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RESERVE

LIVESTOCK MARKETING IN SAMBURULAND, KENYA: AN INVESTIGATION
OF THE SOCIOCULTURAL CONTEXT OF MARKETING BEHAVIOR

By

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Livestock Marketing in Samburiland, Kenya:
An Investigation of the Sociocultural Context of Marketing Behavior.

Abstract

The proposed research is an anthropological study of the factors affecting the marketing of livestock among the pastoral, semi-nomadic Samburu, with particular emphasis on the social and cultural factors which inhibit or stimulate the flow of stock from the pastoral sector. The field study, to be conducted for an **eighteen month period**, will focus on the pastoral household as well as on the relationships between pastoral households in order to examine the motivations for the alternative uses of livestock; what is the sociocultural context of the household strategy to market particular animals commercially or to dispose of stock within the traditional pastoral economy (such as in trade, gifts, loans, feasts or bride-price)?

The proposed research is fundamentally an investigation of:

- 1) the existing opportunities for the commercial sale of livestock,
- 2) the alternative uses of livestock within the traditional pastoral sector, and
- 3) the social differentiation among herdowners with respect to ownership and control of livestock, and the effect that social differentiation has on participation in the commercial (external) market and in the traditional (internal) market.

This study is intended as a contribution to the on-going research in Kenya concerned with increasing the productivity of pastoral lands and encouraging the integration of the pastoral areas into the national market economy. By looking at differentiation within a pastoral society, we can better understand the rationale behind different marketing behavior, enabling development inputs to be more appropriately designed and focused within a pastoral society.

1. General Statement of the Problem

The proposal addresses the general problem of the propensities for cattle marketing among a primarily subsistence-oriented pastoral people of East Africa. It is frequently emphasized in pastoral studies that East African animal husbandry is characterized by the maintenance of large herds with marginal involvement in the commercial marketing of livestock (Haaland 1977).

Since the colonial era, administrations have attempted to alter this condition and integrate the pastoral economy into the national economy. Programs were designed to reduce raiding, dig deep-water wells, and promote veterinary health in an effort to keep more high-grade stock alive and increase the supply of quality beef to the Kenyan marketplace. With improvements in human and veterinary health care resulting in rising population growth, overpopulation and overstocking have occurred in many pastoral areas, while the expected flow of animals to the market has not been forthcoming. Furthermore, development schemes aimed at 1) stock reduction, 2) introducing farming and 3) incorporating pastoralists into ranching schemes have, for the most part, met with failure. As has been suggested, the failure of these initiatives may be more a factor of the inappropriateness of new technologies and a lack of understanding of their secondary consequences rather than the ignorance or irrationality of pastoral peoples (Baker 1976; Goldschmidt 1975).

In a general sense, what is called for is a better understanding of the criteria by which pastoral herdowners evaluate existing market opportunities, particularly those social and cultural factors that affect the commercial marketing of livestock, either by inhibiting or by stimulating flow of stock from the pastoral sector. In examining these criteria, research needs to be focused not only on the individual pastoral households, but on the web of relations between pastoral households, where the majority of livestock transactions take place.

If a task of development planners is to create incentives for herdowners to market their stock, then we must better understand the constraints and negotiations involved in different livestock transactions. Until development inputs are appropriately designed to influence household strategies, livestock development schemes will continue to be "hit or miss" endeavors.

2. Specific Statement of the Problem

2.1 Review of the Literature - Theoretical Issues

Early anthropological studies, by emphasizing the social and ritual aspects of cattle-keeping over their subsistence role, may have inadvertently propelled the image of the "irrational" pastoralist. In 1926, Herskovits coined the term "cattle complex" to refer to pastoral societies from north to south Africa, where cattle are acquired not for their subsistence or commercial value, but primarily because of their religious and social value.

Subsequent studies, while not adhering to such an extreme viewpoint, and while acknowledging the important subsistence role of cattle, nonetheless continued to emphasize the religious and social aspects of cattle-keeping (Evans-Pritchard 1940; Gulliver 1955; Jacobs 1959; Spencer 1965). This disposition^{is} understandable, considering the emphasis in anthropology on ethnographic description during this era. Consequently, livestock have been discussed in terms of their crucial role in performing religious rituals, and their significance in establishing friendship bonds and clientships in the form of exchanges (stock associations). Cattle are used in compensation for crimes between pastoral households: they are the major constituent elements of bride-price used to legitimate marriages; they are named, decorated and mourned for when they die.

