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## RANGELANDS

Pastoralists Do Plan! Community-Led  
Land Use Planning in the Pastoral Areas of Ethiopia



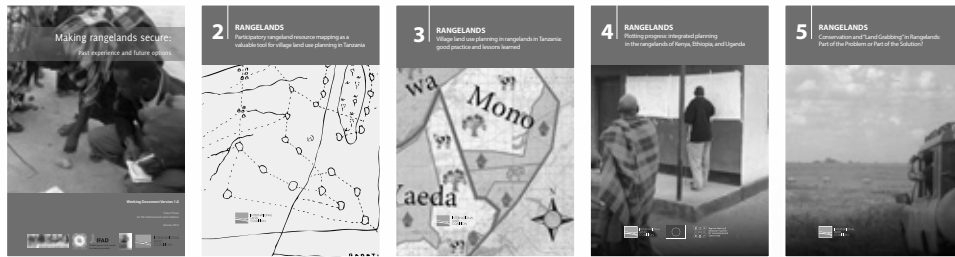
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The opinions expressed herein are those of the authors and the individuals interviewed for this report. They do not constitute official positions of ILC, its members or donors.



# Pastoralists Do Plan! Community-Led Land Use Planning in the Pastoral Areas of Ethiopia

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This paper is an edited version of a set of case studies that informed the development of a manual for participatory land use planning (PLUP) at *woreda* (district) level in pastoral and agro-pastoral areas of Ethiopia, led by the Rural Land Administration and Use Directorate (RLAUD), Ministry of Agriculture and Natural Resources. The authors and the ILC Rangelands Initiative would like to express their sincere gratitude to the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC), which provided funds for the development of the manual; to RLAUD, which initiated the project and has shown support for its activities throughout; to GIZ who supported the piloting of the Manual; and to Oxfam GB, which as an ILC member coordinated and administered the project. Much appreciation is also due to Professor Ivo Strecker, University of Mainz, who provided comments and input to the section on Hamer governance structures. We are also indebted to the pastoral and agro-pastoral communities who gave their time to explain the land use planning processes discussed here – it is hoped that they have benefited from the experience as much as we have.

## ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

AAU	Addis Ababa University
AFD	Action for Development
EWCA	Ethiopian Wildlife Conservation Authority
GIS	Geographic information system
Ha	Hectare
HoA-REC&N	Horn of Africa Regional Centre and Network
RLAUD	Rural Land Administration and Use Directorate
MoA	Ministry of Agriculture
MoARD	Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development
MoFED	Ministry of Finance and Economic Development
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
PCDP	Pastoral Community Development Project
PFE	Pastoralist Forum Ethiopia
PLUP	Participatory land use planning
PRIME	Pastoralists' Areas Resilience Improvement through Market Expansion
PRM	Participatory rangeland management
PSNP	Productive Safety Net Programme
SDC	Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation
SNNP	Southern Nations, Nationalities, and Peoples
SRMP	Sustainable Rangeland Management Project

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# Preface

The Government of Ethiopia and more specifically, the Rural Land Administration and Use Directorate, (RLAUD) has identified land use planning as an important tool for the sustainable development of the country. Land use planning is vital for optimising the use of the land and for reconciling conflicts between different land uses. Land use planning should be carried out at different levels – from national to regional to local including community: these different levels should support and integrate with each other.

Pastoral areas cover around 60% of the country – mainly found in lowland arid and semi-arid parts. These areas are dominated by livestock production, but are increasingly seeing other land uses creeping in. Though in the past, customary institutions have managed to govern the land well to prevent land use conflicts and to protect the environment, they have found this increasingly challenging as their authority has been challenged, problems have become more complex, population has increased, and competition for land and resources has grown.

With this in mind, the Government of Ethiopia has developed a process of participatory land use planning, currently being piloted in two pastoral areas of the country. This process builds on the pastoral planning that is already undertaken by local communities, as part of good land management and decision making processes.

In order to fully understand this pastoral planning the RLAUD and the International Land Coalition Rangelands Initiative supported a study to review how pastoralists plan in five different pastoral areas of the country. This Issue Paper documents this review, highlighting some of the intricacies of the planning processes, related governance structures, and the challenges and opportunities faced by pastoral communities. It is anticipated that this Issue Paper will guide other planning processes, in the same way that it has guided the development of the government-led participatory land use planning process in Ethiopia.

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Ministry of Agriculture and Natural Resources.

# Executive summary

Pastoralism is one of the most valuable, if not the most valuable, land use system found in dryland areas. Common property regimes are the norm and resources are shared between multiple users, demanding complex access and management arrangements. New challenges such as an increasing incidence of drought and/or a reduction in the effectiveness of coping strategies for drought and other problems such as the invasion of alien plant species are occurring. Attempts are being made to use drylands more intensively for activities such as large-scale crop agriculture. However, these shifts in land use are occurring with little, if any, comprehensive land use planning taking place.

In Ethiopia, policies and legislation relevant to pastoral areas do not fully address the issue of land use planning. No full regional land use plan is yet available in any of the pastoral-dominated regional states. Some land use planning activities have been undertaken by different government agencies at national and regional levels for site-specific purposes, but little has been done in pastoral areas. Exceptions are land use planning carried out in parts of Oromia, Afar, and Somali regions specifically for river basin development.

There is a common perception amongst policy-makers that pastoralists do not plan, and particularly not in a long-term manner. As a result, government views land use planning as its own responsibility, often driven by centralised, federal-level decision-making that relies on science-based land capability assessments, including soil and groundwater surveys. Where planning does take place, decision-makers rarely consult local communities, and if they do consult them then it tends to be by asking for comments on plans that have already been drawn up (and which are difficult to change). The most important starting point for such land use planning is understanding how pastoralists and other land and resource users currently use the land and plan and decide upon its use, and the related governance and management systems that exist to facilitate this. By building on these understandings and ensuring that they are the main focus of land use planning, future initiatives will be more sustainable. In addition, with local land users leading and participating in such processes, the land use plans are more likely to be integrated into everyday activities, and as such land users will be more willing to invest time and resources in implementing them.

## THIS PAPER

This paper consolidates a set of case studies which document how pastoralists plan land and resource use in pastoral and agro-pastoral areas of Ethiopia. These case studies are drawn from the regional states of Afar, Somali, Southern Nations, Nationalities, and Peoples (SNNP), Oromia, and Gambella. They describe not only why, how, and when pastoralists plan, but also the management and governance structures that control planning processes and the later implementation of the plans. By doing this, the paper provides guidance on how best such planning processes can be supported, and how they can be integrated with and/or built on by other planning processes such as those led by government.

## GOVERNANCE STRUCTURES

In pastoral societies there are clear, usually hierarchical governance structures that lead community decision-making processes and, for example, control access to land and rangeland resources. These have developed in different ways in different areas, influenced by the demands of the communities they serve, the natural environment, and political forces, amongst other factors. In some cases there may be specific governance structures for a particular resource (such as water), but in other cases decisions about all resources are made by a central group of community decision-makers. These decision-makers are usually elders, considered to be knowledgeable, and male, though opportunities will also exist for others (women, youth, etc.) to influence the decisions made. The social organisation and traditional resource management systems of pastoral communities have greatly contributed to the continuity of social and ecological systems for centuries. Common principles across these governance structures include inclusivity (rather than exclusivity), reciprocity, a focus on respecting the common good (including rights) which may compromise individual good (or rights), collectivity and cohesiveness, and respect for and a strong relationship with the environment and, without doubt, livestock.

## WHY, HOW, AND WHEN DO PASTORALISTS PLAN?

Land use planning is a lifelong practice for pastoralists, as environmental conditions and other factors are constantly changing. The plans of pastoralists tend to be verbal, and not written down. High levels of illiteracy are a challenge in most pastoral communities. Though verbal plans can easily serve the purpose of a cohesive and well-established group with similar interests, in a context where the number and type of land users is increasing there will increasingly be a need for audiovisual recordings, written documentation, and, for example, land use maps.

Pastoralists do plan, and they carry out land use planning for a number of reasons. These include: 1) to decide on and manage different land and resource uses; 2) to decide on and manage the access and use arrangements of different users; 3) to facilitate mobility; 4) to conserve sacred sites; and 5) to prevent and resolve conflict.

## THE INVOLVEMENT OF EXTERNAL ACTORS

In the past government planning processes in pastoral areas (as elsewhere) have tended to be top-down and lacking in community participation. There has been little systematic identification or planning of resource or land use, including of current land uses. To date, government planning processes at national, regional, and (sub-)river basin levels have not included communities to any significant degree. Often land surveyors and researchers appear in villages to collect information without the communities having any idea what the information is being collected for. Government officers summon community representatives to provide feedback on plans that have already been written. These representatives are then expected to take the information back to share with the larger community. This limits the amount of input that communities can provide – it is much more difficult to contribute to something that has already been developed, rather than contributing to a process from the start. There has been little communication or coordination between different government offices, which has resulted in sector-focused plans and conflicting decisions.



National parks are often established in pastoral areas due to the large amount of biodiversity to be found there, including large mammals that have been protected by extensive production systems and the general respect given to them by pastoralists. These parks are established without the input or participation of local communities, despite communities being potential key allies in protecting wildlife and the environment.

Pastoralists are increasingly being involved in the more detailed planning and implementation of activities at the community level. Both government and NGOs support community action planning in different programmes and projects – for example, in order to define community development priorities and to mobilise communities into action on the ground. Much of this action focuses on rangeland management and rehabilitation and on soil and water conservation measures.

Commercial investors and related investments are showing an increasing interest in pastoral areas, including foreign investors who are leased large tracts of land by the federal (sometimes regional) government. When commercial companies (particularly foreign companies) come into an area, they tend to have little, if any, knowledge of the local environment, local people, or livelihood systems. Tour operators, investors, and organisations focusing on conservation and/or tourism have also increased their interest in Ethiopia's pastoral areas in recent years.

### CHANGES TAKING PLACE

Pastoralists face cycles of drought, rangeland degradation, destocking of animals, rangeland recovery, and restocking of animals on a regular, if not always predictable, basis. As such, pastoralists are not averse to, and even embrace change, both short and long term. These could be changes in resource use due to variable rainfall or new opportunities in their livelihood systems such as improved provision of education or the opening up of markets. However, there are a number of more formidable changes taking place. These are happening as a result of internal forces led by pastoralists themselves and/or by external forces beyond their control. These changes present different challenges and opportunities for pastoral land use planning and the different actors involved with often the less powerful actors missing out.

### CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The following conclusions and recommendations are made to those making decisions about land use in the pastoral areas of Ethiopia.

Though it is clear that pastoralists do plan, this planning is becoming less effective as competition for land use in pastoral areas is increasing and the number of actors and interests in pastoral areas grows. In the past where government land use planning has occurred it has failed to adequately recognise and incorporate and/or build on local land use planning processes, and pastoralists in particular are often left out of decision-making processes. Effective land use planning at different levels with both vertical and horizontal integration can support local planning processes and help reduce competition between different land users and reduce the likelihood of conflicts. Fragmentation, blocking of movement, and access to communal resources are all challenges that require attention.

Often the administrative boundaries of government planning processes do not match those of local land users, either spatially or temporally. This may lead to divergence between the two. Local land users are more likely to relate to and commit to planning processes that are built on what they already know, rather than a process imposed from outside and of which they have little understanding. Incentives to do this can be more effective than directives. Local control over processes of change provides greater opportunities for adaptation and is likely to increase feelings of ownership and responsibility.

**Recommendation 1**

*Formal land use planning by government and partners is required in pastoral areas to reconcile the increasing clashes between different conflicting land uses, and to optimise the production opportunities that these areas present. Formal land use planning should be inclusive of pastoral communities and other land users, and build on the local planning processes already taking place. Lower levels of planning should feed into regional and national plans, and higher-level plans should provide a facilitating framework and guidance of local ones. Adequate coordination and information exchange between different actors requires facilitation.*

**Recommendation 2**

*The integration and complementarity of governmental and local/customary planning processes needs to be fully optimised. This requires a full understanding of both processes and how best they can be combined or developed. Some compromises may be required, but the end result should be a stronger land use planning process that will better serve the interests of different sets of actors. Implementing this process should be through incentives, rather than directives.*

Documenting how land and resources are used in pastoral areas can be important in raising awareness and understanding on how land and resources are used, by whom, when and why. It can also be an important first step in the formal legitimisation of this land and resource use through the act of transferring previously undocumented local knowledge and use of land to paper. Participatory mapping of land and resources is a particularly effective tool in this regard.

