thereby leave the indigenous peoples themselves aside as the audience rather than participating actively. While I agree with Henriksen, that indigenous peoples should not be left out of the process as mere observers and clients, it is important to note that not many indigenous peoples and communities have the skills, resources and potential to address their challenges through publication. The role of anthropologists is therefore important in this respect. However, an anthropologist’s role as an advocate would be more meaningful if he/she was able to aim at empowering and involving the indigenous peoples in the process. Empowering indigenous peoples in this case involves working with indigenous peoples on the issues that concern them and building capacity for them to take an upper hand in the process. My response to the Karamojong peoples’ expectations from me was that perhaps

my research findings could be categorized as documentation about their condition that would be beneficial to them in the future.

1.8 Chapter Overview

In Chapter One, I have given an introduction to this study, describing the data collection process and locating myself as a researcher. In Chapter Two, I review literature that is in line with my topic of study. The purpose is to locate the nature of scholarship that has been carried about the livelihood and gender and gender roles of the Karamojong peoples as a back drop and point of departure from my study. In this chapter, I also present the theoretical tools and perspectives that I use as an analytical lens for this study. In Chapter three, I give background information about the Karamojong peoples. I also discuss the colonial and post-colonial history of Karamoja region and how it has shaped and influenced the livelihood of the Karamojong peoples. I highlight the origin of the increased number of guns in the Karamoja region. Finally, in this chapter, I justify why the Karamojong peoples should be treated as indigenous peoples in the international perception and evocation of the word, and the implications of using the term indigenous peoples in a Ugandan context. In Chapter Four, I discuss the Changing Gender Roles among the Karamojong Peoples of North-Eastern Uganda. I discuss how gender and gender roles contribute to indigeneity, the traditional gender and gender roles among the Karamojong as a pastoralist culture and how these are changing because of natural factors such as climatic changes and other factors such as government policies and development initiatives. Chapter Five summarises and concludes the preceding chapters.

CHAPTER TWO: Review of Literature and Theoretical Framework

2.1 Scholarship on Gender in Uganda

There is inadequate scholarly research, specific to gender among the Karamojong peoples. Much of the literature presents general surveys about gender in Uganda; discussing the gender “factor” in relation to politics (Miria Matembe, 2002), religion (Alice P. Tuyizere, 2007), economics and health (see for example, Fiedrich Mare, 2004). Other studies that focus on gender among a specific ethnic groups have mainly focused on more dominant Ugandan communities such as the Baganda, therefore side-lining more marginalized communities such as the Karamojong (see for example Nakanyike B. Musisi, 1991; Nannyonga-Tamusuza 2001; 2009). In this section, I give a general survey of the nature of scholarship that has been done about Uganda in general. This will provide a foundation for the discussion on gender among the Karamojong peoples later in this thesis.

Like much of the scholarship in indigenous studies, scholarship on gender in Uganda has largely taken on an activist form. Many of the Ugandan authors on gender and gender-related issues have often projected themselves as gender activists. As such, much of their writings have often stressed that there are gender inequalities in Uganda. I categorize these inequalities in the areas of political participation, economic empowerment and the social injustices against particular genders, especially women.

In her research carried out among the women of Rutoma in western Uganda, Miria Matembe (2002) highlights that “the woman gender in Uganda is defined in terms of bride price and production of children. Furthermore, Matembe presents the social, cultural and economic environment in which Ugandan women have lived and notes that women have been undervalued as opposed to men when societies assign women domestic roles and not allowing them to participate in decision-making. In a related line of argument, Sylvia Tamale (1999) discusses the relationship between women and politics in Uganda. Her major point of reference is the Affirmative Action Policy which was introduced by the National Resistance Movement Government in 1989. Tamale writes in support of this policy which advocated for the inclusion of women in the decision-making process by pioneering the election of a minimum of thirty-nine women representatives to the parliament of Uganda to counter the domination of men in the decision-making process in Uganda. Tamale also examines the profiles of some women politicians in Uganda and discusses how they negotiate their identities in a society that is male dominated.

The works of Matembe and Tamale cited above relate to this study in a number of ways. First, like many other African societies, women among the Karamojong community have been nurtured to occupy an inferior position in the society and the decision making process as compared to their male counterparts. As I illustrate in Chapter Three, the Karamojong society expects women to cook, fetch water, respond to what men say and above all, be producers and reproducers. Another point of resonance between the studies cited above and this study in particular, and scholarship in indigenous studies in general, is that they all take on an approach of advocacy. While the scholars cited above advocate for affirmative action, particularly for women in Uganda, this study in a way advocates for affirmative action for the Karamojong peoples, based on their disadvantaged and marginalized livelihood as nomadic pastoralists. In Chapter Three, I discuss in detail why the Karamojong peoples are justified as indigenous peoples as the term is invoked in international law. What I want to emphasize at this point is that while scholars like Matembe and Tamale cited above have advocated for affirmative action for specific groups especially women in Uganda, the nature of such scholarship tends to give a general picture that all women in Uganda suffer and live the same conditions. Yet women and children of marginalized Ugandan communities sometimes suffer worse conditions and therefore, special kind of scholarship needs to be addressed to such communities.

In her discussion about the gendering process among the Baganda of Central Uganda, Sylvia Nannyonga-Tamusuza (2009) emphasizes that gender among the Baganda is a construction. She emphasizes that gender categories are not stable but keep changing in relation to the social, political and economic contexts. To illustrate her argument, Nannyonga-Tamusuza presents two domains under which Gender among the Baganda people can be understood: the palace and outside the palace. In the palace, the king is addressed by both men and women as *bba ffe* (our husband). Princes and princesses are addressed as *ssebo* (sir). In addition, in the palace, men are allowed to perform Baakisimba, a dance that is only performed by women outside the palace. From the examples above, the following genders may be constructed: “man”, “female-men”, “male- women” and “female-women”. The following gender categories are constructed outside the palace: the “man”, “woman”, “manly-female” and “womanly-male”. In her discussion, Nannyonga-Tamusuza illustrates that gender definitions depend on where someone is socialized. Finally, Nannyonga-Tamusuza notes that due to the fact that gender categories are constructions of society, we need to be cultural and time specific in order to understand gender.

While her study is based on the Baganda people who are a dominant community in Uganda, Nannyonga-Tamusuza adds a cultural dimension to the study of gender in Uganda.

Since gender forms the core of this study, I have borrowed insights from Nannyonga-Tamusuza in order to examine the conceptualization of gender among the Karamojong. In this study, I illustrate that gender among the Karamojong is a construction of society. I also stress that the Karamojong gendering process starts when the sex of the child is established and goes on until someone becomes an ancestor, after death. In Chapter Four, I demonstrate that “men” and “women” who do not perform the roles expected of them among the Karamojong lose their gender. In line with Nannyonga-Tamusuza, I argue that gender is culture and time specific and should be understood in terms of its own cultural conditions. Societies perform the gender categories which resonate with their demands.

Dereje Wordofa (2007) analyses the relationship between gender and poverty in Uganda. In his discussion, Wordofa illustrates how the lack of consideration to gender and diversity has restricted the success of implementing poverty reduction policies in Uganda. He traces the background to the efforts of various governments in Uganda in attempting to reduce poverty since the mid- twentieth century up to the late 1980s. Wordofa specifically examines the Uganda Participatory Poverty Assessment Process (UPPAP) and notes that the exclusion of women and youths, whom he refers to as the “marginalized”, has perpetuated the high poverty levels in Uganda. He discusses that poverty is about powerlessness and exclusion from decision-making and not merely the low incomes of the people. Wordofa’s views above have been expressed by other scholars such as Armatya Sen (See Allen and Thomas, 2000:14). While Wordofa deals with how relations about gender categories can lead to acceleration or reduction in poverty levels in Uganda, I illustrate in this study that when examining gender, scholars should not only focus on the relationships between gender categories but also consider the roles and identities of these gender categories.

2.2 Gender among the Karamojong People

Carrie Stefansky Huisman (2011) discusses the changing nature of masculinity in Karamoja. Huisman discusses how the changing environment and livelihood of the Karamojong peoples influences and affects ways in which Karamojong males achieve, consolidate and maintain masculinity. Huisman illustrates that traditional mechanisms for males to acquire social status such as acquiring a lot of cattle and marrying are increasingly difficult given the changing climatic, political and social conditions. Huisman illustrates the coping strategies of these Karamojong males as an avenue of acquiring manhood. For example, some move to urban centres in search for manual labour in order to get money to cater for their families. Huisman argues that these coping strategies signal a permanent shift from traditional livelihood of the

Karamojong and may have implications for the viability of traditional Karamojong livelihood in the long run.

Huisman's work above informs this study in a number of ways. Although her work mainly focuses on changing roles of men among the Karamojong community, this work borrows from her methodological approach while analysing the changing gender roles of both males and females among the Karamoja community. Huisman highlights the fact that changes in gender roles of Karamojong males may have implications for the viability of their culture and livelihood in the long run. In this study, I examine Huisman's thesis above by questioning what implications it may have for an indigenous community to experience a shift from traditional livelihood to that of more dominant communities. Like I will discuss in later sections of this thesis, gender and gender roles are an important part of indigenous people's culture. In line with Nannyonga-Tamusuza, I will illustrate in this thesis that gender is culture and time specific and should be understood in terms of its own cultural conditions. Societies perform the gender categories which resonate with their changing demands.