Current pastoral studies, while recognizing the social and religious role of cattle, emphasize that within this cultural framework, pastoralists utilize their livestock as a part of their overall economic strategy. This orientation has resulted in a number of theoretical explanations of the pastoralist's marginal participation in commercial marketing.

From one perspective, it is suggested that the marketing capabilities of pastoral herdowners may be grossly overestimated, when considering the minimum herd size necessary for subsistence. Allan (1965) for instance estimates about six cattle per person are necessary for supplying a herding group with their diet of milk and meat. Beyond this number, it must be realized that the number of cattle "sufficient to support a population" must include a large enough reserve to withstand the animal losses occurring during drought and epidemics. According to Jacobs, the Maasai, with 13 head of cattle per person (in 1961) and small stock, may

not be able to feed a household, depending on the climatic conditions. While two or three milking cows can maintain an adult in the wet season, as many as fifteen cows may be required in the dry season, and twenty or more may be necessary in drought conditions (Jacobs 1961, in Livingston 1977: 11; see also Dahl and Hjort 1976). When considering the variability of environmental conditions in pastoral areas, a surplus of stock is necessary as insurance against disastrous situations (including losses due to raiding) (Widstrand 1973). Consequently, the number of "marketable" stock, beyond the requirements of production and reproduction, are considerably less than formerly perceived.

Those adhering to a formal economic orientation express marketing behavior in terms of viable economic alternatives. In these analyses, individuals are assumed to make rational choices as to the allocation of scarce resources among alternative ends. The main proponent of this approach in anthropology is Schneider, who equates cattle with a form of currency, and examines marketing behavior in terms of the "returns on investment in animal husbandry" (1980: 104). According to Schneider, when cattle represent the best economic investment available to the herdowner, there is the accumulation of large herds and marginal market participation. On the other hand, where pastoralists can profitably sell their animals to agriculturalists, there will be an inevitable tendency for livestock to be partially taken from subsistence use and used in financial and capitalistic manipulations.

The price incentive is seen by others as a key factor in determining off-take levels. For instance, Jacobs contends that the reluctance of Maasai pastoralists to market their cattle is due, in part to the low prices offered by government buyers in comparison with those offered by the local butchers (1973:27-29). Goldschmidt similarly notes that the recurrent failure of government sponsored marketing schemes may be related to inadequate market facilities such as: processing plants, transportation facilities, credit, and market operations that are inappropriate to the pastoralists' traditional practices (n.d. 34-39). It would be wrong to conclude, therefore, that Kenyan pastoralists are opposed in principle to the notion of commercial livestock marketing. When presented with appropriate marketing conditions, pastoralists have responded with livestock sales. As Jacobs illustrates, while the Kenyan Maasai were reluctant to sell their meat to the Kenyan Meat Commission, they were marketing their cattle in Tanzania at triple the price (1959:51-53).

Moreover, White and Meadows note that this policy changed after Independence, and the breakup of the East African Federation. When Kenyan prices improved relative to those in Tanzania, and the KMC began to encourage Maasai pastoralists to sell their cattle to the commission, the KMC soon became the most important recipient of cattle sold for slaughter from Kajiado District (1979:10).

For the most part however, quantitative data on livestock off-take levels and research into the various determinants of sales are greatly lacking. Currently, this area of interest is a high priority of Kenya's Livestock Marketing Division (LMD). One of the recent analyses, examining multiple factors affecting livestock sales is that of White and Meadows (1979). As inadequate data exists to be able to analyse the effect of prices on sales, White and Meadows investigate four other influences on cattle sales from Kajiado district: 1) rainfall, 2) availability of grown steers, 3) incidence of foot and mouth disease, and 4) cash needs. They conclude that market participation is increasing, and that rainfall and increased cash needs are perhaps the most significant determinants of sales.

In sum, a prominent theme running through the anthropological literature on pastoral economy has been the significance of cattle accumulation in pastoral societies. Researchers have investigated the use of livestock in savings and investment from a variety of perspectives, each offering different explanations for an apparently irrational marketing behavior. The earliest anthropological works focused on the social and ritual importance of maintaining a large herd of cattle. The subsistence approach seeks to explain the disposal of livestock in terms of the subsistence requirements of the pastoral household in highly variable climatic conditions. Finally, the economic approach focuses on the exchange value of cattle. As we have seen, this viewpoint contends that pastoralists maintain large herds when this proves the best return on capital. Consequently, when an advantageous market exists, a pastoral herdowner will sell his stock for non-pastoral products.