**Recommendation 3**

*Comprehensive collection of information is required as a first step in the land use planning process, including both physical/scientific and socio-economic data. Pastoral communities should be supported in mapping and documenting their land and resource use, including dry and wet season grazing areas, water sources, cropping areas, settlements, cultural sites and livestock routes. Local government should participate in this process in order to provide an opportunity for it to increase its understanding of this use and incorporate it into land use planning processes, and to provide some formal legitimacy for the process and the maps themselves. Maps should be produced in a way that is useful and accessible for both local land users and for government.*

It is commonly the case that local land users are not included in decisions about land and resource use and their implementation, including the conversion of lands to other uses. This is particularly the case for pastoralists because of their mobile lifestyle, meaning they may not be readily available for related meetings. Often decision-making processes are unclear,

even to those responsible for them. As the trends described in this paper have shown, this can compromise the benefits to local land users of decisions made and in worse case scenarios, harm them. Such a situation is likely to have additional wider impacts on local to national economies, and resource use and distribution.

Community-led land use planning works through elected committee members and customary social networks, elders, and clan chiefs to plan land use in rangelands. Through customary law enforcement and decision-making structures, pastoralists try to maintain a balance between resources on the land and growing demands, while resolving conflicts through negotiation. However, even successful community-led land use initiatives can lack technical skills and information to fully plan land use effectively and to benefit from opportunities created.

#### **Recommendation 4**

*Pastoralists and other local land users should fully participate in decisions made about land use in pastoral areas, including in their formulation. The significant knowledge that pastoralists have of their lands and resources should be a starting point for understanding how these can most productively be used. Consideration of all land uses, including cultural and ritual use of land, and the multiple layers of use and users should be included in decisions about land use. Capacity building of regional and local government may need to be carried out to support land use planning at the local level in order to ensure that rangeland users play a central role in decision-making processes.*

#### **Recommendation 5**

*All decision-making processes related to land and resources should follow formally agreed-upon and timely procedures that provide for documented, transparent and fair negotiations and agreements. Relevant documents should be translated into local languages and shared verbally with communities before decisions are finalised. Recording (written and/or via audio) of meeting minutes in order to have a written and visual record of consent processes can be of help where people cannot read and write. Once the plan is understood, people can then return to the negotiating table to further discuss it and to raise their questions and voice their concerns. This is particularly important in processes that demand significant change e.g. resettlement. Technical information useful for land use planning, including by communities, should be shared in an appropriate format. In times of resettlement, the services promised need to be established prior to relocation to enable smooth adaptation by communities to the new situation.*

#### **Recommendation 6**

*Clear steps for conflict prevention (e.g. consensus building and negotiation) and/or conflict resolution (or transformation) need to be incorporated into decision-making processes on land use planning. In addition, interventions are required to build agreement between different land users, including between different ethnic groups. These should build on successful customary practices of peace-building and conflict resolution.*

Land issues and land use planning are government responsibilities in Ethiopia; however, NGOs can play a supportive role. This can include covering the costs of testing or piloting new initiatives, and providing technical support and opportunities for government to learn from experiences elsewhere. Where NGOs have encouraged land use change (e.g. enclosures), this has often been done without full consideration of the wider impacts of this change on surrounding areas and/or on the communities involved. NGOs are also poor at coordinating interventions on the ground, so one intervention may support a particular approach that conflicts with what another NGO is doing. Where new groups or institutions are established, their relationship with existing customary institutions should be fully understood and prepared for.

**Recommendation 7**

*NGO support and interventions relating to land and resource changes should be better coordinated and NGOs should be more aware of the full impacts of change that they may initiate. The capacity of government to oversee this coordination, particularly at the local level through activities such as local land use planning, requires building. NGOs should play a stronger role in supporting government land use planning initiatives, including the cost of piloting, capacity-building, and implementation.*



# Introduction

## 1.1 PASTORALISM, LAND, AND LAND USE PLANNING

Pastoralism is one of the most valuable, if not *the* most valuable, land use system found in dryland areas. Pastoralism involves an extensive livestock production system, which requires mobility and flexibility in order to track and utilise patchily distributed resources across a heterogeneous (uneven) landscape. Increasingly in Ethiopia, livestock herding is being complemented and supported by a number of other land uses, including crop farming and dryland collection of non-timber forest products, as well as some destructive practices such as charcoal burning. Common property regimes are the norm and resources are shared between multiple users, demanding complex access and management arrangements. New challenges such as an increasing incidence of drought and/or a reduction of coping strategies to cope with it, and threats such as the invasion of alien plant species are occurring. In addition, there are a number of larger processes of land use change at work in Ethiopia: with pressures on other more highly populated and used areas increasing, attempts are being made to use drylands more intensively for activities such as large-scale crop agriculture. However, crop agriculture in drylands is highly dependent on expensive inputs (e.g. irrigation water and fertilisers) in order to try to “iron out” some of the variability in rainfall and resource distribution. Other expanding land uses include mining and infrastructure, as attention is increasingly being paid to these previously neglected areas – now seen as the “new frontier” for development.

These shifts in land use are occurring with little, if any, comprehensive land use planning taking place. Often, different sector-focused ministries make decisions about land use related to their own authority, with minimal integration or coordination between them. Land use planning, if it takes place at all, occurs in offices at a distance from the reality on the ground – and this is particularly the case for large-scale infrastructure and commercial investments, decisions about which tend to be made at a national level rather than local. Yet these are the interventions that tend to have the widest impact, both environmentally and socially. Little time and few resources are given to research and impact assessments prior to land use planning decisions being made, and there is an over-reliance on scientific data collected by “experts”. Furthermore, little attention is paid to current local land uses and the local knowledge embedded therein, and there is a disregard to the variability and interconnectedness of pastoral systems, with planners focusing on one component at a time, e.g. water. This has resulted in decisions being made that fail to consider the long-term and wider impacts of investments and developments and which ignore one or several groups of land users, with often negative environmental and socio-economic

consequences. Blanket-style decision-making is the norm, based on experiences of working in more homogeneous agricultural landscapes and environments.

However, planning in pastoral areas is different to planning in more sedentary agricultural areas in a number of ways. Not least, planning in pastoral areas needs to take account of the existence of large and sparsely populated areas, the independent nature of pastoral cultures, environmental variability, and the complexities of managing semi-natural ecosystems such as rangelands. As such, simply transferring land use planning processes developed for other types of ecosystems and related land uses will not work – rather, planning in pastoral areas requires special attention and a particular approach.

## 1.2 LAND USE PLANNING IN ETHIOPIA

Ethiopia's 2005 Rural Land Administration and Use Proclamation defines land use as "a process whereby rural land is conserved and sustainably used in a manner that gives better benefits". The Proclamation defines a rural land use plan as "a practice whereby the options that give greater economic benefit without causing land degradation and environmental pollution are determined and implemented from among the different use options a rural land can give on the basis of physical, economic and social information".

Under the previous government, master land use plans were prepared at national and sometimes at regional levels. However, these were not implemented nor were they translated into detailed plans at *woreda* (district) or household level, and now they have become inapplicable (ECSNCC, 2011). Ethiopia still lacks a comprehensive national land use policy and plan and, although land use planning has taken place either in a patchy manner (e.g. across certain river basins) and/or in a sectoral way, e.g. focusing on mapping of soils, there is still no systematic process of land use planning across the country.

Until recently, any rural land administration activities were undertaken under the Natural Resources Sector of the then MoA. However, the government accepted the importance of a higher-level rural land administration organisation that would spearhead land administration activities in the country. As a result, the Rural Land Administration and Use Directorate (RLAUD) was established under the Natural Resources Sectors Directorate of the MoA. The RLAUD has three key objectives: land registration and development of legislation; land use planning and regulatory aspects of this; and geographic information system (GIS) mapping. In each region there is found a Land Use Planning Team or Process, though capacity and skills to carry out land use planning vary.

Policies and legislation relevant to pastoral areas do not fully address the issue of land use planning. No full regional land use plan is yet available in any of the pastoral-dominated regional states. Some land use planning activities have been undertaken by different government agencies at national and regional levels for site-specific purposes, but little has been done in pastoral areas (Wabekbon, 2007). Exceptions are land use planning carried out in Oromia, Afar, and Somali regions for river basin development.

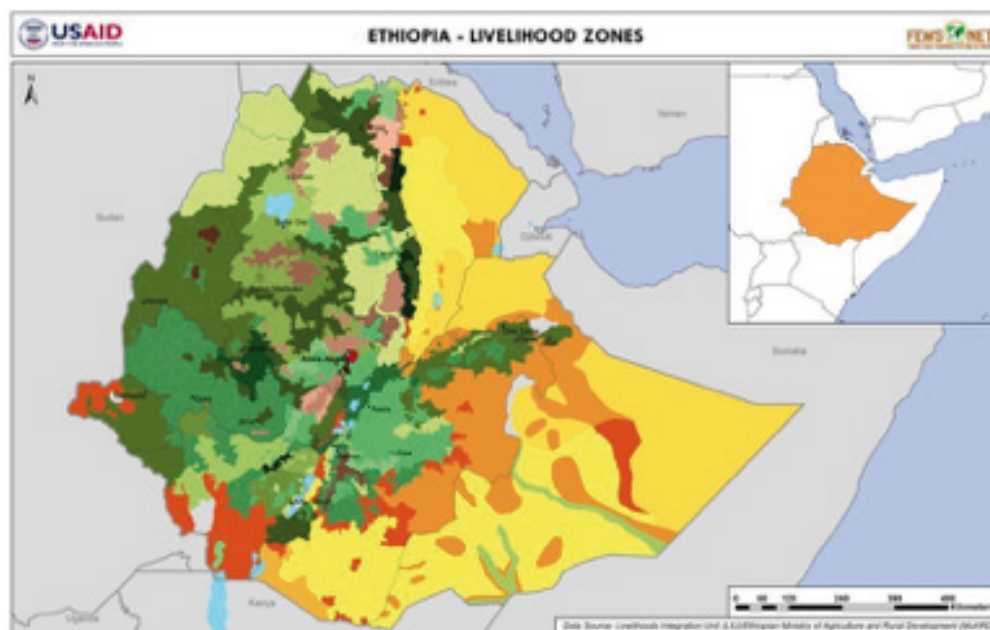
Experience from other countries such as Tanzania (SRMP, 2013; Kalenzi, forthcoming) shows that planning needs to be multi-sectoral and integrated and needs to involve all stakeholders. Currently the capacity of both regional and local government land experts to

carry out such planning is low, raising the need for intensive capacity-building. This includes knowledge of how to combine technical land capability assessments with participatory approaches that provide space for all land users to play a central role in decision-making processes. New planning initiatives, and in particular those that work with both government and communities to plan beyond small administrative boundaries such as river basin planning, watershed management, ecosystem management, and participatory rangeland management (PRM), are providing increasing evidence that planning at scale and with local land users in rangelands has benefits. Increasingly opportunities are arising to incorporate good land use planning within processes to delineate and register communal lands. If done well, planning can incorporate both physical and social scientific data, as well as the knowledge of local land users. If planning processes are clear and simple, they can be carried out at local government and community levels yet can incorporate enough data to ensure that decisions are well informed and have both a social and natural scientific rationale. Planning at scale and with local land users can also reduce costs.

### 1.3 PASTORAL AREAS IN ETHIOPIA

Pastoral areas in Ethiopia cover Somali and Afar regions, large areas of Oromia and Southern Nations, Nationalities, and Peoples (SNNP) regions, and parts of Gambella and to a lesser degree Beneshangul-Gumuz, found mainly along the eastern, southern and southwestern parts of the country (see Figure 1.1). These areas are typically arid or semi-arid lowlands and comprise approximately 63% of the total land area of the country. The climate of these areas is characterised by low and erratic rainfall – between 0mm and 700mm per year – and high temperatures, reaching 50°C in parts of Afar. The variability of rainfall is high, resulting in the patchy distribution of resources.

Figure 1.1: Livelihoods zones of Ethiopia (Source: MoA, accessed 2015, [www.dppc.gov.et](http://www.dppc.gov.et)). The yellow and orange areas illustrate the predominantly pastoral and agropastoral livelihood areas.



It is estimated that 12–15 million pastoralists and agro-pastoralists (of a total population of around 90 million) live in these areas, though many of these can now be called agriculturalists in livelihood and ethnic terms (MoFED, 2006). There are 29 different pastoralist ethnic groups – described in PFE et al. (2010). Although pastoralists may spend most of their time in the drier lowland areas, there is movement of livestock (in particular cattle) between the highland and lowland areas, such as between Amhara and Afar and between Bale and Borana. There is also a strong interaction with urban dwellers through trade and livestock links, as well as across the country's borders.

Although it might not be clear exactly how many true “pastoralists” exist today, what is clear is that many of those living in dryland areas still depend extensively on livestock production for their livelihoods. Their livestock holdings amount to 15.6 million cattle, 17.3 million sheep, 22.8 million goats and 4.5 million camels (MoA, 2015).