In their article entitled "Beer is the cattle of women: Sorghum beer commercialization and dietary intake of agro-pastoral families in Karamoja, Uganda", Kelsey Needham Dancause et al (2010) discuss the importance of sorghum beer brewing among the Karamojong community. The primary purpose of their study is to highlight the role of beer in the diet of the Karamojong people by analysing the nutritional profile of Karamojong people, nutrients supplied by beer and those supplied by foodstuffs purchased with profits from the sale of beer. Although it's not the focus of their study, Dancause et al illustrate a change in role of Karamoja women: from the traditional role of growing food for subsistence, looking after children to a more modern role of brewing sorghum beer for sale in order to get revenue to support their families. It is such examples of shifting gender roles among the Karamojong communities that I form the basis of this study.

Saverio Krätli (2001) discusses the impact of formal education on the traditional livelihood of Turkana and Karamojong pastoralists in Kenya and Uganda respectively. He highlights that although education is offered as an escape route away from pastoralism, pastoralists use it as a security net and a way to strengthen the pastoral enterprise. Education is seen as a way of accessing resources outside the pastoral circuit (mainly financial and social capital), particularly sought after by the growing number of households whose entitlements within the pastoral settings have been eroded for various reasons, and who feel increasingly vulnerable to destitution. In Krätli's discussion, education is one of the important coping strategies adopted by the people of Karamoja as a means of countering the ever changing

climatic, political and social conditions in which they are entangled. In his discussion, Krätli analyses perceptions of Karamojong peoples towards western formal education. His discussion takes on a gendered approach when he discusses the performance of children in schools basing on their genders. He also attempts to examine why parents send more boys to schools than girls. Krätli's study above informs this study in a number of ways. Methodologically, the accounts cited in Krätli's work constitute part of the experiences that I encountered while in the field. I therefore cite some of the examples in his study to strengthen some of the arguments in this thesis. In addition, this thesis serves to build on Krätli's work since it not only deals with formal education but also other development processes and their impact on the livelihood of the Karamojong peoples, in particular their gender and gender roles.

Elizabeth Stites and Darlington Akabwai (2009) discuss in detail the process of disarmament and its impact on the livelihood on the Karamojong peoples. These authors document experiences and perceptions of the disarmament process by different members of the Karamojong community. In addition, they discuss the impact of the process of disarmament on livestock management, food security, managing vulnerability among others. Their study addresses some gender related issues especially that they illustrate how the act of disarmament impacted on the traditional system of livestock rearing. Given the increased insecurity of some of the Karamojong communities fostered by the taking away of their weapons, communities had to adapt to a system of keeping their herds in one large crowd, protected by the Ugandan army. They highlight that the disarmament process did not only affect male livelihood, but also females since the insecurity caused by the process hindered their traditional activities such as agriculture. The work by Stites and Akabwai has been a very important source of literature for this study especially concerning the disarmament process in Karamoja region. However, while their study only focuses on the disarmament process, this study will delve into other development initiatives and how they impact livelihood of the Karamojong peoples, especially their gender and gender roles.

In their research entitled "Livelihoods, Culture and Gender: A Situational Analysis of the Challenges and Opportunities for addressing Gender-Based Violence in Karamoja Region", Alexandar Kagaha et al discuss how cultural values and practices, including livelihoods and migration; as well as instability factors affect women and girl's health, social and economic status. They further examine how indigenous community practices relate with girls, boys, women and men's social and economic status. They also discuss the perceptions, attitudes and knowledge within various community groups and service providers; on girls and women's' access to education, health and livelihoods decision-making. Their study reveals that women

and girls are in a more marginalized position among the Karamojong community. While their study takes on a quantitative approach, this study uses a qualitative approach as a way of presenting empirical data collected through a process of field work.

2.3 Theoretical Framework

One theory pertinent to this study is the view that gender is a product of cultural and social correlates and is an ongoing process (see Marcia Herndon 1990; Sherry Ortner 1996; Tullia Magrini 2003 and Nannyonga-Tamusuza 2005). According to La Fontaine, the process of constructing gender categories is performed through “socialisation and maintenance of social sanctions” (1981:335) or what Herndon refers to as “enculturation” (1990: 12). As this study reveals, gender categories among the Karamojong peoples are constructed and change according to the trends and needs of the population. This process begins by society grooming boys and girls according to the roles they are expected to perform.

In line with Fredrik Barth (1969), I illustrate in this thesis that the meaning of cultural symbols and practices change although they may seem unchanged from the outside. In the case of the Karamojong peoples, changes in livelihood engendered by climatic changes and other development initiatives inevitably leads to a change in gender and gender roles. However, these changes should not be interpreted as loss of culture and cultural meaning. Sissons (2005) makes a similar argument when she argues that a change in cultural practice should not be looked at as cultural loss and loss of meaning for the cultural product, but rather cultural change and a change in meaning. This study will serve to illustrate whether changes in Karamojong people’s livelihood and the coping strategies associated with these changes serve to make the indigenous peoples more vulnerable and marginalized communities or resilient and progressive communities, able to cope with life of other dominant communities.

CHAPTER THREE: Contextualizing the Karamojong Peoples as Indigenous

3.0 The People of the Karamoja

Karamoja is a term employed to describe the pastoral and agro-pastoral ethnic groups who mostly share a common language, culture, and land area encompassing northeastern Uganda, northwestern Kenya, southeastern Sudan, and southwestern Ethiopia. The inhabitants of the cluster include nine sub-groups of people who share the same ethnic origin (the Nilo-Hamites or Ateker group), pursue similar livelihood patterns and, to a certain extent, speak languages that are basically similar to Ngakarimojong. The primary focus of this study is north-eastern Uganda, although tribes from south-eastern Sudan and north-western Kenya are also discussed. Uganda's Karamoja region covers an area of 27,000 sq. km., 10 percent of the country's land area. According to the Ugandan census in 2002, the population of the region is just under one million.

There are a number of different ethnic groups that live and move within northeastern Uganda, some of which belong to the group collectively called the Karamojong. These are the Matheniko, the Tepeth and the Bokora of Moroto district—who share the Moroto district with the Tepeth who live on Moroto Mountain and speak their own language—the Pian of Nakapiripirit district (which they share with the Pokot, which are not a Karamojong group), the Jie and Tobur (sometimes called the Acholi Labwor) of Kotido district, and the Dodoth, Nyangia, the Napore, and Iik (sometimes called the Teuso, but not to be confused with the Teso of the Teso region) of Kaabong district.

All these groups speak Ngakaramojong at school and in administrative offices. While the Pokot are not a Karamojong tribe, because of their proximity and interaction with Karamojong tribes, they too use Ngakaramojong. In Kotido district are found the Jie who currently share the district with the Acholi Labwor, who are also known as Tobur. The Acholi Labwor speak their own language but they also use Ngakaramojong in interacting with other groups. Additionally, the Jie split and moved to southeastern Sudan where they now share the county of East Kapoeta with the Toposa. Kaabong district is the home of the Dodoth. The Dodoth share the district with a small ethnic group called the Iik/Teuso, Nyangiya, and Napore, who have nearly become absorbed by the larger Dodoth tribe, and they also speak Ngakaramojong.

In the far south and outside the borders of the Karamoja region are the Iteso. The Iteso are regarded as the “sons of the Karamojong” who moved away to more fertile and

rainy plains and decided to sedentarize. They speak Ateso which is an Ateker language similar to Ngakaramojong.

In the region of southeastern Sudan we find the Toposa in Kapoeta County. The Toposa have influenced their neighbors the Didinga who are in turn friendly with the Dodoth of Uganda. The Didinga however are a different tribe and are not Karamojong. Then you find the Nyangatom who occupy both southeastern Sudan and southwestern Ethiopia who speak Nyangtom which is an Ateker language. The Nyangtom graze their livestock together with the Dassanetch. The Dassanetch speak their own language but have been influenced by Turkana neighbours. The Turkana broke away from Jie and now live in northwestern Kenya. The Turkana have cultural influence over their neighbours, the Pokot of Kenya.

Most of the groups in the Karamoja region are agro-pastoralists, predominantly reliant on livestock rearing as their main source of subsistence and who also cultivate millet and sorghum and supplement their food supply by gathering wild fruits and greens and through hunting and fishing. Agro-pastoralism is the most appropriate and sustainable livelihood strategy throughout much of the semi-arid savannah and mountains of the Karamoja. The entire region receives very limited rainfall. The terrain is filled with deep gullies caused by ground run-off after heavy rainfall. It is in such a harsh ecological setting that the agro-pastoralists of the Karamoja region have to scrape a living. The key to survival for communities and their livestock is mobility. Most of the herds move epicyclically, instead of the traditional transhumance, because of the region's erratic and scarce rainfall. However this mobility is often the source of conflict among neighbors and, at the least, requires continuous negotiations for grazing rights among groups.

In the Karamoja region the imported terms *kraal* and *manyatta* are typically used to describe the characteristic settlement pattern. A *kraal* is a collection of 10 to 20 households, including women and children, herding their cattle, donkeys, camels and flocks of goats and sheep together as one grazing unit in order, primarily, to form a more secure unit to counter enemy attacks. A *manyatta* is a settlement enclosed by a fence of thorn bushes in which women, the elderly and young children live. The *kraal* leader can either be a sharp shooter, a seer, or simply a rich generous person or a popular ex-government official, such as a chief or councillor. He inspires the rest of the herders to come together to follow him because of his special skills, wisdom or simply because he is a brave man. A *kraal* leader leads the livestock owners and owns many herds among those that have gathered around him. He helps the other livestock owners to come to a consensus on issues of livestock, range management and evaluation of

security conditions in their grazing areas. During the dry season *kraals* may unite into a larger unit called an *arigan*.