This proposal chooses to focus, not on the subsistence level of analysis, nor on the economic determinants of sales, but on the social and cultural context of marketing behavior.

The project takes a theoretical perspective that has received little attention in previous studies, that of the variability of marketing strategies within a pastoral community. Headowners do not always follow cultural prescriptions with respect to the disposal of livestock nor do all pastoralists respond in the same way to the same ecological and economic conditions. Although ethnographic evidence illustrates this variability of market behaviour within pastoral societies, elements of contingency and variability has been rarely analysed in pastoral studies. A principle reason for this neglect has been the preoccupation of past researchers with creating typologies for pastoral peoples. There has been a tendency to classify pastoralists into "culture areas" and "culture types", and to analyse their behavior in terms of the aggregate response to external factors.

If development oriented research is to have any effect in pinpointing development potentials in the arid and semi-arid zones, then we must break away from relying on typologies that have led us to such notions as the existence of "pure pastoralists" (as opposed to presumably "impure pastoralists"). As Dyson-Hudson has noted,

We should try to cultivate assumptions of variability rather than variance, of continuity rather than regularity, of individuality rather than typicality (Dyson-Hudson 1972:9).

Therefore, the specific question becomes not whether pastoralists are becoming more market oriented or not, but what criteria determine the extent to which a pastoral household will be market-oriented.

In this respect, the proposal draws from previous anthropological studies of marketing systems. Most market studies in economic anthropology have been conducted from either the substantivist or the formalist approach. Substantivist studies have focused on the institutional features of marketing systems, and have sought to illustrate how market behaviour is shaped by institutional constraints (Bohannon, P. 1962; Dalton, G. 1965; Polanyi, K. 1957). Formalist studies have tended to focus on the marketing principle, illustrating how economic man manipulates the rules and norms of the marketing system in order to maximize individual gain (Cooks 1966; LeClair, E. & H. Schneider 1968). As with the majority of current economic anthropological studies, this proposal incorporates aspects of both approaches. In the first case, the existing market structure will be examined as well as traditional institutions which regulate the disposal of livestock. With respect to the formalist perspective, I will proceed to investigate the ways in which Samburu pastoralists negotiate individual advantage within these institutional constraints

In my concern for focusing not only on individual households but on the web of social relations between pastoral households, this proposal also draws from previous research involving the study of social networks. For, as Dyson-Hudson has suggested, in such societies where contingency and variability are essential elements, the significant social factors influencing the diversity of pastoral managerial and marketing strategies will be more effectively seen through the analysis of social networks than through the discussion of corporate groups (Dyson-Hudson 1972:9). Network analysis is appropriate for an examination of variability of behavior in that it focuses on man as a manipulator rather than a rule follower. A basic proposition in network studies is that man does not passively respond to sociocultural, ecological or economic determinants, but he actively manipulates the world around him in the pursuit of his self-interest. (Barth, F. 1966; Gulliver, P. 1971; Kapferer, B. 1976; Mitchell, J.C. 1969; Mitchell J.C. and Boissevain, J. 1973). Exchanges between individuals are therefore largely determined through the process of negotiation, and the analysis of the behavior of one individual with respect to another consequently entails the examination of the transactions between them. However, as transactions do not occur in a social, cultural or economic vacuum, network analysts concentrate on more than the study of single transactions. Emphasis is also placed on investigating an actor's past transactions, concurrent transactions with different individuals, as well as the social relations, economic conditions, and cultural values of the transactors involved. In this way, network analysis provides a framework for evaluating economic behavior within its social and cultural context.

2.2. Description of the Topic

The proposed research is fundamentally an investigation of:

- 1) the existing opportunities for the commercial sale of livestock,
- 2) the alternative uses of livestock within the traditional pastoral sector. (This includes uses such as gifts, loans, bride-price, and feasts.),
- 3) the social differentiation among herdowners with respect to ownership and control of livestock, and the effect that social differentiation has on participation in the commercial (external) market and in the traditional (internal) market.

2.2.1 Hypotheses

I expect to find a variability in pastoral response to given market opportunities. More specifically, I expect a general distinction will emerge between the marketing strategies of large herdowners, small herdowners, and a growing town-based pastoral sector.

Pastoralists owning small numbers of stock have limited assets in livestock to assure their self-sufficiency particularly through adverse conditions. Those herdowners in such a situation may be forced to sell stock, including breeding stock, in order to meet immediate cash and subsistence needs, diminishing their ability to accumulate surplus stock. Moreover, small herdowners generally reside near the urban areas where they have the necessary access to livestock markets and alternative non-pastoral evenues of employment.