Pastoral areas not only meet most of domestic demand for meat but are also the main suppliers of livestock for export, generating about USD 50 million per annum for Ethiopia (Yakob and Catley, 2010). They also supply oxen for traction, manure, and skins and hides. Despite this, many of the pastoral areas are defined as areas of high food insecurity.

#### Pastoral planning processes

There is a common perception amongst policy-makers that pastoralists do not plan, and particularly not in a long-term manner. As a result, government views land use planning as its own responsibility, often driven by centralised, federal-level decision-making that relies on science-based land capability assessments, including soil and groundwater surveys. Rarely do these decision-makers consult local communities, and if they do consult them it tends to be by asking for comments on plans that have already been drawn up (and which are therefore difficult to change).

With increased interest being shown in the land and resources of pastoral areas as pressures on other lands have multiplied, there is a growing need for good land use planning (Flintan, 2013). This is vital in order to reconcile conflicts between different land users and to rationalise decision-making processes so that all factors are considered, including the full social and environmental impacts of changing current land uses, the economic valuation of different land uses (including consideration of secondary and tertiary users of land), and the needs and interests of local land users as well as other stakeholders. This requires a participatory and integrated approach, at a scale that is appropriate for considering multiple uses, multiple users, mobility, and the nature of extensive livestock production, as well as other aspects of pastoral livelihoods.

The most important starting point for such land use planning is understanding how pastoralists and other land and resource users currently use the land, how they plan and decide upon this use, and the related governance and management systems that exist to facilitate this. Pastoralists understand the complexities of these areas and how to work with them, rather than fight against them – they have adapted their livelihood processes accordingly. By building on these understandings and ensuring that they are the main



focus of land use planning, future initiatives will be more sustainable.

In addition, with local land users leading and participating in such processes, they are more likely to be integrated into everyday activities and, as such, land users will be more willing to invest time and resources in implementing them.

#### 1.4 THIS PAPER

This paper consolidates a set of case studies which document how pastoralists plan land and resource use in pastoral and agro-pastoral areas of Ethiopia. These case studies are drawn from the regional states of Afar, Somali, SNNP, Oromia, and Gambella. They describe not only why, how, and when pastoralists plan, but also the management and governance structures that control planning processes and the later implementation of the plans. By doing this, the paper provides guidance on how best such planning processes can be supported, and how they can be integrated with other planning processes such as those led by government.

Case study sites were identified using a number of criteria, including the domination of pastoralism as a livelihood system, the presence of customary governance institutions, and evidence of land use change. Case studies were carried out in the following areas:

Region	Woreda*/zone	Village if applicable
Gambella	Mekuy and Jikawu woredas, Nuer zone	Gir, Puldegn, and Adura
Afar	Gewane woreda	
SNNP	Mursiland, Sala Mago woreda, South Omo zone	
Somali	Afdem woreda, Shinile zone	
Oromia	Borana zone (secondary data only)	

\* Government administrative structures in Ethiopia commence with national to regional to zone to woreda (district) and kebele (village).

Information was collected through participatory research, working with community representatives to reflect upon their land use planning processes and to synthesise their knowledge. Participatory tools were used to encourage discussion and to open up space for different land users to contribute to the research, including mapping of resources, seasonal calendars, institution mapping, and trend analysis. This was supplemented by secondary data.

This paper commences by describing the different governance structures in each of the community groups in order to set the institutional context for considering land and land use planning issues (Section 2). Section 3 describes why pastoralists plan, and how and when. This is followed in Section 4 by a consideration of the involvement of “external” actors in these processes and resulting impacts. Section 5 focuses on the changes taking place in pastoral areas, including in relation to land use and land use planning. Finally, Section 6 provides conclusions and recommendations for working with and building on community land use planning.

# Governance structures

Before exploring how pastoralists plan land and resource use, it is important first to understand the framework of governance structures that facilitate this. In each pastoral group the interpretation and application of governance is slightly different, though across all there are guiding principles, including the protection of group (e.g. clan) assets and rights (which often occurs at the expense of individual rights), reciprocity, inclusivity rather than exclusivity, and the redistribution of wealth and assistance to poorer groups in the community. Rules and regulations tend to be unwritten, and may include the prohibition of certain activities in order to ensure that resources are used and maintained appropriately.

In pastoral societies there are clear, usually hierarchical governance structures that lead community decision-making processes and, for example, control access to land and rangeland resources. These have developed in different ways in different areas, influenced by the demands of the communities they serve, the natural environment, and political forces, amongst other factors. In some cases there may be specific governance structures for a particular resource (such as water), but in other cases decisions about all resources are made by a central group of community decision-makers. These decision-makers are usually elders, considered to be knowledgeable, and male, though opportunities will exist for others (women, youth, etc.) to influence the decisions made. The social organisation and traditional resource management systems of pastoral communities have greatly contributed to the continuity of social and ecological systems for centuries.

The primary governance structures found in each ethnic group that participated in this study will be considered in turn.

## 2.1 SOMALI

For the Somali group, leadership is based on clan ties where the clan chief, called *Ugaas*, plays the ultimate role in resource management, conflict resolution or prevention, and political and administrative matters affecting the community. Every clan has its own *Ugaas* responsible for its affairs. Different clans give different names to the *Ugaas*, such as *Sultan*, *Gareda*, *Waber*, *Malaq*, etc., but all have functions and authorities similar to those of an *Ugaas*. An *Ugaas* is elected and, once elected, the office is life-long. In most of the clans, the right to be considered (elected) an *Ugaas* is inherited from father to son and/or to close relatives. Community members respect the *Ugaas* highly and will cook for him, wash his clothes, and consider him to be a member of their family.

The Issa clan dominate in Afdem woreda. All Issa clan members, including those in Djibouti, Somalia, and Ethiopia, have the same *Ugaas*, who is often based in Ethiopia since most of the Issa reside there. Selection criteria include wealth status (he should be rich), a large family, and a strong Islamic faith; the *Ugaas* should be intelligent and wise, an elder, and command respect from people. Below the *Ugaas* in the hierarchy of leadership is a council of 12 Issa elders, representing the different sub-clans or houses of the Issa. The institution is said to be more democratic than similar bodies in other Somali clans. If an *Ugaas* dies,

his son or close relatives will not succeed him: a group of elders will be established who will screen candidates for the post and select one as the new *Ugaas* of the clan. Often a younger man is chosen whose skills and capacity, experience and expertise to lead the clan will be built over his life-time.<sup>1</sup> Whilst he is learning and developing the council of elders will play a strong role in guiding him and even making decisions for him – his role may be only to announce the decisions. Once the *Ugaas* is experienced and skilled enough to make decisions himself, the council will then revert to an advisory role. The council meets only if there are critical issues concerning the clan to discuss. The sub-clan representatives are responsible for issues related to the daily lives of the community at village level, or *Reeri*.

Traditional leadership plays a fundamental role for the community by discouraging disagreements and encouraging consensus-based decision-making and peaceful co-existence. Most issues are handled by elders at grassroots level, including the socialisation of young people, land allocation for cultivation, and deciding the directions and times for mobility. At both clan and sub-clan levels, leaders and elders play an important role in conflict resolution between the different clans and sub-clans, ruling on the use of natural resources, cattle raiding, marriages, and the implementation and enforcement of customary laws. They are also responsible for counselling and guiding the young, mobilising contributions to needy members of the clan or sub-clan or to individuals in the case of drought, disaster, or compensation to be paid, and for overall follow-up of reciprocal obligations.

Issa Somalis follow *Heer Issa* (the Issa custom) to serve all the Issa in Ethiopia, Djibouti, and Somaliland/Somalia. The *Ugaas* and council of elders make strategic decisions pertaining to land. They will also meet to make decisions about any offences committed. Compared with other Somali clans, the Issa's customary institutions are relatively intact.

There are two important rules in the Issa customary system relating to land and resource utilisation. First, according to *Heer Issa*, every individual has equal use rights over resources and the land belonging to the clan, without discrimination anywhere. Issa from Shinille, Aysha'a, or Erer districts can come and use the Afdem grazing land without any questions being asked. This is quite different from other Somali clans, where such rules do not exist and things are managed at a lower level of the clan tree.

By the same token, the second rule states that every Issa can use any resource on the land and cannot prevent others from using a resource he has developed. For instance, if a member of the clan constructs a well somewhere in the rangeland, he cannot stop other pastoralists from using it. The only advantage to the developer is the right to use it first. These two customary rules allow Issa pastoralists to use resources in the rangeland at any time of the year without objection from other Issa households. However, these rules apply only to members of the clan and not to outsiders.

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<sup>1</sup> The current *Ugaas* was elected around eight years ago at the age of 17 years old and at the time was still at high school. He is now 25 years old.

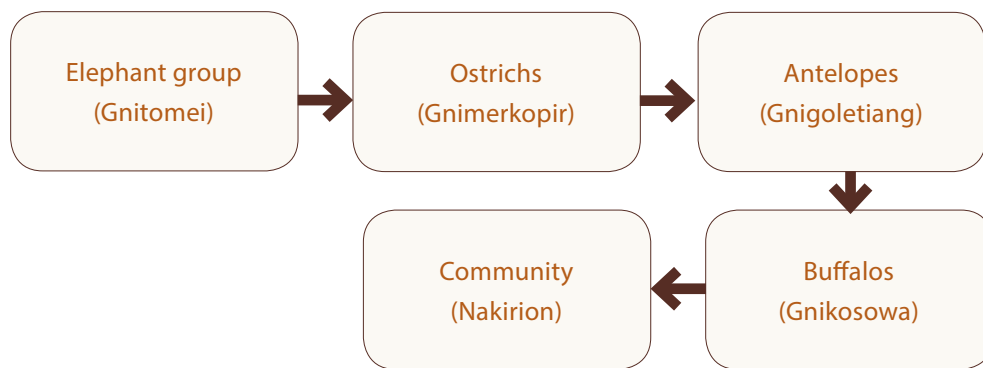
Women tend not to be involved in decisions about resource use beyond what they might use on a daily basis. The younger generation is not involved either, though the community members interviewed indicated that there are outspoken young men who influence the decision-making of elders. Either way, however, young men are relied upon to implement the decisions reached by the elders.

In Afdem district, Sitti zone of Somali region, the Issa are the predominant clan. The community has borders with other Somali clans, the Hawiya and the Gurgura; the district also borders Oromia and Afar. This has made for resource competition between the community and their neighbours and, as a result, there are frequent clashes between the Afdem pastoral community and other groups.

## 2.2 NYANGATOM

The Nyangatom, located in South Omo zone (SNNP region), are comprised of five different territory-based, non-political 'sections'. Traditionally, such sections have no fixed boundaries but rather they express the relative positions of the settlements and reflect the nomadic routines of their members. Today sections tend to be more permanent as movement has reduced. Clan numbers vary from several hundred to a few individuals.

Figure 2.1 Current generation age-set system of the Nyangatom with Elephants at the highest level of decision-making



The Nyangatom are divided into clans, with membership determined through the paternal line. Nyangatom society is a generation age-set system, embracing men and women alike. Each age-set is given a social identity using the name of a local species of animal. Any generation is given one of two possible statuses: their members, whatever their age, are considered to be either the Fathers or the Sons of the Country. Alternate generations (e.g. grandfathers and grandchildren) share a common status. In daily routine, therefore, fathers and sons sit under separate trees and socialise separately.

Currently the "Elephants" are the group highest in the Nyangatom age-set hierarchy, and they make major decisions for the community. The leader of the Elephants was chosen for his family background and leadership qualities. A decision passed by an Elephant can neither be objected to nor revoked: the decision is binding and effective and is considered to best serve the interests of the community. This includes decisions made on matters of rangeland use and management, which will affect the majority of the people.



Elephants have absolute power on how, where, and when livestock is grazed or browsed and how the land is used. The reason for the decisions they make, together with the process followed, will be shared with the community. This means that lower-ranking community officials will be aware of the decisions and the reasons for them, and will work towards their enforcement.

Ostriches are currently the second most important age-set group taking part in decision-making processes. However, their contribution is limited to engaging in arguments and in trying to convince the elders to consider their line of argument when making decisions. Ostriches also play a vital role in following up the implementation of decisions made by the Elephants, supported by the two younger age-sets, the Antelopes and the Buffaloes. These two youngest groups do not have direct contact or communication with the Elephants. Currently, the Buffaloes are the youngest group of Nyangatom, who are deployed for defence and livestock herding and, together with the Antelopes, protect the livestock from potential enemies.