3.1 A Brief Colonial History of Karamoja Region

Uganda was colonized by Britain. British colonial interests in Uganda were driven by the strategic location of Uganda at the source of the Nile, which would assure the British power and security over Egypt since the Nile is the major source of water for Egypt. The colonisation of Uganda was therefore a priceless crown for Britain in their colonial economic and military master plan for the African continent (Kefa, 2006:14).

In their partitioning of Africa, the British took the area that is now occupied by the Karamojong peoples and formed the states of Uganda and Kenya, while the Toposa were incorporated into Southern Sudan, and the Nyangtom into Ethiopia. Early armed violence was the result of raids between and among the Karamojong and their neighbours and the presence of private armies established by competing traders in ivory. Abyssinian merchants competed with Swahili traders coming from the East African and both trained and armed elements of the Turkana, Dassenetch, and Karamojong to protect ivory caravans moving through the Karamoja Cluster from their commercial rivals and local populations that might attack them.

These private armies were quite sizable and, in some cases, were deemed to pose a threat to the British who in 1911 sent military expeditions to defuse the tension caused by their presence on the border of Turkanaland, Sudan and Ethiopia. The presence of these private armies and the fact that the peoples of Karamoja were now well-armed motivated the colonial administration to attempt to pacify the region. British attempts to disarm the warriors met with stiff resistance, and in some cases the British used systemic scorched earth methods. Forcible disarmament appears to have reduced the incidence of cattle thefts and raids quite dramatically after 1913 as the Karamojong lost most of the weapons they had acquired. From 1921 up to Ugandan independence in 1962, the British imposed very strict rules that made it difficult for the Karamojong to raid their neighbors. In effect, Karamoja was put under military occupation and the region closed to outsiders. A permit had to be obtained from the District Commissioner in Moroto, the regional headquarters, in order to enter the district.

The condescending and racist British attitude towards the ‘natives’ was exemplified by a sign which they erected on the entrance to Moroto town—only removed in 1972—which told visitors coming to gawp at the naked tribesmen of the pristine ‘real Africa’: “You have reached the heart of Africa.” See James Barber (1969). The British were in need of the military

experience the Karamojong had acquired through familiarity with modern weaponry and recruited them during the Second World War. Nene Mburu describes how: Britain recruited heavily from the Karamojong and Turkana ethnic communities in recognition of their ethno-military culture.

From the 1940s, the Karamojong pastoralist communities strengthened their raiders using the weapons and skills gained in the colonial wars to revitalize the tradition of cattle raiding. The main impact of the British military occupation on the pastoralists was territorial restriction and economic isolation. Despite the occupation, Karamojong raids into Teso, Sebei, and Suk (Pokot) territory continued. Without guns, the raiders returned to using their spears, a practice they maintained until the early 1950s. Competition for available grazing intensified as the British set aside large areas of prime grazing land for wildlife conservation and water development projects. The competition for pasture was worsened by a severe drought in 1943. By the 1960s, the pastoralists had resumed raiding across northern Uganda and Kenya.

In 1962, the new independent Ugandan government took over power from the British colonialist government. This led to the formation of the Uganda nation state. The creation of the Uganda nation-state meant endorsing the Boundaries of Uganda, and isolating Uganda as an independent nation and people, separate from neighbouring Kenya, Sudan and Tanzania nation states. Given their livelihood as nomadic pastoralists, the Karamojong peoples have always been migrating and exchanging territorial resources with neighbouring Pokot and Turkana communities in Sudan and Kenya respectively. This creation of borders therefore restricted free movement of the Karamojong and other tribal communities across borders as I will further illustrate in this thesis.

The colonialist British Government used a divide and rule policy which ensured that there was no feeling or sense of a common destiny amongst the different peoples of Uganda that is in form of nationhood and common identity. While the divide and rule system helped in helping the British colonialist's grip on power by keeping their subjects weaker, it created tensions among the various tribes in Uganda (Kefa 2006). Such tribal tensions were still existent at the time of independence. Like many other new African nation states, the challenge of the Government of Uganda at the dawn of independence was to construct an image of a unified, cultural and homogeneous state, while under-communicating the tribal or ethnic diversity found in the country (Anderson 1991).

Another major challenge of the new Ugandan Government the practice of Karamojong warriors raiding their neighbours and, to a lesser extent, raiding other Karamojong and non-Karamojong tribes living in the region. The main concern of all post-independence governments of Uganda has been to protect their neighbors from Karamojong warriors. This is because instances where the Karamojong have raided other communities have been interpreted as inter-tribal conflicts and therefore a threat to national security. Though often quite deadly, intra-tribal Karamojong raids rarely made it to the news headlines, which news are published in the capital city of Kampala. In the proceeding chapter, I discuss the process of disarmament of the Karamojong peoples and its impact on the Karamojong people's livelihood.

When the Idi Amin Dada government came to power in 1971, the Karamojong peoples experienced further blow by a decree which stressed that they all should wear Western clothing, instead of clothing made from livestock hides. Amin directed the army to embark on constant harassment of Karamojong women who continued to wear traditional clothing. Such a scenario well illustrates the predicament and marginalization that the Karamojong have undergone at the hands of different political regimes. For the Karamojong this was an outrageous attack on their identity and culture. To them, it implied that livestock should not matter anymore in their lives. A group of Karamojong who refused to put on modern clothes was separated from those who were clothed and were massacred by Amin's army at Nawoikorot in 1972 as a lesson to the observers.

As discussed in the above section, the people of Karamoja have through history undergone a number of challenging conditions to their livelihood as nomadic pastoralists and cattle raiders. These range from harsh changes in climatic conditions, confiscation of their land for the creation of game parks and reserves to forced dominant development programs such as forced abandonment of their traditional wear. As I will illustrate in the following chapter, the Government of Uganda program for promoting security in Karamoja region by disarming the Karamojong cattle raiders ironically leads to insecurity among the Karamojong peoples because it makes them helpless at the hand of their neighbours such as the Turkana who would also carry out raids against the Karamojong peoples. In the following section, I question whether it is justified to categorize the Karamojong peoples as an indigenous community since they have historically been categorized as a threat to national and regional security by the Government of Uganda.

3.2 The Origin of Firearms in Karamoja Region

For the past five decades, the Government of Sudan experienced long civil wars between the Government of Sudan (GoS) and the Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM). These civil wars had a strong impact across the borders in Kenya and Uganda. In the event of fire exchanges between the GoS or SPLM, there was often abandonment of arms and ammunitions as the defeated group retreated. The Didinga agro-pastoralists and the Toposa pastoralists quickly adopted these fire exchanges as opportunities to loot arms and ammunition. One of the last such battles was when the Sudan Peoples Liberation Army (SPLA), the SPLM's armed wing, trounced the GoS's mechanized garrison in Kapoeta on July 9, 2002. The pastoralists reportedly kept most of the guns they acquired for protecting their own animals but gave some to their neighbors and allies in Uganda. (Darlington Akabwai et al, 2007)

Another source of Armoury for the Karamojong warriors is Congo, another country that has experienced continuous civil wars since the 1960s. One of the males that I interviewed informed me that when he was young, a number of male youths from his family often took public means and crossed to the Congo to purchase arms for the protection of their community herd. Owing to the continuous civil wars and conflict conditions in the Congo, control along the border has always been difficult. The Congo has therefore often been an easy route for the entry of illegal weapons into the Karamoja region.

Darlington (2007, 21) reports the existence of weapon markets in Karamoja region and the ease with which guns and other arms were sold by pastoralists in the open by individuals who may have acquired such ammunition from Sudan. Ironically, another source of purchasing ammunition were the commanders and members of the Uganda Peoples Defence Forces, an institution that was tasked with the duty of ensuring security in Karamoja region. As some of my informants informed me, some of the officers of the Uganda Peoples Defence Forces were responsible for selling bullets to individuals who owned guns. One of the informants informed me of how his son was victimized upon revelation of some officers who were in charge of selling bullets to the warriors. That part of his crowd was killed overnight, and he was rejected by some of the members of his community for some time.

It is the sources above that have led to an influx of guns and ammunition in the Karamoja region, even after the colonial government had played a big part to eliminate weapons and ammunition in Karamoja region.

3.3 Do the Karamojong Peoples Qualify to be an Indigenous People?

The use of the term *indigenous people* is a subject of contention among African governments. Saugestad illustrates that the term has historically been used to refer to “descendants of those who occupied a given territory that was invaded, conquered or colonized by white colonial powers” (Saugestad, 2000). This interpretation bases *indigeneity* on the context of what Minde (2000) refers to as a blue-water type of colonialism, which refers to a situation where white settlers came from outside and settled on the *indigenous people’s* land. In the interpretation above, the dominant position of the white colonial masters left all Africans in a subordinate position, replicating conditions similar to those of indigenous peoples elsewhere in the world. In relation to the colonial powers, all native Africans were (a) first comers (b) non-dominant and (c) different in culture from the white intruders (Saugestad, 2000).

A major factor that disqualifies the interpretation of indigenous above is that the colonialists withdrew from all African countries apart from South Africa. As earlier noted, at their time of departure, the colonialists had constructed borders of the nation-states that they controlled. This creation of boundaries led to the merging of different tribal and territorial communities under one nation-state. As such, the Karamojong people’s livelihood was abruptly altered because they would no longer overlap and share the resources of neighbouring communities as it is a common practice among nomadic pastoralists.