Conversely, pastoralists who own large numbers of stock may tend to maintain their cattle within the pastoral economy via the internal circulation of gifts, loans and exchanges. Such herdowners may aim to invest in the pastoral sector in order to assure their self-sufficiency and ability to rebuild their herd in case of animal loss, as well as to acquire prestige according to traditional values. Therefore, while developers tend to focus on the marketing behavior of large herdowners, the pastoralists who market the largest proportion of their herds may well be a segment of the small herdowners.

Finally, there may be an emerging town-based sector of Samburu pastoral society that maintains high grade stock, and Zebu cattle, as well as diverse business and educational interests in the greater society. It is this sector of society, both large and small herdowners, that may be the most responsive to development inputs such as dipping and vaccination programs and land adjudication. More than any other members of the society, these individuals are likely to be "producers," responding to the fluctuating supply and demand for beef.

I suspect that diverse market strategies have been shaped in large part by social and cultural difference. Of those social and cultural factors there are three which may prove to be particularly significant: the nature of exchange relationships with other pastoral and non-pastoral households, the paths of information flow, with particular respect to market conditions,

and the career strategies of the household unit. Other significant factors will be sought throughout the study.

In the first case, it is likely that pastoral households are under differing obligations to exchange and sell livestock and livestock products, thus limiting commercial options. The nature of these obligations may be primarily social (i.e. bride-wealth or blood-wealth payment), economic (i.e. the extension of credit to oblige consecutive sales), or political (i.e. the loaning or gifting of cattle in exchange for political support).

Secondly, pastoral households may have different access to market information, depending on how market information is disseminated throughout the pastoral community. It is therefore necessary to investigate how a pastoral herdowner acquires, withholds, and manipulates information in order to gain a comparative marketing advantage for himself, and in the process affect the marketing behavior of other herdowners.

Lastly, pastoral households may not follow the same career strategies. For instance, some pastoral households may aim to diversify the household economy to include interests outside of the pastoral sector. Such households may invest in education, agriculture, or trading ventures. They may also build and rent houses in growing urban areas. Other households may choose to concentrate career interests in the pastoral sector, requiring heavy investments of labor and livestock from all household members.

Investigations of a herdowner's marketing alternatives, his socio-cultural characteristics, as well as his network of transactions will enable me to elucidate how these and other factors effectively shape marketing behavior. Moreover, such an investigation will reveal the ways in which the marketing strategy of one sector of a pastoral society may affect the marketing strategy of other herdowners. That is, the marketing behavior of one herdowner may affectively seal the options available to other herdowners. On the other hand, successful management and marketing decisions may serve as an example for others to follow.

2.2.2. Information to be Considered and Specific Kinds of Data to be Collected

The types of information to be considered for this analysis, and kinds of data to be collected are the following:

1) The Commercial Market Structure

I will investigate the existing opportunities for commercial livestock sales. In order to do this I will be examining the extent to which livestock may be sold through a market center or at individual homesteads, the opportunities to sell to alternate buyers (e.g. private traders, LMD, butchers, pastoral speculators), and the advantages and disadvantages for the herdowner of working through alternative marketing locations and stock buyers.

The specific kinds of data to be collected include:

- a) ethnographic description of market center: location, periodicity, seasonality, type and volume of trade, types of buyers and sellers, licensing regulations, and cess.
- b) description of decentralized market opportunities: location, periodicity, type and volume of trade, types of buyers and sellers.
- c) price of stock through various market outlets
- d) costs in terms of loss of animals, money and time in transporting animals via rail, road truck, or trekking to and from buyer
- e) social aspects of commercial markets
- f) goods and services available (pastoral and non-pastoral) at the point of sale
- g) Opportunities for credit and investment at point of sale

2) The Internal Circulation of Livestock

I will investigate the traditional pattern of livestock use for exchanges, gifts, loans, and the consumption of animals; and the nature of the social relationships that are generated and maintained with each type of transaction.

The specific kinds data to be collected include:

- a) the classification of the herd, in terms of age/sex/species, and in terms of the kinds of ownership or rights in the animal, and other parameters significant to the Samburu.
- b) an ethnographic description of the convertability of livestock to other resources (e.g., labor, women, land, food, stock, prestige) and the means of conversion (e.g., bride-price, gift, loan, feast).

3) Social Differentiation Among the Samburu

I will collect data indicating social differentiation among herdowners with respect to ownership and control of livestock. This will include an investigation of how the sample population varies with respect to social and economic assets, and differential access to environmental, social and economic resources.