Decision-making processes in the Nyangatom community do not publicly involve women. In particular, issues related to rangeland and livestock management are considered to be the responsibility of men. Women can contribute their views privately and put forward any idea they believe is right, but the decision will be made by the elders. A woman married to an Elephant automatically becomes an Elephant herself. Women do not tend to participate in clan meetings, although there are some meetings that elders invite any member of the community to attend, including certain ritual ceremonies and annual festivals (*Ekimomuar*).

### 2.3 MURSI

The Mursi also located in South Omo zone are patriarchal in nature and have a socio-political structure in which kin, clans, and local groups called *bhuranyoga* (singular *bhuran*) are the most salient modes of organisation (Turton 1987). While there is freedom to move within and across local districts (discussed further in Section 3.3), control over local resources, such as agricultural land and watering holes, is generally managed by individuals and their respective clans. While grazing lands are an open access resource, people tend to remain within their own local groupings (*bhuranyoga*). The Mursi are practitioners of a traditional age-grade system that is still followed and respected today. Elder men (*bara*) decide on most major matters for each age group. Mursi boys (*teru*) are raised to defend and protect the interests of the community and to achieve the status of married adult men (*rora*). Mursi girls are raised to become “strong girls” (*bansanaa*), and upon marriage take on the age-grade status of their husbands (LaTosky, 2013). While men make decisions regarding agricultural fields and the seasonal movement of cattle, women make decisions when it comes to planting, preparing, processing, and storing food, and choosing foraging sites for collecting wild edible leaves that are essential for meeting everyday dietary needs (ibid.).

The local “priest” or ritual leader (*Komoru*) plays a particular and powerful role in land use decision-making, and it is believed that he has the ability to bring good (and bad) to the land through his ritual powers. *Komoru* can restrict access to an area to allow it to rest or rehabilitate and/or can order livestock to be moved to a different area.

Once a decision has been made, no-one will try to interfere with it. *Komor* have been known to curse an area, so that if cattle go to graze there they will be at risk of dying or they (and their herders) will be at risk of being attacked by wild animals.

The *Komor*'s main job, however, is to perform rituals that bring well-being to the land, the cattle, and people. If the cattle are suffering from disease or are moved to a new place, the *Komor* must first carry out a ritual called *biyo lama* ("blessing the cattle") to curse the disease or one known as *rossen uro ma* ("milking by the river"), so that when the cattle graze and drink in that place they will be healthy. He can also perform rituals such as *komoru lam muntan*, *lam muntana bioyin*, *lam muntana liwa*, or *muntana mirogi* that can, respectively, ward off disease from cattle and sorghum, bring fertility to the land, and prevent war. The Mursi believe that without such rituals their cattle, crops, and people will face serious problems.

#### 2.4 AFAR

The Afar sustain their production system through the indigenous institutions *Medaa* and *Adaa*. The *Medaa* is the customary legal system that makes decisions and governs the management and use of the rangeland, dealing with issues such as conflict resolution, natural resource management (including livestock and rangelands), mutual assistance, external relationships, and emergency situations (such as drought). *Adaa* is the set of rules (customary laws) set by the *Medaa*.

Afar elders strongly emphasise that *Adaa* governs all the Afar, irrespective of their clan (*kedo*) affiliation or area of residence, or changes in national politics. They have a strong sense of respect for traditional rules and guidelines, and respect for the elderly. Authority is based on clan ties, with a structure of clan leader (*Kedo Aba*), vice clan leaders (*Dala Aba*), youth leaders (*Fei'ma Aba*), and council of elders (locally called *Edola* made up of *Yasin sera* and *Ali sera*<sup>2</sup>).

In general the Afar are divided into clans and sub-clans. Below the clan level there are *burra*, which are households and/or immediate families and *dahla*, who are lineage or extended family members. Members of single, and sometimes several clans form *ganta* or settlements – these may be temporary or permanent. The council of elders or *Edola*<sup>3</sup> is a body that is constituted in a given community as need arises. The *Kedo Aba*, *Dala Aba*, and *Edola* have decisive roles in resolving disputes between clans, individuals, and other ethnic groups, strengthening the clan, segregating members of their own clan from other clans, and advising clan and sub-clan members regarding their safety and well-being, as well as in managing access to land. Most decisions pertinent to the arbitration and settlement of disputes over social and economic issues and the management of rangeland and natural resources are taken by these leaders, who also manage and protect the *Adaa* (customary laws), Islamic religious practices, and the Afar pastoral way of life.

2 *Ali sera* and *Yasin sera* are the most powerful elders in the clan. In Gewane (or Baadu) area there are two sub-divisions in the clan – *Ulut modayto* (represented by *Ali sera*) and *Wadimak messara* (represented by *Yasin sera*).

3 Also spelt *Idolla*

Land in Afar is divided into *sultanates*, which are further divided into tribe and clan territories. Each clan usually presides over a number of strategic resources, such as wet and dry season grazing areas and water points. The *Kedo Aba* is the primary decision-maker related to land use and rights, including about land allocation to 'outsiders.' In the wet season, Afar livestock graze open rangelands, which are loosely managed by clan units. However, scarcity of water in the dry season leads pastoralists back to the Awash River, which is the principal dry season water source. Grazing around the river is delineated and managed by clans through the clan elders (or judges) (*Mekabons*) where territorial affiliations are strong, and infringements of traditional law are penalised.

In Gewane district, the *Mekabons* lead decisions regarding use of the rangelands. They are the ones who will discuss any important issues with the local government, and they are responsible for making decisions about the spatial and temporal use of the rangelands for grazing, settlement, farming, and, when required, for emergency purposes. They handle negotiations related to these issues, and to conflict resolution when necessary. Sub-clan leaders will support the main clan leader, contribute to decisions, and be responsible for the distribution of information given to them by the leader. In the first instance the clan leaders will make a decision, then the elders will ratify it. Once the decision is agreed upon, a *fatiha* (prayer/blessing) will be made before execution. Under customary law, once the decision is ratified and blessed, it must be universally accepted and no further amendment can be made to it. Those who reject the decision will lose part of their possessions as a punishment. The *Du'abe* ("rangeland managers") are the ones who facilitate and mobilise the movement of livestock and the rotation of grazing land, under the authority of the clan leaders. They decide when and where new grazing sites are required, and will mobilise representatives from the sub-clans (through the *Dala Aba*) to go out and assess the quantity and quality of rangeland resources.

The Afar *Du'abe* are responsible for:

- » Facilitating and mobilising the movement of livestock and the rotation of grazing land;
- » Sending scouts (*Geba*) at night-time to assess the potential of the grazing area and potential security issues. The *Geba* are expected to defend the clan resources and sometimes even sacrifice their lives for the sake of the community;
- » Announcing the day of *guuro* (migration or movement/travel) to all the clan leaders and community members;
- » Discussing the selection of grazing land with youth leaders (*Fei'ma'Aba*) and monitoring the issuing of food to the *Geba*. Every member of the clan has a responsibility to prepare milk for such individuals;
- » Changing grazing areas in times of insecurity;
- » Monitoring and evaluating the effective implementation of decisions made about rangeland planning;
- » Receiving daily reports from the *Fei'ma'Aba* on challenges encountered as well as successes.

Decisions made by the clan leaders and elders are passed on to *Fei'ma'Aba* youth leaders for implementation. The *Fei'ma'Aba* are the enforcers of the elders' decisions and are also responsible for gathering information on key resources and hazards, which they give to the clan leaders and *Du'abe*. They are also expected to monitor the condition of the herds in the grazing areas. Communities receive up-to-date information on the status of pasture and security from the *Fei'ma'Aba* in collaboration with the *Dala Aba* (using information from the *Du'abe*). The *Mekabons* have legislative power while the *Fei'ma'Aba* hold executive powers. On occasions when the *Fei'ma'Aba* fail to exercise their executive power, they are made to sacrifice their own livestock as punishment.

In Afar, no activity is supposed to be undertaken on rangelands belonging to clans unless the elders and clan leaders permit it. Increasingly, these decisions are made in collaboration with government officials. In times of drought, the search for better pasture and water starts with the blessing of the elders. In the case of small-scale investment, investors need to meet with clan leaders and request permission to use the land. The clan leaders with support from elders are then responsible for the investor<sup>4</sup> and for the sharing of benefits from the investment amongst community members through sub-clan leaders. All members of the clan will benefit from the investment, as under customary law they have equal rights and entitlements to the land and resources. However the clan leader will receive a larger share. Community members can also benefit from new job opportunities such as guards and labourers. Without the permission of the leaders/elders, no individual pastoralist should allot land to outsiders.

As in most pastoral communities, decisions are committed to memory and are not written down on paper. Ideas, experiences, and memories are shared amongst all the members of the clan, including children, so that if elders die, their decisions remain in force and are transmitted across generations.

## 2.5 HAMER<sup>5</sup>

Traditional offices in Hamer society are held either hereditarily or through public election, following nominations by elders. The leaders holding these offices are involved in the day-to-day socio-ecological, economic, ritual, and cultural affairs of the people (*zersi*) and the governance as well as use of resources on the land (*pe*) (see Figure 2.2).

In Hamer society, decisions emerge in a roundabout way through informal and formal debates amongst the elders (*Donza*). Depending on the situation, these debates may concern villages (*gurda*), larger territorial units (*tsinti*, nowadays considered as *kebele*), or the whole of Hamer country (*Hamer pe*). The elders select (and if need be, depose) particularly gifted orators as their spokesmen (*Ayo*) who represent them at public meetings (*osh*). The debates held at an important *osh* are preceded by: (1) lengthy discussions among individual *Donza* who have come to attend the meeting; (2) various forms of public divination, which

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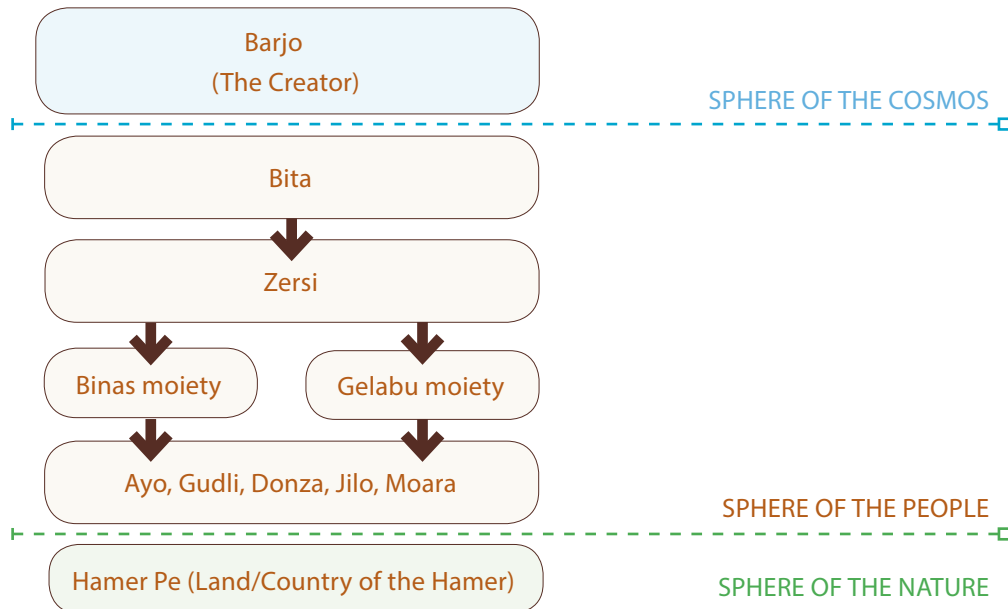
4 This applies to small-scale local investors only. Representatives of federal or regional government would negotiate with and/or be responsible for large-scale investors.

5 This section has been drawn from Samuel (2015) and Samuel (2014) with much-appreciated input from Professor Ivo Strecker, University of Mainz, Germany.



involve either throwing sandals (*dunguri*) or consulting entrails (*rukunti*); and (3) by calling forth good fortune by conducting mass prayers (*barjo ala*). Human beings, animals, plants, and the land on which they live all depend on an effective blessing during *barjo ala*, which is made for the fields by the *Gudli*, for the pastures by the *Qogo*, and for the whole of Hamer by *Bit* (see Box 2.1), who ward off war and disease and call forth rain and fertility.

Figure 2.2: Typology of the traditional governance structure of the Hamer



### BOX 2.1: HAMER CUSTOMARY LEADERS AND THEIR ROLES

*Ayo* are responsible for serving the people as representative speakers and messengers for specific localities. They call public meetings (*osh*) whenever there are issues of reconciliation, punishment, warning, or other important social matters to be discussed.

*Gudli* are respected elders responsible for the fertility and general well-being of the fields in specific neighbourhoods. Particularly at the times of planting and of harvesting they call forth the *Barjo* (the creator/guardian) of the fields, the crops, and the people. The office of *Gudli* is inherited from one generation to the next.