As discussed in the previous section, the Karamojong peoples have continually undergone oppressive and discriminative policies by the colonialist and post-colonial governments in Uganda. The discriminative colonial policies earlier illustrated in this chapter left communities such as the Karamojong peoples in a more marginalized position at the expense of dominant communities that received privileged favours from the colonialist government. As earlier noted, Karamoja region was sealed off from the rest of Ugandans owing to the insecurity that has existed in the region since colonial times. Secondly, the Karamojong peoples did not much benefit from colonialist development projects. If they did in any form, they were mainly recruited for military and army service, yet the rest of the Ugandans especially those in the Southern part were privileged with education and administrative positions. In addition, their culture as nomadic pastoralists has always proved an antithesis to development as envisioned by the government of Uganda. Like many other post-colonial African governments, at the dawn of independence, the new Government of Uganda had an obligation of achieving equal distribution of wealth and resources across the country. Yet the Karamojong people’s culture

and livelihood as nomadic pastoralists is often perceived as un-sustainable, since it is mainly based on kinship than on a capitalist economy.

Given the fact that the peoples of Karamoja did not much benefit from the colonialist's development programs, one would expect that the new independent governments were to develop affirmative action plans for them. However, the new Ugandan government was reluctant to implement such a policy because it would seemingly present a "violation of the liberal principles of equal treatment of all citizens and 'colour blindness' towards their racial and cultural differences (Kymlicka 1989, 1995, Weigard, 2008).

Since 2006, the post-colonial Ugandan Government headed by President Yoweri Museveni has embarked on a developmental program for Karamoja. This program was initiated by the disarmament scheme that I will discuss in the following chapter. In addition, a cabinet ministerial post was established specifically to address issues related to Karamoja. This ministry in conjunction with a number of NGOs has been instrumental in spearheading projects such as construction of schools, hospitals and other social services for the benefit of the people of Karamoja. However, despite such new initiatives geared towards development, the Government of Uganda does not recognize the Karamojong as indigenous peoples as invoked by the term in indigenous law.

As Verber notes, the concept of indigenous people as applied to the African setting is a complicated and much debated one. "But this is mostly so from the perspective of the decision-makers and those dealing with international human rights issues and less so when seen by those who themselves claim to be indigenous (Verber et al. 1993:10) Basing on the following interpretation of the term indigenous peoples as applied in international law, and also on the possible reasons why the government of Uganda may have refrained from the use of the term, particularly in relation to the Karamojong peoples, I believe that the Karamojong peoples fit into the contemporary and modern understanding of the category of indigenous peoples.

As earlier noted, the term indigenous peoples has often been used to refer to descendants of a territory that was invaded by foreigners (mainly white settlers). Such an interpretation of the term would not be applicable in the context of Africa, since the foreigners never settled on the territory. However, in other areas where the white colonialists settled such as Australia, America and Canada, the above interpretation of indigeneity would be applicable. It should be noted that the international indigenous movement was mainly initiated as a result of the above mentioned groups' struggles for their land and territorial rights. However, in the

case of Africa, even if the colonialist left the territory, some African communities were left as a minority at the expense of dominant African tribal societies. Such groups have their specific ways of life which are endangered. It is such groups that have come up to claim status as indigenous as I will illustrate later in this section. It is important to note that the Africans joined the global indigenous movement at a much later stage. As Saugestad notes, “those who took the first steps and initiated the movement (with exception of the Sami) were all victims of ‘blue-water colonialism’ (Saugestad, 2008:159). The inclusion of the Africans in the global indigenous movement therefore posed a new challenge of re-defining and determining indigeneity, since the meaning of the term had ceased to be based on the blue-water type of theory earlier discussed.

As a result of the above illustrated events, a new working definition of indigenous peoples was adopted by the United Nations in 1986. This definition was a brain child of Martinez Cobo and it characterises Indigenous peoples as

“peoples and nations which, having a historical continuity with pre-invasion and pre-colonial societies have developed on their territories, consider themselves distinct from other sectors of the societies now prevailing on those territories, or parts of them. They form at present non-dominant sectors of society and are determined to preserve, develop and transmit to future generations their ancestral territories and their ethnic identity as the basis of their continual existence as peoples, in accordance with their own cultural patterns, social institutions and legal system” (Martínez Cobo 1986,7)

As illustrated, the definition above still places emphasis on the question of “who came first”. Yet as so far discussed in this chapter, this question has mainly been the biggest challenge in applying the term indigenous to the African context. There was therefore a need to make the term more relevant and applicable to the African context.

Consequently the African Commission on Human and Peoples Rights came up with a new definition that seeks to make the term less foreign to the African continent.

...that their cultures and ways of life differ considerably from the dominant society and that their cultures are under threat, in some cases to the point of extinction. ...that the survival of their particular way of life depends on access and rights to their traditional lands and the natural resources thereon. They suffer from discrimination as they are regarded as less developed and less advanced than other dominant sectors of society. They often live in inaccessible regions, often geographically isolated and suffer from various forms of marginalization both politically and socially. They are subjected to domination and exploitation within national political and economic structures that are commonly designed to reflect the interests and activities of the national majority. This

discrimination, domination and marginalization violates their human rights as peoples/communities, threatens continuation of their cultures and ways of life and prevents them from being able to genuinely participate in decisions regarding their own future and forms of development (ACWGIP 2009:41)

As seen in the definition above, the term Indigenous peoples goes beyond connotations of who came first. The term is used to refer to groups who suffer particular human rights problems and, in an effort to address and alleviate those problems, refer to themselves as indigenous (Verber 1993:11).

Referring to the livelihood of the Karamojong peoples discussed in this thesis so far, their culture and livelihood as nomadic pastoralists, which has existed for centuries differs considerably with the livelihood of neighboring dominant agricultural communities. They are determined to keep their culture and practices. In addition, they have been sent of a big part of their land to foster the creation of Kidepo National Game Park. Yet they are also limited and restricted from sharing land and resources with neighboring communities because of national boarder and immigration restrictions. It is important to note that the survival of their cattle herding and nomadic livelihood depends on their access to land and natural resources thereon such as water and pastures. In addition, their livelihood as nomadic pastoralists is a major cause of their marginalization and discrimination by dominant Ugandan communities. It is this nomadic culture that also conflicts with the Government of Uganda development programs because it is envisioned as un-sustainable and also fosters cattle raiding, a practice unacceptable by the Government of Uganda. Basing on the factors discussed above, the Karamojong peoples belong to the category of indigenous peoples as evoked by international law.

3.4 What is in a name? Implications of the term Indigenous in the Ugandan legal framework

When we compare the characteristics of indigenous peoples mentioned above to the livelihood of the Karamojong peoples that I earlier discussed in this chapter, it is clearly evident that the Karamojong peoples fit into this category of indigenous peoples. However, the Government of Uganda does not invoke the above interpretation of indigeneity as defined by international law.

In schedule 3 of the constitution of Uganda (2006), reference is given to 56 indigenous communities in Uganda. The date for determining indigenoussness is placed at 1926. In 1926, significant border adjustments were made in Uganda, including the transfer of the eastern Rudolf province from Uganda to Kenya by the British, hence demarcating the boundaries of

the present day Uganda. As Kagumba (2013) discusses, “the Ugandan government relies on a colonial construct of creation of state borders to determine indigeneity”. As earlier noted, the fact that the Ugandan Nation-State was formed a result of merging of different tribal territories did not leave much sense of a common Ugandan nationhood and identity. The challenge of the new Ugandan nation was therefore to “under-communicate the tribal or ethnic diversity found in the country”. (Anderson 1991).

A number of scholars have addressed the reason why African governments have been reluctant to interpreting the term indigenous peoples as perceived in international law (Saugestad 2000, 200, Anderson 1991). Some of these include; the multi-ethnicity of the country and its nationhood project earlier mentioned where the government intends to under communicate tribal differences and preferential treatment of specific groups over others. In addition, there is increased pressure over land in Uganda, yet invocation of indigeneity as perceived in international law inevitably brings into question issues concerning land rights. Thirdly, the Karamojong peoples are traditionally nomadic pastoralists with a long standing tradition of cattle rustling. As I will further illustrate in subsequent chapters of this study, the above mentioned practices and traditions are not in line with the Nation-stated millennium development goals and visions of development (ACWGIP, 2009). The above mentioned factors are not unique to the Karamojong peoples and are evident in other African countries.

However, one element that is perhaps unique to the Karamojong people is the insecurity that has occurred in the region for decades. As earlier noted, the Karamojong peoples have a long tradition of cattle rustling, in which they raid cattle from neighbouring Pokot and Turkana peoples of Sudan and Kenya. This tradition was precipitated by the introduction of automatic weapons in the 1980s. As a result, a community that once held cattle raids with simple armoury such as spears and pangas started using sophisticated machine guns to carry out their raiding tradition. This not only made Karamoja a no-go-zone for other Ugandan nationals, but their possession of automatic weapons posed a threat to National and regional security.

The government of Uganda has attempted a demilitarizing campaign of the Karamojong, who have been reluctant to lay down their weapons in part because they remain prone to cross-border cattle raids from Pokot and Turkana peoples in neighbouring Kenya and Sudan. An attempt at voluntary disarmament in December 2001 included a government pledge to protect the border and allowance of armed Karamojong border defence militias. The effort resulted in collection of 3,000 of an estimated 40,000 weapons. But it was accompanied by

widespread allegations of abuses - including torture, extrajudicial killings, and destruction of property - by the Ugandan armed forces. Continued Karamojong cattle raids in subsequent years have led to many civilian deaths and spurred a heavy-handed Ugandan military response.