The specific kinds of data to be collected include:

- a) residence and migratory patterns of the pastoral household
- b) herd size and composition
- c) family size and composition (including an analysis of the division of labor)
- d) lineage, sub-clan, clan, moiety, age-set, and hair-sharing group of herdowner
- e) education of household members
- f) non-livestock assets and investments
- g) household budget as an indication of diverse household economic interests
- h) career goals

4) Livestock Transactions

In order to evaluate the effect of social differentiation on pastoral market participation, I will collect data on both commercial and traditional livestock transactions, as well as data on non-livestock transactions which indirectly affect the disposal of stock.

Commercial Transactions

For each stockowner, I will monitor the actual choice taken to acquire and dispose of animals in the commercial market over a specific period of time. I will also record the stated reasons for such choices.

The specific types of data to be collected include:

- a) managerial decision which directly affect the acquisition and disposal of livestock. Such managerial decisions may include:
 - 1. the decision to alter the composition of the herd (e.g., shifting from a subsistence to a market orientation, a herdowner may sell more readily marketable species)

2. the decision to decrease or increase the household consumption of milk or meat with consequences for decline or growth of animal numbers
 3. the decision to seek alternative resources or investments (e.g., engage in wage labor by household members; investment in education).
 4. the decision to live predominantly in the highlands, or predominantly in the lowlands of Samburiland.
- b) number and frequency of animals sold/bought
- c) market and type of seller/buyer involved
- d) market decisions with respect to the particular type of stock sold or bought. Regarding cattle, such marketing decisions may include:
1. the decision to sell male immatures (1-3 years old)
 2. the decision to sell off these animals previously loaned
 3. the decision to sell off old females instead of keeping them in the herd for insurance against herd losses
 4. the decision to sell reproductive females, which may bring a higher price, yet reduce capital.

Traditional Transactions

For each stockowner, I will monitor the actual choices made to acquire or dispose of animals in the traditional exchange system over a specific period of time.

The specific kinds of data include:

- a) gifts and loans given/received
- b) ceremonial slaughtering of stock, feasts, bride-price and other wedding costs, any other culturally prescribed means of giving or receiving live-stock
- c) stated reasons for all such actions.

Non-Livestock Transactions

For each stockowner, I will monitor transactions which, although not directly dealing with livestock, indirectly affect the disposal of his herd. Such transactions include loans of cash and food, as well as the exchange of non-materials such as information, visits, and cooperative labor.

The specific kinds of data include:

- a) Sources of market related information
- b) routine visits between pastoral households
- c) extent and purpose of travel of household members
- d) the acquisition of cooperative and/or hired labour
- e) loans, exchanges, and/or gifts not directly involving livestock.

3. Methodology

The project will begin with an investigation of the existing market structure with respect to the greater highland Samburu region. The data to be collected are listed on page 8 of this paper. The information will be collected through observation at marketplaces and abattoirs, and interviews with the District Veterinary Officers, County Council Officials, local butchers and traders. Records sought include receipts of cattle sales from all district marketplaces, slaughter house records, records of cattle moved out of the district, household-specific herd count and composition, and household-specific vaccination records (the last three are filed with the Samburu District Veterinary Department, Maralal).

The information gathered will enable me to assess to the commercial marketing options available to Samburu herdowners, and differential participation in alternative market outlets. The data will also reveal seasonality and regionality of marketing activity, which will aid me in selecting a specific site location for the proposed ethnographic investigation.

The ethnographic investigation will constitute the main body of the research. It will be conducted primarily through the traditional anthropological methods of participant observation and informant interviews. Initially, I will build a current ethnographic foundation, especially with respect to the uses of livestock, the nature of livestock ownership, transfers, and related matters. This will be important to enable me to formulate meaningful questionnaires which will constitute the basis of my more quantitative information. (Such investigations will continue throughout the remaining study. I will also conduct an initial survey of the bomas within the Lodokejek location. Information will be collected with the assistance of an interpreter. Principle data to be collected will include the location and identification of bomas number of households and household members, favoured marketing outlet of each herdowner, and herd size and composition. Also to be ascertained is permanency of residence, and broad kinship affiliation of pastoral households within the Lodokejek location.