*Qogo* are similar to the *Gudli*, but their domain is not the field but the pastures, where they call for rain and fertility of the herds, ward off sickness, and ensure the safety and well-being of the herdsmen. However, at times the Hamer unofficially appoint individuals (*jilo*) who fulfil the roles of the *Gudli* and *Qogo*.

*Donza* refers to a man who has become an elder by completing a rite of passage during which he leaps over a line of cattle. Once married, together with all the other *Donza* he is responsible for making decisions and settling disputes in his neighbourhood and beyond. Often, the *Donza* gather for coffee early in the morning in a house in the village, or they assemble in the evening at their meeting ground (*boaka*) to converse, exchange news, and discuss important affairs, including decisions about grazing, water, land use, security, and any other current issue.

*Bit*a means “first” and entails the belief that the *Bit*a (1) were the first to arrive in Hamer country; (2) were the first to lay down the rules of social conduct in Hamer; and (3) hold the supreme power of blessing that affects the whole of the territory. Traditionally, the *Bit*a are expected to stay out of mundane politics and may not take part in any violent conflict, in order to keep their ritually clean status, which allows them to ensure the well-being of the whole of Hamer country.

The Hamer cultivate bond-friend (*bel/bekida*) relationships amongst themselves in order to exchange cattle and smaller livestock as well as grain in times of need. They may also have *bel* in neighbouring groups such as the Bashada, Kara, Arbore, and Tsemai, and even at times in hostile groups like the Nyangatom and Dassenech. Such alliances operate on a mutually beneficial basis, and arrangements may be made between two households to share the labour for clearing land to grow sorghum or grasses. This means that one man can concentrate on the land clearing, while the other can take care of both livestock herds. Those who want to enter into such an arrangement, and in particular where land clearing is involved, require permission and blessing from the *Donza*. Failure to inform the *Donza* may result in a fine.

Any decision that requires the use of resources on a different rangeland outside of the community’s jurisdiction involves pre-planning meetings at the village level. Elders reach decisions through discussing the options of their plan, together with the costs and benefits of implementing it. If negotiations with resource owners do not bear fruit, elders may decide to exercise force via the youth e.g. sending them to spy on their neighbours or even to raid livestock. In such cases, although the elders make the decision to challenge their neighbours, it is the youth who must undertake the action.

## 2.6 NUER (OF GAMBELLA)

There are six main Nuer clans in Gambella, and each main clan has at least four sub-clans within it. Together, they make up about 47% of the population of the region. In common with most pastoral groups, the Nuer rely on customary land tenure and land ownership that is easily exploited or encroached upon. Most of the Nuer live along the Ethiopia–Sudan border, where it is too dry for rain-fed agriculture. Livestock constitutes the primary source of income.

The most respected member of the Nuer lineage is the *Diel*. This word is used to describe members of a Nuer village with the same lineage – the “native” dwellers of the village. These *Diel* have greater status than those who have come to the village more recently. *Tut* is a name given to a man who is regarded as a warrior or hero in terms of anything that can be used to define bravery in the Nuer tradition. *Tut* often take leadership positions in the community and in the political life of the village, and the organisation of the cattle camps and livestock movement is in their hands. There is no hereditary leadership – rather, leaders are elected on the basis of personal qualities. These include lineage, age, seniority in the family, large number of wives and children, marriage alliances, wealth in cattle, prowess as a warrior in youth, skill in debate, and some ritual powers, which combined produce a suitable personality for a leader.

The Nuer also have a *Kuaar Twac*, who is the ritual leader, and the *Kuaar Muon*, the custodian of the land. A *Guock* is a religious leader who performs different types of religious ceremonies and rituals – the word has similar meaning to “witch doctor”.

All these groups of people play a central role in the decision-making processes of the community, including those related to land use planning. They also settle disputes in the community and manage mobility, and decide when and where the community should move to grazing sites. Information on the status of pasture, security, and anything that could help the well-being of the community and their property is collected by youth acting as cattle herders and scouts, who also carry out patrols to protect the livestock from robbers. The *Diel* govern resources such as water and pasture, while the second group of influential elders, the *Tut*, deal with mobility and social matters.

Information required for decision-making tends to be collected as these groups go about their everyday tasks and/or on patrol while looking out for Falata (pastoralists coming from Sudan) and other groups entering the community's territory. The information is passed on to the elders for appropriate action. Some issues such as security or the presence of Murile raiding parties may be reported to government officials for assistance. *Kebele* (neighbourhood) leaders assist and work closely with elders in the decision-making process.

## 2.7 BORAN

The Boran, Arsi, and Guji are members of the Oromo group and share a common form of customary social and political organisation, including customary institutions in natural resource management. But as well as similarities in customary institutions, there are differences between the institutions of each group. Customary institutions are set out at three levels – those with overall customary jurisdiction over land, social, and cultural issues (including conflict) in the pastoral lands of Borana and Guji zones (including pockets of Guji and Arsi); those in the middle with the critical responsibility of regulating seasonal access to grazing and water; and those at the local level of grazing and water management. The head of each institution is referred to as the *Abba* (father), and each has a council of male elders; this is known as the *Jaarsa* at all levels except for the *Gada*, when it is known as the *Raaba gada* (see below).<sup>6</sup>

### General customary institutions

Customary social organisation in Oromia is based on the *Gada*, a Boran age-grade or generation system in which one age-set rules for eight years by assuming political, military, judicial, legislative, and ritual responsibilities, before handing over to the next, younger age-set (this system is described in more detail in Ibrahim, 2005). At the head of the system, the *Abba gada* is composed of three selected leaders with different social and cultural responsibilities. The *Gada* system is complemented by the age-set system of *Hariya*<sup>7</sup>. In many parts of Oromia the *Gada* system has declined in authority, but in most rural parts of Borana it is still adhered to.

<sup>6</sup> The majority of this section is taken from Muir (2007).

<sup>7</sup> These two systems are complimentary in function. All males have a position in each. *Hariya* consists of ten eight-year blocks of similarly aged individuals between the ages of 12 and 91 who share a collective identity that evolves with ascension into subsequent age sets. The *Gada* consists of seven grades and increasing number of generation classes that are created every eight years. *Gada* grades can contain males of vastly different ages. Among other attributes the *Gada* grades confer political and ceremonial duties (Coppock 1974).

Once every eight years, in the middle of the *Gada* period, a pan-Borana general assembly takes place – the *Gumii Gaayo* (*Gumii* Assembly) or “meeting of the multitude”. During this assembly customary laws are reviewed, new ones are made, successors to the *Abba* are chosen, and major conflicts that could not be resolved at lower levels of judicial organisation are addressed. All Borana men are entitled to attend, speak, and be heard. It is the *Gumii* – the Assembly – that has the legislative power, not the *Gada* leaders. Today, although some of the traditional *Gumii*s no longer take place, the most senior of all the assemblies, the *Gumii Gaayoo* Assembly (GGA), is still held, with the most recent gathering occurring in 2012 over a period of one month.

The *Gada* council’s role in resource management and administration lies in establishing rules that govern resource access. The *Gada* council makes decisions on local resource use and determines the management of grazing and water resources.<sup>8</sup> Any changes to land use are introduced based on a customary knowledge system and are disseminated to the community through clan representatives. All clans have *Hayyu* (ritual leader or judge). The *Hayyu* is a legal expert, who translates laws and regulations and settles disputes.

According to the *adda seera* (customary law), all Boran men collectively own Borana land: through their clan Boran people have access to natural resources. The *adda seera* sets out codes of conduct for natural resource management, social relations, food, and dress.

Ritual priests (*quallu*) are important clan representatives in spiritual endeavours and are also involved in political and administrative tasks. Other clan authorities are messengers (*jallaba*) and organisers of meetings (*Abba quaae*) obliged to the welfare of clan members.

#### Mid-level customary institutions

Management of land (pasture) is not a clan responsibility among the Borana but the responsibility of “territorial units” (Tache, 2000) called *dheeda*. A *dheeda* is a customary territorial natural resource management unit, which is sufficiently extensive to allow dry and wet season mobility of cattle. These *dheeda* do not have hard and fast boundaries, but may change according to resources available; they are highly porous and are simply “known” rather than being clearly defined and written down. The *Jaarsa dheeda* (council of the grazing area) is responsible for decisions about mobility; they are also responsible for addressing social disputes and have an important role in conflict resolution. Disputes and conflicts not resolved by the *Jaarsa dheeda* level are referred to the *Rabba gada*. The *Jaarsa dheeda* once had a pivotal role in ensuring the organised mobility of herds in the customary pastoral system. Over time, however, for a number of reasons, this role has weakened.

Now herders do not necessarily adhere to previously established patterns of mobility between wet and dry season grazing areas.

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<sup>8</sup> The *Gada* system is not based on the clan system, but the *Gada* works closely with clan organisation to implement its decisions. For example, clan leaders are represented in all political, legal, and economic deliberations of the *Gada* council.

### Local-level customary institutions

The *madaa* is a smaller customary territorial natural resource management unit, comprising several clusters of villages (*arda*) and is usually established around a permanent water point. It is often commensurable with a *kebele*. Disputes and conflicts not resolved at *Jaarsa madaa* level are referred to the *Jaarsa dheeda*. Notable successes of *Jaarsa madaa* include negotiations with *kebele* leaders in order to re-establish *dongora seera* – the principle of restricted settlement areas controlling where homes may be constructed;<sup>9</sup> the resettlement of households out of grazing areas; a maximum size of cropped area of 1.5 ha; and the dismantling of private enclosures.

A *reera* or lower-level grazing unit (*sub-dheeda*) serves the *arda*, a cluster of villages/settlements or *ollas*. At this level there is cooperation on mobilising labour for important occasions and also on the use of ponds. Each *reera*<sup>10</sup> sends an elder to the *Jaarsa madaa*, which is usually comprised of elders from 14–17 *reera*. An *arda* comprises two or more *olla* (villages): the *Jarso arda* has management responsibilities for grazing, water, and land for cultivation at this level. Decisions are made at this level regarding lactating stock (*loon warra*), which graze around the villages, and dry stock (*loon forra*), which are grazed further away. The *olla* is a small family-based residential unit of about ten households (*warra*) and associated communal cattle enclosures that could be a seasonal home camp or a permanent settlement. It is the smallest unit of collective land and livestock management. The *olla* make independent decisions on herd management and share resources. The smallest territorial unit is the household – the *warra*.

Wells are managed by a well council (or *Cora ella*) of the clan of the *Konfi* (the man who initially excavated the well). This council includes a retired *Hayyu* (ritual leader and judge), the *Jallaba* (a clan leader and special messenger), the *Konfi* (“father” or trustee of the well), and the *Abba herega* (coordinator of well use or “father of turns”). The council has overall authority over the well and decides who gains access; the decision is informed and guided by the *adda seera*. Gaining access to a well depends on a contribution of labour commensurate with the size of the herd to be watered, and on “establishing and legitimizing links with the well council [where] the organizational units of Borana society, such as the lineage organization, the *Gada* system, the age sets and the relationships between them, provide a grid of potential links among individuals” (Helland, 1980: 71). Failure to provide the required labour or to adequately convince the well council of claims to water will result in exclusion, and water must then be sought elsewhere. The *Konfi* is considered the individual responsible for the well – this does not translate into absolute ownership, but he does have priority of access and makes decisions concerning the well (Bassi, 2005).

9 This was to a) regain control of access to pastures close to *reera*, which are used for lactating herds and b) to prevent fragmentation of grazing areas (Homann et al., 2005). *Reera* (composed of homesteads with at least one adult woman) are confined to a limited area.

10 A *reera* is a local every-day grazing range.

The *Abba herega* (“father of turns”) is the water manager responsible for the day-to-day management of a well. Water management is often viewed as being of more importance than grazing area management – the *Abba herega* is responsible for controlling the use of a well and is considered to have greater authority than the *Abba dheeda* (“father of the grazing area”).

Although today women are allowed to attend some sessions, the assembly and many other major decision-making meetings are highly dominated by male elders: it is assumed that women are represented by their husbands and by clan councillors, so their physical absence from meeting places is considered not to matter at all. Indeed, in general women are not involved in public decision-making processes and do not have authority in traditional governance structures. The exclusion of women is illustrated by a popular dictum: *Siqee mootii warra isin mootuti bade* (“Women’s authority destroys the very people over whom it is exercised”) (Ibrahim, 2005).

## 2.8 GOVERNMENT

In Ethiopia government administrative structures follow a decentralised federal arrangement, from national government to nine regional governments (and two administrative centres) zones (though not in all locations) to *woreda* (or districts), and then *kebele* (or peasant/pastoral associations, normally made up of one or two villages). The customary territories of pastoralists cut across these administrative boundaries/units and particularly across the boundaries of *woreda* and *kebele*.