Details of the security question and demilitarizing campaign of the Karamojong peoples have been discussed in reports and publications elsewhere. However, the underlying challenge experienced by the Ugandan government is whether communities such as the Karamojong who may pose regional security challenges may still be given preferential treatment as indigenous peoples as invoked by international law.

Despite the security challenges posed by the Karamojong's possession of automated weapons above, the government of Uganda recognizes their marginalized position in the Ugandan society, their culturally endangered situation and the low levels of economic and social development in the Karamoja region. However, the Government of Uganda characterises them as *ethnic minorities* (Article 36 Ugandan constitution). The term encompasses communities that have been excluded or discriminated against on the basis of sex, disability or any other basis created by history, custom or tradition.

As illustrated in the ACHPR report, the use of the term *ethnic minorities* instead of *indigenous peoples* (as evoked by international law) has a number of legal implications. First, the nature and kind of rights ascribed to indigenous peoples and minorities in international law differs considerably (ACHPR 2006:13). While minority rights are often formulated as individual rights, indigenous rights are collective rights according to international law (ACHPR 2006:13). Characterising the Karamojong as an ethnic minority group therefore poses challenges for their collective right to ownership of their ancestral land. Secondly, while indigenous peoples have a right to land, territories and natural resources (ACHPR 2006:14), this law does not apply to ethnic minorities. The government of Uganda may therefore have preferred the term ethnic minorities to insulate its self from the demands associated with the term indigenous peoples as evoked by international law. In fact, this could perhaps suggest why the Ugandan government has not yet ratified the ILO 169 Convention

CHAPTER FOUR: The Changing Gender Roles among the Karamojong Peoples of North-Eastern Uganda

4.0 Introduction

In this chapter, I discuss the changing nature of gender roles among the Karamojong community. These changes have primarily been fostered by factors, majority of which are beyond the Karamojong Peoples control. Examples of Such factors climate changes and the introduction of the new Uganda Nation-State, which has largely influenced the Karamojong people's livelihood through its envisioned development processes as I will discuss later in this chapter. The ever changing circumstances in which the Karamojong people live have made the survival traditional livelihood of the Karamojong peoples difficult, especially the survival of traditional gender roles among the Karamojong communities. Coping strategies are therefore inevitable for the Karamojong to live in their changing habitus. However, some of these coping strategies have significant implications, especially in line with the survival of gender roles of the Karamojong peoples. As I will discuss later in this chapter, some of these strategies involve the migration of young Karamojong men and women to urban centres in search for "modern" employment. Given the challenge that these changing dynamics pose to the survival of Karamojong livelihood, in particular the survival of their gender and gender roles, my underlying question is whether these changes and the coping strategies associated with them serve to make the Karamojong peoples a more vulnerable and marginalized community or resilient and progressive community, able to cope with life of other dominant communities in Uganda.

4.1 How does gender and gender roles contribute to indigeneity?

One of the highlights of the definitions of indigenous peoples as stated in the Martinez Cobo study is that they are "determined to preserve, develop and transmit to future generations their ancestral territories and their ethnic identity as the basis of their continual existence as peoples, in accordance with their own cultural patterns, social institutions and legal system" (Martínez Cobo 1986, 7). In order to fulfil the aspirations of indigenous peoples described above, gender and gender roles play an important part, not only because the different peoples among the Karamojong have specific roles to play in the survival of their cultures basing on their gender and gender roles, but also because the definition of these gender and gender roles is itself a part of their culture and as such, part of their identity. Therefore, in order to appreciate the social organization of the Karamojong, one must understand the roles that gender plays in determining their culture since males, females, children and different stake holders have

specific contributions to make to the formation of their unique culture that is endangered by a number of factors that I will address in this chapter.

4.2 Traditional Gender and Gender Roles among the Karamojong as a Pastoralist Culture

As earlier discussed in previous chapters, the Karamojong Peoples are primarily a pastoralist community. Among the Karamojong, cattle holds a central position in their livelihood. To the Karamojong Peoples, their cattle serves as source of meat, milk and blood, which is primarily the pastoralist's staple diet. In addition, the cattle may also be battered in exchange for necessity commodities. The cattle is also used for labour in agricultural belts of the Karamojong peoples. More so, In case of a conflict among individuals, families and communities, cattle may be exchanged as a means of attempting to solve the conflict. As Huisman (2011) argues it is "this strong attachment and reliance on livestock that incentivizes cattle raiding, a practice that allows for the redistribution of wealth and re-stocking of herds lost to drought, famine and disease".

In this traditional practice of cattle rearing, all members of the community contribute both directly and indirectly. There is an established tradition of division of labour based on one's age, sex among others. The elder women are primarily tasked with a duty of fulfilling domestic household chores. These include looking after children and in case of any sick people in a home. In addition, the women are also involved in small scale agricultural activities, which include growing food stuffs such as millet, important for the providence of food to their families. Young girls are usually tasked to stay at home with their mothers to help with household chores. One of the primary roles of girls is to help their mothers in looking after their siblings. In addition, girls help with supplying basic necessities such as water and harvesting and preparing of food for their families. It should be noted that at this stage, the girls are being nurtured and ushered into the livelihood of what will be expected of them as adult Karamojong women.

While the role of women and girls among Karamojong communities is primarily domestic, the men and boys' role is to look after their family's most valuable assets, the livestock. Even in this process, there is an established division of labour according to age, physical strength and experience. The young boys are primarily responsible for herding the animals, while elder and youthful boys are tasked with protecting their animals and communities from raids, attacks and threats such as wild animals. The elder men are the main decision makers, given their experience, since they have been involved in livestock rearing for

the biggest part of their life. It is these elder men that determine the movement and reproduction of the herds.

As illustrated in the discussion above, the Karamojong community is largely a male-centred community because “for men, status is a highly public affair and requires outward expression as compared to women, for whom it is largely domestic”. As they gain more cattle, the men gain more prominence and more positions of power and responsibility in the community. However, this does not imply that one loses such power and authority when they lose a big part of their herd³. “These achievements help men to gain access to political and decision making power and ritual authority” (Huisman 2011:65)

4.2.1 Akiriket Assembly

The men participate in formal political, social and religious assemblies traditionally known as *akiriket*. The assembly is closely associated with *Akujũ*, their God. The *akiriket* assemblies represent the active political, social and religious organization of the Karamojong peoples. As Ben Knighton (2003) explains:

Akiriket provides a living record. First its full members are men. They are not there merely to exclude women from power in a society, nor even as representatives of their families or clans. They are there as a summation of society before *Akujũ* [their God] and, under His guidance, to take responsibility for that society and act on its behalf for its common welfare. Secondly, the men are strictly ranked in order of seniority. Uninitiated men have no proper voice in the assembly and have a status relative to it similar to that of women, as *ngikaracuna* (they of the apron) or boys (*ngidyain*). The initiates are divided twice, into generation-sets and into age-sets contained within the generation-sets, but all initiates have an equal right to speak in the assembly, even if different voices carry different weight... Initiations are only held in good years, and any planned for years that turn out to be bad are stopped.

The *akiriket* are highly formal and ritualized meetings and cover a range of ritual activities of communities in relation with *Akujũ*. The *akiriket* are held in particular *shrines set aside for this purpose, and only certain elders are qualified to handle matters of the akiriket*. In the *akiriket*, power is invested in groups of peoples depending on their age class and never in an individual. Decisions are collectively made.

The initiation process involves the giving of a specific name to the members of an age-class by the elders. It is this name that will identify the age-class for the collective life of its members. The elders usually select the name of an animal or, less commonly, a plant or geological feature, to give to the age-class. However, elders will often wait to initiate a group until they are significantly older.

³ This is mainly because of the increased cattle raiding activities and bad climatic conditions that have claimed a big part of their herds over time.

Each generation-set is comprised of up to five age-classes. Only two generation-sets can exist simultaneously—the senior generation-set, which consists of the elders in power at a given time, and the junior generation-set, which will eventually assume power. A man cannot be in the same generation-set as his father. Generation-sets and age-classes are identified by their name and chosen form of metal and body ornamentation, with the generation-set identification passing from grandfather to grandson. Age-classes may choose their own physical identification, such as a specific tattoo pattern, type of earrings, or scarification pattern, and they maintain these for life. The table below, adapted from Knighton (2003,149) illustrates the age classes that have existed among the Karamojong since the 1890s.

Figure 2: Table Showing the Age Class System of the Karamojong Peoples

Date	Names for Age-Classes	Metal (body ornamentation)
1897	Moru III (mountains), Kokoi (grey monkeys, grivets)	Copper
a. 1898	Taaba (rocks)	
b. 1898	Putiro (wart-hogs)	
c. 1913	Cubae (blue monkeys), Rengelen (red ostrich feathers)	
d. 1942-43	Baanga (ducks)	
1956	Gete IV (Grant’s gazelles)	Brass
a. 1956	Meguro (bat-eared foxes) there were initiations in 1957, 1959 , 1964, 1966	
b. 1975	Owa (bees) now closed – many initiates	
c. 1999	Wapeto (eland)	
d. Forthcoming	Ru (small plant with green leaves and yellow fruit)	
Forthcoming	Moru (mountains) and Mirio (field-mice)	Copper

As illustrated in the table above, the last time that the men of Karamoja experienced a shift in power from one generation-set to the next was in 1956. The Mountains generation-set took the position of the senior generation-set and became the official elders and leaders of the Karamojong, opening up a new generation-set (called the Gazelles) and a new series of age-classes. These generation-sets have occupied the senior and junior position for the intervening fifty years, with no hand-over of power in the interim. Over the past years, there has been a reluctance on the part of the senior male generation-set to relinquish control.