From the pastoral households surveyed, a sample of 30-40 will be selected for indepth study. Households will be selected so as to include both large and small herdowners, rural and town-based Samburu, those of diverse clan and group ranch affiliation, and pastoralists that are more and less market oriented. Every effort will be made to achieve representativeness within

these categories, for true randomization will not be feasible for a variety of reasons. A principle difficulty with random sampling lies with the fact that the project deals with a semi-nomadic population. While boma sites may be permanent for purposes related to the adjudication of land, the livestock and human populations migrate at various intervals to various locations throughout the highlands. By the time the location's population is accounted for and random numbers are assigned, households within the population will have shifted. Furthermore, the project is interested in recording the heterogeneity in Samburu society and is concerned with the disaggregation of data. Because the purpose of the study is to analyse the difference between market-oriented and less market oriented Samburu, to record social differentiation in a pastoral society, and to examine the web of interconnections between pastoral households, the random sampling technique, which isolates units and selects them according to a random numbers chart, is not appropriate for the project.

In order to
/ acquire the detailed information that is called for in an intensive anthropological study such as this one, the sample size must remain small. While a small sample size is much more manageable on the ground, it prohibits certain types of statistical analysis of the data. In an attempt to minimize this trade off, I will conduct a broad survey at the end of my study, testing key relationships in my hypotheses.

While selecting the sample, I will familiarize the participants with the methods and objectives of the research. Data will be collected through interviews household members and through a series of ^{five} / questionnaires to be administered throughout the remaining study by myself with the assistance of my interpreter and ^{two} / part-time enumerators. The five questionnaires are summarized below:-

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- 1) Human and Livestock Census. Recorded will be the composition and assets of the household unit. Also recorded will be the livestock owned or controlled by the household members, by class of animal, species, age, sex, and any other culturally significant category. Data will be recorded twice during the field study.
- 2) Loans, Exchanges, Gifts, and Consumption of Livestock will be recorded, together with the relationships of the parties involved and the stated reasons for such action. This data will be collected monthly.
- 3) Household Budget of major cash receipts and expenditures will be recorded monthly with the sources of purchases, relationships of parties involved, and the stated reasons for such transactions.
- 4) Purchases and Sales of Livestock will be monitored together with the prices paid/received, and the reasons for the transaction. This information will be collected monthly.

In addition, data on total district market sales of livestock will be assembled from Samburu County Council records. This data will allow me to cross check data furnished by other methods as well as enable me to evaluate the representativeness of my sample.

- 5) Work and Time Allocation. This questionnaire will record each household's sources of labor (e.g. household members, hired, cooperative work group), the purposes of each activity, and the time allocated to various activities, including visiting and traveling. The Central Bureau of Statistics Integrated Rural Survey method will be used. Therefore, the survey year will be divided into thirteen 4-week cycles, with questionnaires sampling three to five day periods within each 4-week cycle. The sample periods for each household will move progressively from the first to the fourth week of a cycle, eliminating the bias of the enumerator always visiting a household at the beginning or end of a month.
4. Interim Report on Field Findings: Description of the Population

The research is being conducted among the Samburu of the Rift Valley province in northern Kenya. The Samburu, numbering about 55,000, are a Maa-speaking people who ethnically and linguistically are related to the Maasai of southern Kenya and northern Tanzania. Residing in small base settlements of 4 - 10 households, the Samburu spread over a vast 11,000 square kilometers between Lake Turkana and the Uaso Nyiro river.

Samburu are well suited for this study in a number of ways:

- 1) The Samburu are primarily subsistence-oriented herders, possessing an elaborate system of cattle exchanges that involve social life.
- 2) The known complications of Samburu ownership rights exemplifies the difficulties and the complexity of decision-making with respect to marketing.

- 3) Due to the detailed ethnographies of Spencer (1965, 1973) and numerous articles, the necessary background information on the Samburu people is available.
- 4) The Samburu District has been an important supplier of immatures to the Kenya market. However, surprisingly little is known of the private trading sector, the internal system of sales and exchanges, or the reasons for the considerable fluctuations in official sales from year to year.

Specifically, the project studies the Lmasula Samburu in the Leroghi Division of highland Samburu District. The Lmasula is the largest of the highland Samburu sections, and the leading section with respect to all Samburu rituals. For instance, Lmasula boys are the first to be circumcised, followed by the Lpisikishu Samburu and so on. The research population is defined according to sections rather than administrative locations primarily because the principle sphere of cattle exchanges, gifts and loans is the Samburu section.