In some regions, efforts have been made to align customary use of land with the more recently established government administrations. In many parts of Borana in Oromia region, for example, pastoralists have traditionally managed their use of the land and grazing around permanent wells – a permanent well is found at the centre of many *madaa* (territorial management units), with dry season pasture distributed around it. In many cases the *madaa* and its boundaries form the basis of the more recently introduced *kebele*. There are about 35 *madaa* with an average area of 500 sq km each.

However, though pastoralists congregate in the *madaa* area during the dry season, they move much further in the wet season, when plenty of surface water is available. This is an opportune time to use grazing elsewhere, while resting the grazing around the permanent wells. This movement takes pastoralists outside the *kebele* to wet season grazing areas that can be a significant distance away. This larger grazing landscape of any particular group of pastoralists therefore crosses several *kebele*, and often several *woreda*. This means that government land use planning in both *kebele* and *woreda* needs to recognise and take account of the fact that pastoral grazing areas cut across their boundaries – and as such, only part of a complete grazing unit is likely to be found in any one of these administrative units. Appropriate management and protection of the customary grazing landscape and units require the different *kebele* and *woreda* that the units cross to plan and work together. This is discussed in more detail below.



In South Omo, *woreda* tend to reflect the presence of different pastoral groups, which are many and smaller than in other areas. For example, Nyangatom and Dassanech are both districts in their own right and reflect the territorial/rangeland use of the land and resources by these groups quite well. These territorial areas/*woreda* then tend to be divided up into geographical/administrative “sections”, according to clans.

In Gewane *woreda* in Afar, the government has intervened in the planning decisions of communities since a series of conflicts arose between local people and agricultural investors. In Gewane every clan has around 300-500 ha of land. Conflict arose as some of this land was allocated by clan leaders to investors, with the agreement of all clan members. Conflicts increased between different clans, destroying social bonds. The government intervened to encourage more varied use of the land that remained under clan authority. A conference was held in Semera in 2013 to solve inter-clan conflicts over land use and to initiate more sedentary agriculture.

Today the local government in Gewane is involved in the decision-making process by facilitating transportation for participants to attend meetings, follow-up conflict resolution mechanisms, and documenting mutually agreed decisions. However, clan leaders and community elders have the ultimate power to decide local land use planning processes in Gewane *woreda*. For government, being part of the decision-making process on local land use planning helps support its villagisation programme and other development activities (see Section 4.1). Increasingly, government is being involved in ensuring that land use planning decisions are implemented.

In Gambella, elders work closely with *kebele* representatives in conflict management and security matters, and in relation to government development plans such as villagisation, large-scale farming, and social services. *Kebele* officials consult the elders and other community members for information on the local area and development issues. There are *kebele* development agents who advise the community on improved livelihood activities, including crop farming; however despite such interventions the majority of communities prefer to stick to the traditional agro-pastoral systems. Local government officials are responsible for assisting the community to solve security issues and harmonise community land use plans with those of the government. They work closely with the elders in planning and decision-making processes, as well as with human/wildlife conflict management around national park boundaries.

# Why, how, and when do pastoralists plan?

Land use planning is a lifelong practice for pastoralists, as environmental conditions and other factors are constantly changing. The plans of pastoralists tend to be verbal only, and not written down. High levels of illiteracy are a challenge in most pastoral communities. Although verbal plans can easily serve the purpose of a cohesive and well-established group with similar interests, in a context where the number and type of land users is increasing there will increasingly be a need for written documentation and, for example, land use maps.

Land use planning is carried out for a number of reasons. These include: 1) to decide on and manage different land and resource uses; 2) to decide on and manage the access and use arrangements of different users; 3) to facilitate mobility; 4) to conserve sacred sites; and 5) to prevent and resolve conflict.

## 3.1 DECIDING ON AND MANAGING DIFFERENT LAND AND RESOURCE USES

Pastoral planning tends to take an integrated and holistic approach that considers the interconnectedness of rangeland resources (land, water, vegetation, minerals) as well as connections with people and livestock and, not just one particular resource. As such, water use is planned with grazing use, for example. Though governance structures might give responsibility for planning and managing different resources to different groups of decision-makers (e.g. for water and grazing), these are expected to work together to ensure that over-exploitation of one or the other does not occur. This layered or “nested” approach of governance, with strong horizontal and vertical linkages, is typical of common property regimes.

Grazing resources tend to be most highly protected, even though rangelands are used for multiple purposes including honey production (beehives hung in trees) and collection of firewood and building materials, gums, and resins, as well as for livestock. This multiple use of the land increases its value and productivity.

Generally it is pastoral men who make the major land use decisions, including where and when to take the livestock for grazing. This is not to say that women do not play a role – women are more likely to make decisions about resource use and collection in relation to resources such as edible and medicinal plants, firewood, and materials for house construction or handicrafts. It has increasingly become the case that women play a key role in influencing land conversion to agriculture. Being concerned with household food security, women are keen to see food options diversified so they encourage the growing of grains and vegetables for household consumption, even though they are usually the ones given responsibility for looking after these, thus increasing demands on their labour.

Information that influences land use planning decisions includes the availability of water or recent/expected rainfall; current land uses; the position or status of the person asking for land; the availability of palatable grasses and wild foods; the potential of the land for

crop agriculture; people in need of social support; and security (including the presence or likelihood of conflicts). In general, communities rely on their own sources of information for land use planning (grazing, growing of crops, etc.) rather than on sources outside of the community; to date, additional and useful information provided by government or non-governmental organisations (NGOs) has been minimal. In general, information generated on land and resources tends to remain within clans, sections, and pastoral groups. However, in unusual circumstances, including in times of crisis, information can be shared beyond these. More information on information exchange processes is provided in Section 3.6.

Figure 3.1: Land use planning map, as drawn by community members in Gir village, Gambella



Multiple use of pastoral lands is becoming increasingly more common and a part of community decision-making processes. In Gambella, Nuer pastoralists use land for both agriculture and livestock. The use of land and resources is not restricted by administrative boundaries, but people tend to use the resources close to their settlements in normal times (of non-drought). Access to resources is not a problem for communities in general.

In Gewane, Afar households have traditionally practised small-scale irrigation close to the Awash River to produce crops for household consumption and to feed small livestock. However, today agriculture and other land uses are increasingly taking over large parts of communal grazing areas, which are being fragmented and privatised. This process has been heavily influenced by government “commune” or villagisation programmes (see Section 4.1). Today the same plot of land is used for multiple purposes – for grazing, charcoal production, crop cultivation, and for settlement purposes. This has meant a reduction in the number of livestock that the majority of pastoralists can manage (excluding some better-off pastoralists who have been able to hold on to larger herds).

Clan members have the right to use part of clan-controlled lands for individual purposes, on the understanding that individual investments and benefits will also benefit the clan as a whole. It is the clan leaders (*Mekabons*) and community elders (*Yasin sera* and *Ali sera*)

who make decisions regarding the multiple uses of rangelands. The elders' decision is then passed on to youth leaders (*Fei'ma'Aba*) for implementation. As explained previously, *Fei'ma'Aba* are enforcers of the decisions made by clan leaders and elders.

### Land classification

Pastoralists classify land according to a mix of ecological, socio-economic (production), and cultural criteria. The Mursi, found in South Omo zone of SNNP, classify their land into three types: grazing land (*missa iwony*), cultivated land (*baa gunyang*), and sacred land or ritual places (*baa barrara*). When discussing land use and land use management, the Mursi stress that all three types of land are vital for a healthy and productive pastoral system. As a local saying goes: "If you have only two cooking stones, you will never cook anything." That is, if you ignore, remove, or lose one of these three important land types, the whole system will collapse.

Somali region can be divided into *deyr* and *karan* rain-receiving ecological zones depending on the timings of the short and long rains; Afdem district belongs to the latter.<sup>11</sup> In this ecological zone the *gu'* rains fall from mid-March to late May, and are followed by *hagay* which continue until July. The *karan* rains fall from mid-July to late September and then comes the *jilaal* season, which is the most difficult part of the year, extending from October through March. Most rangeland is still used according to these seasons, and so it has dry season and wet season grazing areas. However, increasingly new land uses are conflicting with grazing patterns, and as available resources have declined the traditional drought reserve area is now used regularly for dry season grazing.

In Borana, Oromia region, the traditional *dheeda* (see Section 2.8) is sufficiently extensive to allow dry and wet season mobility of cattle. These do not necessarily match government administrative units however and often *dheeda* cross several *woreda*. Day-to-day administration of land including grazing is carried out through units called *madaa*, which are centred on permanent water sources, usually traditional deep wells. *Dheeda* cut across *madaa*. The *madaa* are further divided into sub-units called *arda* (set of encampments) that have jurisdiction over some form of local grazing areas, cultivated land, and, to a lesser extent, water resources. The encampments or *olla*, which each comprise about ten households, are the smallest administrative units in the traditional system. There are selected councils of elders at each of these levels, who are responsible for managing the overall affairs of their respective communities in a manner that ensures the implementation of resource use rules and regulations.

In Nyangatom, two different kinds of settlement are established. Members of the tribe who for whatever reason have lost their cattle live along the western bank of the Omo River, where they grow sorghum (a tropical cereal grass) and catch fish – this is the main agricultural zone. It is impossible to raise stock along the river because of tsetse fly, the main cause of sleeping sickness (trypanosomiasis). Those people living on the river who do own cattle usually entrust them to relatives to the west, who spend much of the year moving with their herds in an area that stretches from Kibish on the Sudanese border to the western pasturelands of the Ilemi triangle and the Toposa rangelands – the main pastoral-livestock zone. Herders' huts in temporary herding camps are made of woven twigs rather than mud, and can be

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11 The district has a climate pattern that is broadly similar to that of highland areas in Ethiopia.

packed up and moved quickly in times of need. Men spend their time away from the village, finding pasture for the livestock and protecting them from frequent raids.

### The planning of grazing

In nearly all rangelands, pastoralists manage grazing primarily through a system of dry and wet season grazing areas – i.e. it is the availability of both water and grazing that controls land use. In addition, factors such as disease control, including the breaking of grass-borne parasite cycles including those of worms and ticks, are important. Usually pastoralists stick to the same well-established patterns every year. In pastoral societies, a particular group may be assigned the role of herding: these are usually members who are young to mid-age, trustworthy, and strong. For example, amongst the Nyangatom it is the “Buffaloes” and the “Antelopes” who are responsible for herding, while also playing the role of scouts, assessing and relaying information on the status of grazing areas.

The quantity and types of palatable grass and browse are significant factors in the importance and use of different grazing areas. Steps are taken to improve pastures through grazing practices, encouraging the growth of palatable species. Pastoralists have detailed knowledge about different species of grass and their palatability (see Box 3.1). Dry season grazing areas need to have two important characteristics: a permanent water source must be available in the area, as there is no rainwater during this time, and trees must be available that remain green when grass begins to dry off. Scouts (discussed further below) are expected to assess and provide information on the distribution, quality, and quantity of grazing areas in particular, so that decisions can be made about when and where to move. In addition, some food to sustain herders needs to be available in grazing areas in order to supplement their diet of milk – wild fruits and leaves, for example, are commonly eaten. Often pastoralists remain in the dry season areas until rain is known to be falling in the wet season areas, and only then will they move.

#### BOX 3.1: THE MURSI'S IN-DEPTH KNOWLEDGE OF THE GRASSLANDS

There are many species of grass that every Mursi knows. Some are very good. Some are better fresh, some better dry, and some fatten cattle more quickly and help produce more milk than others. There are more than a dozen species of grasses, with different names. *Nganngani* is a very good grass, a delicacy for cattle; when it is fresh it is very good, but also when it is dry. Other grasses include *Lanyoia gidhanga* (a very good one), *engere warra*, *karamgerruwi*, *guudi* (also a good one), *wowoy* (good when it is fresh, but not if it grows tall and becomes old), *lanyoy a bilicho ko shigin* (there are two names), *tawali*, *sololi*, and *lanyoia mederuny*. There are also many tree species in the Mursi grasslands that the cattle prefer for shade. Two types of tree are *radi* and *sholbi*; however, when they are in full bloom they attract tsetse fly, making them dangerous for the cattle, though fruitful for humans. Once such trees have blossomed, the Mursi collect a good honey harvest from them.

Knowing how and where to burn the grasses is also an important part of rangeland management in Mursiland. This is important for changing the diet of the cattle, since burning turns old grass into fresh green grass for cattle (and wildlife). Every year different grassland areas are burned. If they are frequently burned off like this, alternating areas every few years, the old-growth trees will have a chance to grow and withstand the fires. If an area has not been burned for several years, people will not live in that area during the dry season since it makes them more vulnerable to losing their property (including cattle) if a fire does break out. People will live in places where the grass has recently been burned, which means that if a fire breaks out, it will not be as dangerous. A common complaint made by elders today is that local knowledge about controlled burning is disappearing, which is evidenced by the increase in scrubland.