This failure to relinquish power to the next generation-set results in a large number of men who cannot be initiated. As earlier noted, a man cannot belong to the same generation-set as his father. In the example illustrated in the table above, all the men who were born in the 1940s were initiated into the Gazelle generation in the late 1950s. Today, these men are in their 70s and possibly have children in their 30s. Yet the fact that there has not been a transition of power since the 1950s, these men still belong to the junior age class-set. Their children have therefore not been initiated since they cannot belong to the same generation set as their fathers. These youths therefore do not have the power to participate in important activities such as *akiriket* assemblies. As Sandra Gray notes:

A number of male informants, who were in their late middle age in 1998-1999, complained that they were nothing more than “rats” (*ngidoi*), or uninitiated men, without a formal identity in the traditional power structure of Karimojong society (Gray, 2000: 408).

Currently, the groups in Karamoja are therefore experiencing a major crisis of lack of a clear leadership. This combined with failed harvests, droughts, and increasingly violent military confrontations with the Ugandan security forces means that very few ceremonies and initiations have taken place, since major ceremonies should occur in times of peace and prosperity.

4.2.2 The age-class system and women

During my fieldwork, I was interested in learning whether the age-class system illustrated above also applied to females. Four of my key informants consented that the system applied to women too. In a related line of argument, Ben Knighton, reports that the female age-class system is still functioning. However, in the case of women, the system of hierarchy has much less weight or meaning for women than it does for men. When a male age-class opened and was formally named, parallel age-classes also opened for women. Like men, the age-classes of women had distinct names. However, while the initiation for men involves a number of ritualistic activities such as spearing of oxen, for women, a marriage with cattle was the central facet of initiation. In addition, while initiation of men carries along with it special power to participate in activities such as *akiriket*, initiation of women does not carry with it such privileges. Since Women’s generation-sets and age-classes traditionally mirrored those of their husbands, women are to wear the same metal or marking emblem as their men.

4.3 Marriage

Marriage is yet another important aspect of the traditional gender roles and expectations of both Karamojong men and women. It is one of the most important rites of passage in a Karamojong male’s life because it symbolizes a transition from boyhood to adulthood. During

marriage ceremonies among the Karamojong Peoples, cattle holds a central point. Bride wealth is traditionally paid in the form of livestock. This is done as a way to solidify the relationship of the two families of the new couple. It is also a way of acquiring social status, since the more cows one gives at a marriage ceremony, the more prestige and fame they acquire. In addition, the fulfilment of the bride price requirement embeds with it specific rights and claims to the man who pays the bride price.

Being officially married (with cattle) gives a man recognition as an adult member of his clan and the ability to participate in decision-making within the manyatta and kraal. On the other hand, a woman who is married with cattle becomes an official member of the man's clan. This therefore implies that the rights and protections of the man's clan are extended to a woman and her children following official marriage. In the event of death of the husband, the woman will have rights to her husband's property (including his cattle) only if their marriage was official (with cattle). In addition, the man's clan is obligated to care for the woman upon her husband's death

Much of the assets used as part of the marriage ceremonies were procured through the cattle raiding tradition earlier mentioned in this chapter. This activity was primarily monitored and regulated by elders of the communities. The activity was traditionally used as a method for redistributing wealth, restocking herds and recovering from climatic and ecological uncertainties. In the previous chapter, I gave a detailed discussion on raiding activity. My emphasis at this point is that the cattle rustling activity is primarily the role of young men among the Karamojong communities.

4.4 The New Uganda Nation-State and its Impact on the Survival of Traditional Karamojong Gender Roles

As earlier noted in previous chapters, the Karamojong peoples have for centuries lived a nomadic. Their nomadic livelihood fostered movements and the sharing of resources with neighbouring Turkana and Toposa peoples in Kenya and Southern Sudan respectively. In 1926, the Rudolf province was transferred from Uganda to Kenya by the British colonial government. This transfer led to the creation of border lines and mapping of the current Uganda, which would later become a nation-state in 1962. This creation of borders ushered in a new challenge for the nomadic Karamojongs, since they were now restricted from accessing resources on the Turkana and Toposa territory, because this land now belonged to other Nation-States. Such a restriction not only creates shortage of food and resources for their animals, but also, with time,

the knowledge held by these communities may be lost. Since migration, an important part of their livelihood is now restricted and limited to specific areas.

In 1962, the new Uganda Nation-State gained independence from the British government. As earlier noted in chapter two, the British government employed divide and rule tactics as a means of holding their grip over power. Like many other new African Nation-States, the challenge of the new Ugandan Nation-State was to forge an image of a unified, cultural and homogeneous state, while under-communicating the tribal or ethnic diversity found in the country (Anderson 1991). Yet at the dawn of independence, the Karamojong were a disadvantaged community among the other tribal communities, because their nomadic life and cattle raiding traditions were not in sync with the colonialist development programs. In a similar manner, since the initiation of the Uganda Nation-State, the nomadic livelihood and cattle raiding culture of the Karamojongs has proved an anti-thesis to the envisioned development program of the Ugandan government. As a result, the government of Uganda and a number of Non-Governmental Organisations have embarked on massive development programs for Karamoja. In the following section, I analyse how government activities have contributed to changes in gender roles of the Karamojong peoples as a means of fitting into the changing contexts in which they live. My purpose is to analyse whether these changes in gender roles and the coping strategies make the Karamojong Peoples a more vulnerable and marginalized community or resilient and progressive community coping with life of the dominant population.

4.5 The Practice of Cattle raiding and the changing gender roles

Traditionally, the cattle raiding tradition was done on a small scale with traditional instruments such as spears. As earlier mentioned, the cattle raiding activity was an acceptable method for redistributing wealth, restocking herds and recovering from climatic and ecological uncertainties, regulated and controlled by elders of the communities. Cattle raiding was thus an “economic as well as a socially acceptable institution” (Huisman 2011:6).

However, one outstanding challenge associated with the activity is that a number of individuals seek to maximize achieving personal economic wealth in this activity. This challenge has been much precipitated by the existence of the large number of un-registered firearms in the Karamoja region. In 2011, an approximated five million un-registered firearms were believed to have been roaming around Karamoja region. The demand for guns in the region is rooted in the changing political, economic and climatic conditions.

The worsening climatic conditions led to drought and famine, and therefore the death of a large number of the pastoralists herd. Using the gun as part of a raiding activity therefore largely guaranteed easy access to animals of other communities, since the gun as a military tool has the ability to eliminate anyone who would be a threat to a successful raid. In line with Huisman, my emphasis is that for Karamojong males, owning a firearm embeds in it a new form of social definition and “provides mechanisms for negotiating pastoralist’s livelihoods in a changing environment”.

One of the roles attached to youth and young men among the Karamojong peoples earlier mentioned is to protect their herds from raids by members of other communities. The militaristic approach of the cattle raiding activity necessitates that these young men keeping the herds of their communities also possess firearms to counter their enemies in case of an attack. As such, an activity that was once performed with elementary armoury such as spears is now using more sophisticated machinery. In this way, the young Karamojong men are still able to perform their role of protecting their community and herds, but using modern and militaristic means. As such, the gun became part of masculinity and an important symbol for the males in the form of security and protection for their herd.

Traditionally during raids, it was socially unacceptable to cause harm to women and children. Perhaps this is because of their traditional domestic role earlier mentioned, yet cattle raiding and rearing is more of a social event and activity. With the introduction of guns, raids became more violent. One of the female informants that I encountered during my fieldwork narrated cases of rape, physical assault and also killings of women and children during raids. Such cases have been reported elsewhere (See Huisman 2011, 66). This is an indicator that socially acceptable traditions and roles about violence are changing with time.

4.6 The Disarmament program

As earlier noted, the challenge of the government of Uganda is to create a homogeneous nation with balanced economic, social and political development of all nations. Yet the possession of fire arms in Karamoja region poses a threat to the envisioned governmental development program, because it increases chances of insecurity in the region. In addition, the Karamojong people’s livelihood as nomadic pastoralists is not in sync with the government’s development programs. More so, the practice of cattle raiding is seen as an unsustainable practice because it not only causes conflicts among communities, but also insecurity in the region which hinders economic and social development.

As a result, the Government of Uganda engaged in a massive disarmament program which started on 2001. This disarmament took on different forms of voluntary submission of firearms by some Karamojong peoples who possessed them and more aggressive and forceful fire-arms such operations. While the process of the disarmament program has been discussed by scholars elsewhere, my emphasis is that the Government of Uganda did not care whether the communities possessed weapons for purposes of conducting raids or for security of their properties. During the disarmament program, some communities hid and remained with their guns, while others guns were taken, creating a form of insecurity for the communities whose guns were taken. In a way, the practice of disarmament dilutes the role that men especially the youth have to protect their families and herds, since their weapons are taken away.

The strategy of the Government of Uganda was that the pastoralists gather their animals into one protected kraal by the Uganda People's Defence Force (UPDF). The rationale for keeping all the animals in one kraal is that it would not be practical for this livestock to be raided by other communities in possession of firearms. While the approach above may be practically possible, it embeds in it a number of challenges. First, the carrying capacity of the land is subdued by the large number of animals. Secondly, the UPDF soldiers may not have the knowledge about animal health and rearing of these animals. Third, keeping the animals in one guarded kraal implies that the young Karamojong boys and men have given up their traditional social role of protecting and looking after their herd to the UPDF soldiers. As such, these young men do not get a chance and experience to perform their traditional role of cattle rearing. With time, such knowledge would be lost since it is no longer performed by members of the community.