Stretching from Poror to Bawa, the Lmasula section includes the major trading centers of Maralal, Kisima, and Kirimun, and borders a fourth trading center at Sugura Marmar. Consequently, pastoralists in the Lmasula section have access to a number of market place options. However, the highland marketing system is not a highly structured one. Livestock Marketing Division (LMD) and County Council auctions are held both infrequently and at irregular intervals. There is not specified periodic structure which tend to bring together greater numbers of buyers and sellers. Rather, Maralal and Suguta Marmar markets meet daily, a market structure which tends to result in the thin flow of sellers and buyers through the market place. There has been only one auction at Kirimun since January of this year, and with respect to the Kisima center, there are no daily markets at all. Kisima rather serves as an assembly point for long distance livestock traders and local buchers. In such an informal system, the seller always runs the risk that, after walking his animals to the trading center, he may not find any buyers, or he may find only a few buyers offering unreasonably low prices. The seller then has the difficult choice of selling below value, trekking his animals back to his homestead, or paying for the animals to be boarded at the trading center until a suitable buyer is found. Another market option exists which avoids this risk. The pastoralist may sell his stock directly from his rural homestead, avoiding the trading center altogether.

Long distance traders and agents of local butchers often approach the pastoral herdowner at his homestead, offering competitive propositions. Similarly, other pastoral herdowners buy or exchange stock in the rural homesteads, hoping to make a profit by reselling them at the urban marketplace.

One of the market conditions that encourages livestock speculation and decentralized buying and selling is the variability of stock prices. While prices are generally highest at Kirimun, the fact that auctions may be held as infrequently as once or twice a year means that Samburu herdowners cannot rely on auctions as the sole commercial outlet for their livestock. Prices also vary considerably at the daily markets so that a seller may find the highest price for his stock in Maralal one month and in Suguta Marmar the next.

Due to the variety of sales options, plus the significant degree of price variability, it becomes crucial for a herdowner to acquire both current and accurate information on the state of the market if he is to find the best price for his stock. Such a market structure implies the importance of personalistic ties in regulating market sales, and further serves to indicate that the chosen site is an appropriate one for the proposed study.

The sales response to these existing opportunities appears to be high, relative to that of other locations in the district. 32% of 1981 district cattle sales occurred at Maralal market 53% of 1981 sales occurred at one Kirimun auction. Moreover, the greatest proportion of cattle sales is recorded as being made by Lodokejek Samburu. Lodokejek location (which is centered at Kisima and which contains a substantial number of Lmasula) contributed 17% of district sales during this initial period of 1981. (Samburu County Council Cattle Sales Receipts). Because of the proximity to Maralal and the relative ease with which these data can be collected, the figures presented may be distorted in favor of the Lodokejek location. They only serve as a rough indication of relative market activity in the district. It would also be misleading to imply that this sales record illustrates the high market orientation of Lodokejek location Samburu. Withstanding the existing market opportunities, and the significant amount of cattle sales relative to other regions of Samburuland, the important fact to be dealt with is that Lodokejek Samburu remain fundamentally cattle keepers and not beef producers.

Initial field findings indicate that they prefer to invest in livestock rather than urban enterprises, to sell under drought conditions and withhold cattle from the market during wet seasons. Urban administrators as well as local butchers and traders explain this perceived market behavior by pointing to cultural practices and values which obstruct the marketing of livestock among the Samburu. Thus the general problem which this project addresses is restated.

My initial ethnographic investigations examined these cultural practices and values involving the management and disposal of livestock. Evidence collected to date indicates that regardless of the adoption of agricultural activities, milk and meat continue to be the preferred Samburu food. Maize, although grown throughout regions of Lmasula section, is stored primarily in case of drought or sold to non-Samburu townsmen. Moreover, although this maize is sold, the Samburu recognize that the revenues accruing from selling the small fruits of small shambas are necessarily small. Along the same line of reasoning, the amount of cash obtained from selling a goat or two at the market is not considered worth the trekk. Cattle therefore remain the primary source of cash for the Lmasula pastoralists.

With respect to the social and cultural significance of cattle, I have found cattle remain to be important not only as a mark of prestige and wealth, but of ceremonial decorum. Herd size per household varies greatly within the Lodokejek location, according to the Veterinary Department inoculation records. In Kiloriti sublocation, poorer Samburu households, or Ndorobo-Samburu become dependent on wealthier Samburu, expanding their patron's labor and resource base, as well as social status. Furthermore, livestock continue to be considered the only appropriate bride-wealth payment, gift at circumcision ceremonies, and sacrificial slaughter on the occasion of transition into a new stage of social life.