As Mursi elders explained: "*Before they controlled the land very well. The Komoru will tell people nobody is allowed to burn grass in that area for three years and the grass and trees would become old and tall. The people working with the Komoru would decide on this and assess the area to determine where it should be burned and which areas would be left to grow up.*"

Being Boran technically entitles any Boran to graze anywhere,<sup>12</sup> but different controlling mechanisms are put in place by the different territorial units to make sure that pasture is not overused (limiting where and when people can settle, restricting grazing by stock type, establishing calf reserves or *kalo* (see below) whose location changes from year to year to avoid overgrazing, and establishing wet and dry season grazing locations. However, access to water, especially in the dry season, is decided by clans who manage permanent wells (see below). Therefore, clan-based decisions on water influence which pasture can be used when, and by whom.

In Borana, livestock grazing is managed through a satellite system, with a split herd: lactating cows, calves, and sick animals are kept close to the settlements, while others are taken to distant wet and dry season grazing areas. The main grazing area is the *dheeda*, incorporating both wet and dry season areas. There are six rangeland or *dheeda* systems in Borana – Dida, Woyama, Dire, Malbe, Gomole, and Golbo. *Jaarsa dheeda* ("fathers" of the grazing areas) are generally stronger in the pastoral areas of Borana and Guji zones than in the highland areas, especially where NGOs and government have been supporting them since the 1990s. Notable successes include the mapping of *dheedas* and wet and dry season grazing areas, the strengthening of wet and dry season patterns of mobility, the dismantling of private enclosures, and the reopening of routes to mineral licks. *Dheeda* are sub-divided into *reera* (grazing areas), which provide day-to-day grazing for a set of settlements (see Section 2.7). *Kalo* (reserved rangeland or enclosure) tends to be managed at *reera* level. The reserve is often fenced for use during the dry season, and can be reserved for calves, lactating animals, and weak animals. Access to the reserve is discussed and decided by *Jarsa reera* (community elders), and only a few animals are allowed to graze at a time so that the reserve is not depleted.

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12 This entitlement is applied to various degrees in Borana areas and is influenced by various social, political, and economic factors, which differ between locations.



In Mursiland, once again only men make decisions about when and where to herd and cultivate. Youth, including young boys, play an important role in herding as well as providing information about grazing land and watering points and are often the ones to report back to the older men if there is not enough water or grass. While the boys can initiate decisions, ultimately the older men finalise where the cattle will go and during which season. Only the *Komor* (local ritual leader/priest), together with the elders, can decide if cattle are to be stopped from grazing in a certain area; equally, this could be that a certain area should not be burned or that cattle must go and graze in a specific area. If the *Komor* makes such a decision, everybody will follow his decision and nobody will interfere with it. The *Komor* is a key player in land management issues and has the ability to bring good and bad to the land through his ritual powers, which are closely linked to it. He can also curse an area, so that if cattle go to graze there they are believed to be at risk of dying, and/or people and cattle are at risk of being attacked by wild animals.

The Afar, in common with most pastoralists, have regular grazing areas that they visit seasonally. There are three types of forage resource area used by the Afar:

- » Dry season grazing and browsing areas within a day's herding distance from permanent camps;
- » Much more extensive wet season forage resource areas up to 100km from the camps; and
- » Emergency forage resource areas used only in years of severe forage shortage (for example, the Chefa and Borkena valleys).

Movements between dry and wet season grazing areas are made not only in order to access grazing resources and water. They also prevent the build-up of parasites such as lung-worm, breaking the parasite cycles. Wet season grazing areas tend to have better quality grasses, which provide important nutritional requirements for pregnant or lactating cows. Grazing reserves (*desso* in Afar and *kalo* in Borana) are useful means of sustaining pastoral livestock during dry and drought periods when grazing and browse are under stress.

Figure 3.2: Map showing wet and dry season grazing of Gewane-Geleallo grazing system, Afar



**BOX 3.2: GRAZING ENCLOSURES (DESSO) IN AFAR**

In Afar most of a clan's grazing requirements can be found within the boundary of its' territory, with all members of the clan often grazing livestock together. During the rainy season in Gewane *woreda*, pastoralists move their herds from the area called *Badu* to *Alta*, which is more elevated and so better able to avoid floods and mosquitoes. They return to *Badu*<sup>13</sup> when the dry season starts. During their stay in *Alta*<sup>14</sup>, they use the water from the seasonal Ambuli River. When the water runs out, they dig temporary wells (*elaa*) – each clan will have at least one *elaa*. The pastoralists will stay in *Alta* until the rangeland grasses have been used. Use of resources is less restricted and controlled at this time than in times of greater scarcity and there can often be several clans grazing together. Once these have been fully exploited, they move their herds to grazing enclosures. In the past, these grazing enclosures would have been communal, managed by customary institutions (usually under the control of one clan) and laws. Use of these areas can be restricted to clan members only. Sometimes, the pastoralists would have diverted river water to these areas in order to increase the grass available. However, invasion of the rangeland by the shrub *Prosopis juliflora* has reduced the quantity and quality of the grazing land, as well as restricted movement. Movement is further limited due to conflicts with the neighbouring Issa clan herders coming from Somali region. This has meant that many traditional grazing areas have now been abandoned. Today, few if any such communal emergency grazing reserves are functional, and instead individuals keep enclosures near their houses to produce grasses for small livestock.

Although they are more agro-pastoral than some other groups, the Nuer have well-planned seasonal movements between wet and dry season grazing and settlement areas, through the leadership and guidance of elders. In the dry season (December–May) they move close to the Baro River and during the wet season (June to November) they move south to the Alewero and the Makuy River. The main reasons for movement are to find better pasture and water, to guard against parasites and pests, to allow grazed areas time to recover, and to cultivate farming plots, and for security reasons. In addition, flooding of the Baro River forces people to leave the riverside and move to drier areas in the wet season. It is common for adequate grazing (wet and dry season) and water to be found in a *kebele*, but occasionally movement outside is required.

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13 The PRIME (Pastoralist Areas Resilience Improvement through Market Expansion) project notes that pastoralists from Gewane also use Gebeyabora, Geileladora and Yigile for dry season grazing. PRIME is a USAID programme intended to improve resilience and the adaptive capacity of pastoral communities to climate change through market expansion in pastoral and agro-pastoral districts of Afar, Somali, and Oromia regional states.

14 PRIME project notes that pastoralists from Gewane also use Molale, Rifo and Andode, Ayelu, Mutkidela and Admegale for wet season grazing.

Table 3.1: Challenges to use of grazing areas in Gambella

Village	Vicinity	Wet season grazing	Dry season grazing	Challenges
A dura	Gninignang, villagisation site	South of Gninignang town	Baro River	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– No views about villagisation, but need to keep seasonal resource use areas</li> <li>– Movement southwards is restricted due to Murile from South Sudan</li> </ul>
Gir	Gambella National Park	North of the park	Baro River	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Human/wildlife conflict (depredation, transmission of diseases, poaching)</li> <li>– Restrictions on movement (park, Murile)</li> </ul>
Puldegn	Commercial farming site	North of Duma swamp	Baro River	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Conflict with investors (crop destruction, loss of grazing land)</li> <li>– Movement restrictions (due to commercial farming, Murile)</li> <li>– Encroachment by other users (Falata community, urbanisation, commercial farming)</li> </ul>

Other areas in Ethiopia are still overwhelmingly dominated by pastoralism – for example Afdem *woreda* in Somali region, whose population was documented as 65,000 in the national population census with more than 75% pastoralist.<sup>15</sup> With the exception of maize cultivation at Ruqi, the land and resources in Afdem are used for livestock production. Climate can have a fundamental impact in this, driving the land use systems that are most suitable for the physical environment (see the section on seasonal rains above under “Land classification”).

In the Afdem grazing system, the southern part of the district is used as dry season grazing and provides minerals (salt) for livestock once or twice in a year depending on proximity to the rangeland. In this part of the grazing system, trees and bushes provide essential feed for camel browsing. The forests are also a source of fire and construction wood, gum, and incense.<sup>16</sup> However, increasingly uncontrolled utilisation has damaged trees and thereby the potential income that some households generate from the sale of wood. Pastoralists stay in the southern part of the rangeland system during the long dry period of six months or so stretching from November to mid-April. The northern part of the grazing system, which is dominated by grassland, provides wet season grazing.<sup>17</sup> Communities know these areas in detail, understanding which particular sites have a better quality and quantity of grasses at different times of the year.<sup>18</sup>

15 [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Afdem\\_\(woreda\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Afdem_(woreda))

16 Vernacular names of trees that grow in this forest/bush land include *qudhac*, *garas*, *tiin*, *dhabi-ad*, *adada*, *dhabi-madaw*, and *sogsog*. Settlement and the need for construction and firewood are resulting in the loss of forest resources from the rangelands in the district.

17 Grass species *gahadh* (local name) grows in the vast plains and *rari* (local name) grows in swampy areas during the rainy season.

18 The main wet season grazing areas include *Siselu*, *Sodonle*, *Asyl*, *Harta*, *Biyo-Kulul*, *Dhankeron*, *Salahley*, *Robley*, *Hamays*, *Meydelal*, *Qadhanjalle*, *Dulwayn*, *Kumbi*, *Dokisle*, and *Ali-Jir*. Of these, community participants indicated that *Siselu*, *Salahley*, *Qadhanjalle*, and *Ali-Jir* were in a better resource condition compared with the others. As a result, these are the

A development for certain communities in Somali region is the fencing of pastureland, regardless of livestock ownership. Some people who used to be clan-dependent do not receive much assistance nowadays and so rely on involvement in different income generation activities. One of these activities is selling pastureland to people in urban areas. This is an indication of a more intensive livestock production system emerging in some pastoral areas. In some areas there are also communal grazing reserves, though these are not usually opened until all other grazing land has been exhausted.

Rules and regulations may also exist for “tenure niches”, such as certain trees. In Hamer, for example, beehives can be placed in trees on open land without permission. However, if the land has already been enclosed, then permission will be required from the person who enclosed it, and subsequently the honey produced should be shared between the two parties. Open land that includes trees with beehives already in place can still be enclosed to let grasses grow – though in this case the owner of the hive is not obliged to share his honey.

### Planning crop agriculture

Increasingly, grazing lands are being converted to the cultivation of crops. Pastoralists have always grown small amounts of crops, particularly around homesteads, but the trends seen today are much greater. Areas close to rivers in particular tend to be used for agriculture. Often this land is permanently settled and privatised, though landholders will use communal resources (such as grazing) as well as their private plots.

Sometimes government bodies or NGOs organise communities to undertake communal agricultural activities – for example, soil and water conservation activities – which may also be part of a productive safety-net programme. Government villagisation programmes (see Section 4.1) have also played a fundamental role in encouraging crop farming.

Often a community as a whole will carry out planning of where in the pastoral area cultivation takes place. Preferential treatment in the allocation of land for crops tends to be given to those who do not have livestock – who may have lost them during a drought, for example, and have little chance of restocking the herd quickly. It is increasingly common for individuals who want to farm to be allocated lands for this purpose next to rivers; in South Omo, flood-retreat cultivation along the Omo River has been a common practice for decades. Crop cultivation can also take place away from the rivers following good rains. The use of land for crops depends on the length of the rainy season – if possible, two sets of crops may be harvested in one season. It tends to be that the longer the rainy season, the better the harvest.

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areas that the *Afdem* pastoral community mostly use during normal years for wet season grazing. The main dry season grazing areas identified by the community include *Afdaba* Mountains, *Gubanta*, *Qudhanjalle*, *Ayaga* Mountains, *Ruqi*, and *Yaanta* Mountains. Of these, participants identified *Gubanta* as having a worse resource condition than the others. *Afdem* community members also indicated that *Salahley*, *Siselu*, *Qudhanjalle*, *Ruqi*, and the mountainous *Ayaga*, *Yaanta*, and *Afdaba* areas form a single network grazing system, which they use during both the dry and wet seasons. If the situation deteriorates, the community can migrate beyond this grazing system and may cross to *Oromia* and *Afar* regions. The community participants also identified *Qudhanjalle*, *Gubanta*, *Karaba*, *Elbahay*, *Salahley*, and *Ali-Jir* areas as having shallow wells that are dug in dry season riverbeds, and which provide most of the water for people and livestock.

Old state farms in Afar have been converted to private landholdings for agricultural purposes, often with elite leaders taking advantage of the process to benefit themselves. Multiple use of land is becoming more common, with pastoralists diversifying their livelihoods to include farming and activities such as charcoal burning. This multiple use is increasingly being seen on private landholdings, with the “owner” making all the decisions once the land has been allocated, encouraged by government-supported processes of villagisation.