4.6.1 The role of women in the disarmament program

In her study, Christina Yeung examines the gendered effects of weapons proliferation in Karamoja. Pertinent to this study, She asks how successful the weapons collection program was at fully disarming households, to what extent women were involved in the decision to disarm or retain firearms, and whether the experience and perception of (in)security of men and women differed as a result of the de-commissioning of weapons. Finally, her study explores whether and how practical disarmament affected the demand factor for small arms, for example, whether cultural valuation of traditional expressions of masculinity and femininity have changed, whether socio economic deprivation in the Karamoja cluster has become more clearly gendered, and whether the weapons collection program has made any positive or

negative contributions to the long-term social, economic and political empowerment of women and men in the sub-region.

Yueng's findings reveal that although Karamojong women do not have formal access to traditional decision-making institutions, they have an indirect role to play in the conflict dynamics of the region through their social roles as unmarried girls, wives, and mothers. Yueng cites accounts many women have traditionally encouraged cattle raids by taunting men and insulting their manhood in case they are not providing properly for their family.

However, during the group interviews that I conducted during my fieldwork, I observed that all of the women were no longer in support of the cattle raiding culture. One of the elderly informants that I encountered informed me that in the past, the men would come to them to seek their blessing before they would engage in any cattle raiding activity. However, it came to a point when the women never offered their blessings and the men never sought these blessings because they were aware they wouldn't get them anyway. Perhaps this is because the cattle raiding activity had taken on a more violent approach as earlier discussed in this chapter.

Emily Schroeder et al (2005) report that the role of women in the weapons collection program was important particularly during the first phase. In the initial stages of the disarmament program, the president of Uganda, Yoweri Kaguta Museveni, encouraged the inclusion of women in the discussion and mobilization process. The women were involved in the mobilization process through holding discussions with men about the disarmament program at home. The women were also involved in community music and drama performances, in which they incorporated messages about dangers of guns in their songs and plays. In some cases, the women played a role in handing over the weapons, "for if a woman handed in a gun, it was less likely that there would be further questions on the location of other weapons" (Schroeder et al 2005:10). In a sense, the women were protecting the men and their guns.

Later on during the disarmament process, Kkaramojong women were much blamed by their male counterparts for their supportive role to the disarmament program. Cases of women being beaten by their husbands and sons for encouraging the disarmament process have been reported (see Schroeder et al 2005:10). As a result, women were forced to play a more quiet and passive role during the second phase of the disarmament process. As such, they lost their influence on the process.

4.7 Formal Education and the changing gender roles in Karamoja

In a bid to foster development in Karamojong region, the Government of Uganda introduced formal education in Karamoja region. Free Primary educational services were introduced by the government and a number of NGOs. The rationale for the introduction of formal education in Karamoja region was that once the pastoralists receive formal education, they would have achieved skills and experience that would make them employable in other sectors, thus breaking their dependency on pastoralism. The rationale above clearly alludes to a sudden shift and break in traditions of the Karamojong peoples that have existed over years. As illustrated above, education was emphasized as an escape route from pastoralism. Perhaps this is a major reason why education was not embraced with open hands by the communities.

The nomadic livelihood of the Karamojong peoples is primarily characterised by prolonged movements in search for water and pastures. This livelihood would present a logistical problem, since the school would physically be located in one place yet the communities have to migrate in search for pastures. In addition, being a pastoralist community, there is constantly a lot of work to be done and child labour plays a major role in accomplishing such tasks. It would therefore be a big sacrifice for the communities to allow their children away from home for many hours. Thirdly, education would pose a threat to the authority of the elders of the community who are not only the heads of the communities, but also some times intermediaries between gods and the people. In this case, the teachers would be looked at as competing with the authority of the elders.

In schools, free food is distributed to the children at break and lunch time. This has increased the number of enrolment in schools. Because of the bad weather conditions in Karamoja region discussed in Chapter Three, there is limited cultivation activity among the communities, thus limited food distribution in the homes. As such, many of the children go to schools in search for food distributed there. According to a report from the World Food Program⁴, the numbers of children in schools drastically dropped in 2010 when food distribution was cut by 50%. This is a clear indicator that the children primarily go to schools in search for food. In this case, the traditional role of elderly men and women to provide food for their families is now replaced by schools and a number of Non-Governmental Organisations that distribute free food in schools and in the region.

⁴ <http://www.irinnews.org/report/94145/uganda-education-critical-to-build-on-karamoja-s-new-found-security>

Education is therefore a way of accessing resources outside the pastoral livelihood (mainly financial and social capital). As earlier noted, there is a growing number of Karamojong households whose entitlements within the pastoral settings have been eroded for various reasons, and who feel increasingly vulnerable to destitution. They therefore need alternative sources of survival. Perhaps the reported rise in school enrolment figures over the last few years is likely to be an indicator of the increased vulnerability of the pastoral household rather than a sign of development. Especially so, since schools have become free-food distribution points.

4.7.1 The impact of formal education on boy children and their gender roles

The introduction of formal education poses new challenges and changes in gender roles to the Karamojong pastoralist community. One of the traditional roles for boys was to gain intimate knowledge of their herd upon which prosperity thrives. A boy's success depended on the level of knowledge that they mastered considering the keeping and rearing of their herd. Having a big and healthy herd guaranteed not only economic wealth but also a successful future and marriage life since one would have enough resources to pay bride price for any woman of their choice. With the introduction of formal education, traditional and practical pastoralist knowledge is to be substituted for academic knowledge and theoretical knowledge gained by sitting in classrooms. The power of the herd is to be replaced by the power of the pen, ironically an instrument that was used to register young Karamojong men in the 1930s for participation in the World War II, many of whom never returned home.

With the introduction of formal education in Karamoja region, the Government of Uganda has positive intentions of transforming the people of Karamoja into educated citizens that would be able to participate in national service and compete with members of other dominant communities. However, the manner in which the above has been implemented is questionable. As noted in the previous paragraph, from childhood, the Karamojong boys were always nurtured to become herdsman because success of a man in the Karamojong context is often based on how well their herds are doing. It would therefore be important to incorporate such knowledge in the educational curriculum. Perhaps, this would be a way of making formal education popular among the parents and elders who often discourage their children from attending school. This is in line with Sen's argument that when initiating development programs, such as formal education for the Karamojong peoples, it is important that members of the groups are not excluded from full participation in the society in such projects since they

mally affect them (European Foundation, 1995:4, as quoted in Allen and Thomas 14). Similarly, Robert Chambers (1997) have argued for a participatory approach. Such an approach is aimed at empowering people to participate in, and control, their own process by building confidence in their own capacity.

As discussed thus far, it is evident that the formal education which the Government of Uganda initiated as an empowering factor is disempowering in this case. Because it does not pay attention to the significance of specific aspects of the culture of the Karamojong peoples for whom it's initiated, in particular, the transmission of knowledge about pastoralism to the children, thus posing a threat to the survival of the culture that they seek to safeguard.

4.7.2 Formal Education and its impact on gender and gender roles of girl children and women in Karamoja region

Traditionally, the role of girls was to help with domestic chores at home. Such work included helping to raise their siblings, cultivation, harvesting and preparing food for their families. This was a process of nurturing girls into future mothers. It was the role of female elders to help in grooming the girls into their responsibilities as future mothers. Grooming a well disciplined and successful girl yielded more bride wealth for the family.

With the introduction of formal education, the children (girls) are to spend more time in schools, limiting the time they would take to learn household and domestic chores, which knowledge is what is expected of them as successful mothers in future. More so, as earlier cited in the case of the boys, the nature of knowledge gained from the schools is largely academic, limiting the possibility of acquiring knowledge about their traditional livelihood and expectations of them as girls and women in the future.

As earlier noted, the Karamojong community is a largely-centred male society. As such, males are considered more powerful and hold more powerful and dominant positions than the females. Yet formal education treats all learners equal, regardless of their gender, a phenomenon new to Karamojong beliefs. In fact, formal education trains both males and female children to compete for the same jobs in future.

The introduction of formal schooling for Karamojong children has got a number of associated advantages. First, it is an indicator that the Karamojong children have the ability to cope with life like children from other dominant communities in Uganda. It is even more empowering in the event where girls perform better than their male counterparts in school and academic activities.

Secondly, despite the fact that formal education may have some implications on traditional gender roles, it serves to justify that culture is not static, and that the Karamojong as a people have the ability to survive as a people in their changing habitus. In line with Sissions, I reiterate that that a change in cultural practice should not be looked at as cultural loss and loss of meaning for the cultural product, but rather cultural change and a change in meaning. A situation where girls take on different roles of attaining education for purposes of gaining skills that would enable them to provide for their families in the future should in this case be interpreted as a change in culture and not loss of cultural meaning. Besides, availing the opportunity for girls to equally get engaged in formal education like their male counterparts is in line with international human rights.