The traditional management and disposal of livestock will continue to be investigated throughout the project. However, an argument of this project is that, by themselves, shared cultural value cannot serve to explain market participation, because the Samburu are not a homogeneous corporate group. Interim field findings support this viewpoint by indicating significant social and economic differentiation among the Lmasula Samburu which may affect livestock marketing behavior. The Lmasula occupy primarily six sub-locations of the Leroghi Division; a general description of the populations of

each sublocation follows:

The Lmasula of Kiloriti and Poror sublocations are similar in that they densely populate two of the most fertile and forested areas of the highlands. Both cattle and goats are significant in each region, although goats to a lesser extent due to a high degree of humidity. Of any Samburu sublocation, these are considered two of the most advanced. The Samburu of Kiloriti have a growing attendance rate at both the local primary school and Catholic church, and are considered to be the most cooperative group ranch in the Lodokejek location by rangeland officials in Maralal. The Kiloriti group ranch, for instance, is one of the few Samburu group ranches to have already negotiated a government development loan. Moreover, virtually every household is currently experimenting in agricultural endeavors. Similarly, Poror is a major supplier of agricultural produce to Maralal, as well as the site of considerable experimentation in wheat production. Furthermore, this month, a group ranch has been incorporated at Poror, and is expected to be as cooperative as the Kiloriti ranch in the development process.

The sublocations of Nontoto and Misigio contrast with those of Kiloriti and Poror in climate as well as in their pastoral activities. Located on the highland plains east of Kisima, the areas are drier and less densely populated. Cattle and goats are kept; goats particularly are found in greater numbers due to the dry climate. The Samburu of these sublocations tend to be more intensively involved in pastoral activities than those of the forested regions, maintaining a larger average herd size and shunning agricultural activities.

With respect to group ranch development, the ^{two} group ranches located in these areas; ilKirimun and ilMisigio, are two with the smallest number of livestock and members in the location. For instance, while the ilKiloriti group ranch has a 1979 membership list of 321 names, the ilMisigio group ranch claims only 94 members (^{Rangeland} Division, Maralal). They are also considered by ^{rangeland} officials to be two of the more problematic and least developed group ranches.

A third category of Lmasula Samburu are those poorer Samburu who reside at the outskirts of the two major towns in the region; those living outside Maralal in the Maralal-Rural sublocation, and those living outside Kisima in the Mbaringon sublocation. These Samburu maintain small herds of livestock, small farms, and seek periodic employment in the urban areas.

Although they are reputed to sell few animals, they are ^{known} / for selling products that most remote Samburu refuse to sell, notably milk, ilisiish (milk fat), charcoal, fire wood, and seketiet fruits (used as a remedy for malaria as well as a general health tonic).

Finally, there are a growing number of Lmasula Samburu who are settling in the towns of Kisimia and Maralal. These Samburu acquire permanent houses, shops and bars, while still retaining their rural Samburu family ties, and are alleged to be the main suppliers of cash and credit to the surrounding Samburu population.

In sum, interim field findings indicate that regardless of common accessibility to livestock markets and an apparently shared appreciation for the value and multiple uses of cattle, the Lmasula Samburu appear to be differentiated with respect to the ownership and control of livestock, natural resources and other assets which suggests the existence of different livestock marketing strategies. The project will continue to investigate and quantify this evidence in order to ascertain the affect that social and economic differentiation has on a herdowner's ability and motivation to take advantage of commercial and traditional options with respect to the disposal of livestock.

5. Relevance

Aside from veterinary and health care programs, the "Development of Livestock Movement and Marketing" has the highest estimated expenditures for the Livestock Development Plan of 1970-1983 (Part II. p. 20 - 22). This is due to the fact that the Arid and Semi-Arid Lands Development Program is a new high priority activity for Kenya. The objective of this program is to increase the productivity of pastoral lands which incorporate nearly 80% of Kenya, maintain 50% of its livestock, and support 20% of Kenya's population. These pastoral areas face a sad condition of a degrading eco-system, and mounting poverty with few economic opportunities. The Arid and Semi-Arid Lands Development Program is expected to contribute to the national development of Kenya by promoting ecologically sound production schemes, and by encouraging the integration of the pastoral areas into the national market economy (ibid: 253-255).

In order to achieve these goals we need a better understanding of the functioning of the traditional pastoral economy, as well as the implications of the transition from subsistence to a market economy. Therefore, an investment in research on marketing incentives for the pastoral population seems likely to improve the bases upon which policy is founded.

The proposed research will provide the basis for my PhD dissertation in Anthropology at the University of California at Los Angeles, USA.

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