Despite the above discussed advantages associated with formal education, a number of Karamojon elders are reluctant to allowing their children to attend school. In one of the group discussions that I had with informants during my fieldwork, I asked how many parents had their children registered in schools. Out of a group of 11 informants, four did not consent to allowing their children to go to school. Upon asking why they did not allow their children to go to school, one of the parents was concerned about the fact that he never attended western education, yet he is “successful with herds of cattle and wives and children”. As illustrated in the informant’s statement above, it is clear that from birth, the life of a child among the Karamojong peoples is determined by his gender. As earlier noted, the boys are trained to take care of herds of their families, while girls are trained to become mothers. The challenge with formal education is that such knowledge is not taught to children in schools, posing a threat to the continuity of important aspects of Karamojong culture in a case where the role of the teachers in schools replaces that of elderly women and men in a home.

CHAPTER FIVE: Summary and Conclusions

5.0 Summary

The underlying objective of this study has been to analyse how a change in living conditions of the Karamojong peoples, fostered by climatic, political, social and economic factors has impacted on their traditional gender and gender roles. In particular, I was interested in analysing aspects of change in Karamojong people's livelihood and the coping strategies associated these changes. The underlying purpose was to find out whether these changes in livelihood and the associated coping strategies serve to make the Karamojong Peoples a more vulnerable and marginalized community or a resilient and progressive community, able to cope with life of other dominant communities in Uganda

This study was based on the data I gathered through a qualitative research design whose details I discuss in Chapter One. This study took on an ethnographic approach that necessitated me to carry out fieldwork, observe and interact with my informants in Moroto District in North-Eastern Uganda. In this study, I interviewed 6 Karamojong elderly men, 8 Karamojong elderly women, 7 school going male youths, 4 school going female youths, 8 non schooling male youths, 5 non schooling female youths, 6 NGO workers and 5 Government of Uganda officials. The other research tools I used in this study included participant observation, audio and visual recording and library research. In Chapter One, I also gave brief historical background information about the Karamojong Peoples. This was intended to give a context for their livelihood and marginalization that I discuss in the preceding chapters.

In Chapter Two, I review literature that is in line with my topic of study. In particular, I review literature related to gender and gender roles in Uganda in general and Karamoja in particular. The purpose is to locate the nature of scholarship that has been carried about the livelihood and gender and gender roles of the Karamojong peoples as a back drop and point of departure from my study. In Chapter Two, I also present the theoretical framework that I use as an analytical lens for this study. This study is based on the theory gender is a product of cultural and social correlates and is an ongoing process (see Marcia Herndon 1990; Sherry Ortner 1996; Tullia Magrini 2003 and Nannyonga-Tamusuza 2005). This study therefore serves to illustrate that gender is culture and time specific and should be understood in terms of its own cultural conditions.

Chapter Three served to contextualize the Karamojong as Indigenous Peoples as per the term is invoked in international law. I give a detailed discussion about their agro-pastoralist livelihood. In addition, I give a detailed historical and colonial background of Karamoja region to trace and illustrate the causes of insecurity in the region and the causes of the current marginalization of the peoples of Karamoja. I discussed the understanding of the concept of *indigenous* in the African and Ugandan legal framework. The major purpose was to identify why the Government of Uganda is reluctant to endorsing the people of Karamoja as an indigenous population as the term is applied in international law.

In Chapter Five, I discussed the changing livelihood of the Karamojong peoples and how it impacts on their gender and gender roles. These changes have primarily been fostered by factors, majority of which are beyond the Karamojong Peoples control. Examples of Such factors climate changes and the introduction of the new Uganda Nation-State, which has largely influenced the Karamojong people's livelihood through its envisioned development processes. Outstanding development processes that I discussed in Chapter Five include the disarmament program the introduction of formal education. These changes and developments within Karamoja have made the survival traditional livelihood of the Karamojong peoples difficult, especially the survival of traditional gender roles among the Karamojong communities. Coping strategies are therefore inevitable for the Karamojong to live in their changing environment. However, some of these coping strategies have significant implications, especially in line with the survival of gender roles of the Karamojong peoples. I discuss in this chapter that some of these strategies involve the migration of young Karamojong men and women to urban centres in search for "modern" employment. Given the challenge that these changing dynamics pose to the survival of Karamojong livelihood, in particular the survival of their gender and gender roles, this chapter serves to answer the question whether these changes and the coping strategies associated with them serve to make the Karamojong peoples a more vulnerable and marginalized community or resilient and progressive community, able to cope with life of other dominant communities in Uganda.

5.1 Conclusions

One of the important aspects of the definition of indigenous peoples as stated in the Martinez Cobo study is that they are "determined to preserve, develop and transmit to future generations their ancestral territories and their ethnic identity as the basis of their continual existence as peoples, in accordance with their own cultural patterns, social institutions and legal system"

(Martínez Cobo 1986, 7). Yet gender and gender roles play an important part in fulfilling the conditions indicated in the Cobo definition above. Not only because the different peoples among the Karamojong have specific roles to play in the survival of their cultures basing on their gender and gender roles, but also because the definition of these gender and gender roles is itself a part of their culture and as such, part of their identity. This study has therefore served to justify that in order to understand the social organization of the Karamojong, one must understand the roles that gender plays in determining their culture since males, females, children and different stake holders have specific contributions to make to the formation of their unique culture that is endangered by a number of factors discussed in this thesis. This study has served to illustrate that gender and gender roles are an important part of indigenous culture. This study justified the hypothesis that gender is culture and time specific and should be understood in terms of its own cultural conditions.

This study concludes and justifies that the Karamojong Peoples fit in the category of indigenous peoples as the term is used in international law. This is because they have lived their nomadic pastoralist livelihood for centuries and they are determined to keep their culture and practices. In addition, they have been sent of a big part of their land to foster the creation of Kidepo National Game Park. Yet they are also limited and restricted from sharing land and resources with neighboring communities because of national boarder and immigration restrictions. The survival of their cattle herding and nomadic livelihood depends on their access to land and natural resources thereon such as water and pastures. In addition, their livelihood as nomadic pastoralists is a major cause of their marginalization and discrimination by dominant Ugandan communities. It is this nomadic culture that also conflicts with the Government of Uganda development programs because it is envisioned as un-sustainable and also fosters cattle raiding, a practice un-acceptable by the Government of Uganda.

This study has illustrated that a number of changes have occurred in Karamojong livelihood. These include climatic conditions which have made their pastoralist livelihood difficult. The creation of national boundaries led to restricted movement of their herd, therefore limitation of resources. This was expounded by the creation of Kidepo National Park which cut off the Karamojong pastoralists a big part of their land. The introduction of fire arms in the region made cattle raiding a more violent tradition. The Uganda Government's program of disarmament also had associated challenges since it was sometimes carried out in a violent manner. In addition, unarmed pastoralists were forced to keep all their cattle in one herd protected by the Ugandan army for purposes of security. The introduction of formal education

also meant that children had to spend more time in schools and less time learning their traditionally expected roles. In this thesis, I have illustrated how the developments above have impacted the gender and gender roles of the Karamojong peoples.

My underlying argument in this thesis is that the changes above do not serve to make the Karamojong Peoples a more vulnerable and marginalized community in Uganda. On the contrary, they serve to justify that like any other culture, Karamojong culture is not static. It is rather a resilient and progressive culture. A change in livelihood and culture of indigenous peoples should therefore not be interpreted as loss of culture, but a change in meaning as defined by the community. These changes in Karamojong culture and livelihood therefore serve to illustrate that the Karamojong peoples are able to cope with changing livelihood like any other dominant communities in Uganda.

However the proponents of Change and developments should design and implement policies that will not keep the Karamojong people in a marginalized and vulnerable state. If not well managed, some signs of change can keep the Karamojong people vulnerable to exploitation. As Men's ability to provide for their families has reduced due to loss of cattle to the armed neighbours, this affected the role of women because women had to get out of their homes to start looking for income generating activities. During my field work, it was discovered that among the new activities women adopted was to do unskilled work to business persons who operate in their area. Such work included working as house maids whose payment is determined by the employer. To me that is a sign of continued marginalisation because in most cases the payment is too low. Here I call upon the government to fix a minimum wage and to at least compensate those who lost their cattle to armed Turukana of Kenya or even negotiate with the governments of the surrounding areas so that a complete disarmament project is carried out across all regions as also proposed by local scholars Elizabeth Stities and Darlington Akabwai (2009).

Additionally the level of standard of infrastructure particularly schools in karamoja is not as improved yet compared to other parts of the country. The schools lack enough facilities as I observed some children who were being taught from under a tree due to lack of buildings to serve as classes. This has resulted into low literacy rate in the region which makes the people of Karamoja unable to compete for more skilled work with the rest of the people in the country. To avoid unbalanced development that would take the karamajong people back to their

marginalised position, all infrastructure in the area must be developed to match with the rest of the other parts of the country.

I therefore credit the new government Under the Leadership of His Excellence Yoweri Kaguta Museveni for implementing affirmative action to benefit the people of Karamoja. Even though coping strategies of Karamajong people require cultural modification but not cultural change as shown by the changes in roles of people of different gender, it should be noted that the traditional identity of Karamojong should not be prone to long run complete erosion. I would recommend that the proponents of development should not hesitate to involve the Karamajong people in decision making so as to yield sustainable livelihoods that would be in line with the Karamojong culture. This can be inform of co-management as discussed by Paul Nadasdy (2005). In his discussion Paul emphasises that “The First Nation people and elders possess Knowledge that the government managers do not, and incorporating this knowledge into existing management process will necessarily improve those processes”, (Nadasdy,2005 p. 233).

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Photos Illustrating Livelihood of the Karamojong Peoples



A young Karamojong boy looking after his family's herd of cattle and Sheep.

Source: Photo by Researcher



Local brewery livelihood by Karamojong women



Food storage facilities of the Karamojong Peoples