Crop farming has been expanding in Borana since the 1970s. Farmland is locally called *obru*. A community member can ask the *kebele* administration for a plot of land for crop production. The *kebele* administration consults the *Abba olla* (traditional village leader) and the *Jarsa reera* (elders of the local grazing area) to check whether the requested cultivation would affect grazing, reserve pasturelands, routes to grazing areas, or water points. However, the land can rarely sustain more than one or two seasons of cultivation and it will then be abandoned. Others can then ask the local administration and traditional leaders to use the land, without the permission of the former user of the plot. This is because the land belongs to the community and the *Abba olla* has the authority to reallocate land for another purpose.<sup>19</sup>

Cultivated land in Mursi tends to be managed individually. As one Mursi man explained:

“This is really private [cultivated] land. They don’t go to use it without permission. The land is originally the Kwegu’s land. The Mursi and Bodi are newcomers. Sharing arrangements must be made with the various pastoralist and hunter-gatherer groups.”

On a similar note, if people want to move into or share a new area they will come together and kill a favourite ox. For the Mursi, this is like signing a document – it means that a big decision has been made which cannot be reversed. Such traditions around land use changes should be respected. In Mursiland rituals (e.g. *liwa shesheg* or “blessing the sorghum”) are performed before clearing an area for cultivation or if crops fail as a result of disease.

Cultivation sites, or *bha guinyow*, tend to be under the management of women. These fields are where the Mursi cultivate sorghum and corn, collect honey and a large variety of edible wild leaves, and where they can hunt wild animals for bushmeat. The *bha guinyow* are critical to Mursi livelihoods and are found along the Omo, Moizo, Mago, Mara, and Elma rivers (depending on the time of the year), as well as many other rivers that are vital for Mursi survival. They are also home to numerous sacred (and protected) trees, which are used for various ritual purposes. For example, the *liwa shesheg* ritual is important

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19 A forthcoming baseline report for the LAND project produced by Cloudburst Group indicates that nearly all pastoral households have access to farming land and the majority use this land for growing crops.

for the fertility of crops and for preventing crop failure. One Mursi elder explained: *“The diseases they will listen to Komoru and they will go, with the help of special clays collected in secret places only known by the Komoru and his people and ‘cabinet’”*.<sup>20</sup> Clay is also an important aspect of how the Mursi use and connect to the land, not only used for making pots and other household implements but also for body painting and decorations (see Feyers-Kerr, 2014).

In the dry season, cultivation sites are also where the cattle seek shade and shelter, as they are located mainly along rivers where the water flows all year round (e.g. the Omo and Mago rivers). Cultivation sites frequently change, since they are dependent on the seasonal rains and natural flooding of the rivers. They also rely on long fallow periods in order to replenish the nutrients in the soil and to allow undergrowth to return. They know that growing crops is precarious. As Olibui Dhokdhok (interviewed 10 July 2014) explained:

**“You plant one year or two years; if the land looks good, three years. If you cultivate the same place all the time, the land will become barren and erosion will occur. The soil will wash away and become rock, dust, and not fertile for crops, so you must let this area recover and come back five or six years later. Sometimes if you get enough crops, one year you don’t cultivate and you can plant the next year.”**

The poor fertility of the land for agriculture and the different challenges described above means that farming plots are regularly moved – staying in one place will permanently damage the land. In Hamer old slash-and-burn sites left by previous users can be transferred to anyone, but the elders should be informed of the transfer. Increasingly however, as land is becoming scarcer, people are being forced to stay in one place even though the fertility of the land is said to be decreasing every year.

Depending on the pastoral group, different degrees of restriction on farming may exist. In more agro-pastoral areas such as South Omo, permission will usually be given for farming with some minimal restrictions. In Hamer, there is a prohibition on agriculture on footpaths, tracks, or cattle routes, as well as in graveyards or sacred places where rituals are carried out. Large shade trees and open spaces where people gather for meetings are also protected, along with rivers, small water points, and salt licks.

In predominantly pastoral areas such as Afdem in Somali region, the restrictions on agriculture, and punishments for practising it without permission, can be harsh (see Box 3.3). An assigned group of men hands out the punishment rather than one individual playing this role, so that no particular person can be held responsible or be the lone recipient of a revenge attack. The elders explain that, for an area to be delineated for cultivation, the soil condition must be good, i.e. not affected by erosion, and water should be available in the area. They also indicate that it is unlikely in their area that crops can grow only by rainwater: due to the high temperatures, additional water is required for irrigation. That is why Ruqi area is farmed now, as it has irrigation water.

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<sup>20</sup> Personal communication, 4 July 2014.



### BOX 3.3: RESTRICTIONS ON AGRICULTURE IN SOMALI REGION

The Somali Issa clan has 12 sub-clans called “the 12 houses of the Issa”. When a member of the clan has offended in some way, the elders will select 12 men from the relevant sub-clan and give them a mandate to take the necessary action against the offender. For instance, if someone cultivates land on which crop farming has been prohibited, the 12 men can decide to destroy the farm. In this way, the owner of the farm will not have any particular person or group to blame for the damage inflicted on his farm; this helps to avoid the risk of revenge attacks. However, over time these traditional practices are weakening and it has become more difficult to control agricultural encroachment into the rangelands.

In Afdem, pastoralists blame the interference of local government in local and customary affairs for the expansion of cultivation in the rangelands and the weakening of customary institutions. The provision of free agricultural inputs by government agricultural extension workers contributes to the changes in land use. In addition, the uncontrolled influx of people from elsewhere who do not adhere to customary rules and regulations of land use (*Heer Issa*, as described earlier) have aggravated the situation.

#### Accessing water

Water is highly valued in dryland areas, and its availability is a critical factor in deciding on land uses. Pastoralism, as a flexible and mobile land use system, is able to accommodate the variable nature of rainfall and water availability. Such variability will only ever be controlled to a small degree through measures such as irrigation or piped-in water, thus giving pastoralism a comparative advantage as a land use in these areas.

Information about water availability and its quality is important for decisions about livestock movements (i.e. combined with information on grazing/browse, as described above). Because this information is so important, pastoralists also share it across different pastoral groups. The Nyangatom, for example, share information with and (more importantly) get information from the Mursi, Kara, and Arbore people, who are believed to have powers to predict the level and condition of the Omo River and its flooding patterns (which is important for cultivation). Gifts are made to the appropriate persons with these powers in order to extract this information and, once obtained, this will influence whether crops are planted or not.

Floodwater is an important source of water for riverside agriculture, also washing up valuable silt (minerals and soils). Communities have adapted to the different flood regimes so that crops are planted and harvested in tune with these.

Afar region is endowed with many rivers flowing from the highlands of Amhara region, especially during rainy seasons. Along these rivers, access to water is relatively easy. However, some animals such as camels do not drink the running water from the highlands, which tends to be heavily sedimented. As a result, the digging of shallow wells/ponds is common, particularly in riverbeds during the dry season – this tends to be done by individuals.

This water is relatively clean and is used by both human beings and livestock. Schemes such as the government-led Pastoral Community Development Project (PCDP) have supported the digging of ponds on flood catchments. Where possible and where groundwater permits, pastoralists use deep permanent wells to water their livestock; these tend to be managed or “owned” by those who excavate the well. In areas where some labour investment is required to excavate wells or to develop ponds, community leaders select youth (boys) to work on the excavation. The digging of wells involves some investigation of an area’s water potential, using indigenous knowledge. Traditionally, such wells would be managed communally; however, private wells are increasingly being established. Pastoralists coming into an area from other places should contact the *Kedo Aba* (clan leader) to get permission to use the wells – and often payment will be made to do so.

In Somali region in the past (prior to the 1960s), the Haud plateau was predominantly wet season grazing land. Pastoralists would use grazing areas in the Haud during the wet season, and fall back to the permanent water points in what is now Somaliland in the dry season (Sugule and Walker, 1998). However, construction by pastoralists of *birked* (cement-lined open storage tanks set into the ground) in parts of the Haud allowed people to settle permanently around these structures, effectively establishing dry season nuclei across a formerly wet season landscape and changing land use dynamics (Gomes, 2006).

Water points in Afdem grazing areas are mostly found in seasonally dry riverbeds, in the form of hand-dug wells. These are mostly between 10m and 30m deep and are constructed by certain groups. Their use is communal across the Issa clans. However, as in the Haud, in many parts of Somali region the construction of *birked* water storage tanks has increased dramatically; the majority of these are owned by individuals, who charge for the use of water. Many of these are heavily reliant on refilling of the *birked* with water tankered in by government or NGOs. Not only have these *birked* been a key factor in encouraging sedentarisation, but they have also encouraged the privatisation of rangeland resources, including the breaking up and enclosing of grasslands (Flintan et al., 2011).

Whereas grazing areas are open for use by different clans in Mursiland, certain clans own water holes (*ella*). An *ella* can be used by anyone from the clan to which it belongs, but members of other clans are expected to ask permission. As one respondent explained:

**“If I dig there, and I discover one place with water, this place belongs to me. Next time that I move out and someone comes and wants to use it, they have to get permission from me, about my well.”**

Having said this, however, there tend to be fewer restrictions on using water in areas outside the clan area than there are for grazing.

In Borana, the establishment of permanent wells has been a key factor in how the land is administered and used. The Borana Plateau is characterised by a general scarcity of surface water. There are over 540 hand-dug wells occurring in some 40 clusters, largely in the west of the area. Traditionally, these wells have provided over 95% of the permanent water points and about 84% of the total accessible water in a typical dry season; as the water is used,

fresh water seeps in through surrounding soils and rocks. The wells provide about half of the annual water requirements for people and livestock, with the remainder provided by ephemeral and permanent ponds. Wells require large inputs of labour to extract the water (often through a human chain) and are thus important in the social and economic life of Borana pastoralists (Coppock, 1974). Permanent wells have defined the boundaries of the *madaa* – the day-to-day traditional administrative and resource allocation unit.

The Borana have elaborate water control and management systems. Anyone can use surface ponds (which fill up in the wet season) as long as they contribute to their maintenance. However, *reera* members are expected to use ponds within their own territory. If water levels in ponds fall too fast and it is feared that the supply is being over-used, precedence is given to domestic use by the closest *ollas*, adult cattle are excluded in favour of calves, and if necessary even calves are not allowed access. The animals denied access must then be moved to other ponds or wells. Limitations on watering of livestock are also imposed.<sup>21</sup> Ponds and other surface catchments are usually constructed by *reera* families, and the management and maintenance of water points are communal at this level.

The management of permanent wells is stricter. The *Konfi* (or *Abba ella* – “father of the well”) is the individual who instigates the digging of a well. He recruits labour for the excavation from within his own clan and if necessary from other clans and lineages, who provide the labour and the cattle to sustain the digging crew during the construction work. As a result of this contribution they earn permanent access rights to the well. The *Konfi* is closely monitored by the well council (or *Cora ella*), who make sure that decisions are made in line with the customs and laws of the Borana (*adda seera*). Day-to-day management of the well is under the authority of the *Abba herega* (“father of turns”) chosen by the *Abba ella* – he maintains orderly use of the well and organises the required labour to pull up the water. Traditional regulations dictate that access to the well is structured by day and position in the queue for that day, and those clans or lineages who have contributed to construction have priority right of access. Borana who have not contributed to well construction are provided with temporary access rights in times of need. The *Abba herega*, restricts the number of positions in the queue calculated according to the amount of water available and by the rate of water seepage (Bassi, 2005) (see also Section 2.7).

Individuals can dig their own *shallow wells*, particularly close to their homesteads, and would then manage them themselves. Water management is often viewed as being of greater importance than grazing area management – the *Abba herega* is considered to have greater authority than the *Abba dheeda*.

The development of a large network of piped water points across Borana will surely change traditional water use patterns and regimes and will likely have a fundamental knock-on impact on livelihoods, as well as on Borana society and the environment. The network developed by the Oromia Water Works and Development Enterprise at the request of the Oromia government will extract groundwater and pipe it from the source to the areas

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21 When there is water scarcity in the dry season, the drinking frequency of cattle is gradually reduced to one day (*dhabsuu*), two days (*limmaalimma*), and three days (*sadeen*). Camels may not be watered for as much as 21 days.

where the majority of Borana are living. An alternative to such movement of water was to move people to the water, but this was considered to be too expensive and disruptive, and instead the Borana water network was developed.

### Settlement and resettlement

Many of the pastoral groups in Ethiopia have been undergoing a consolidation of settlements, as well as in some cases more significant settlement or resettlement processes. Where possible, this has been controlled: for example, traditionally in Borana, encampments have not been allowed within 10km of water sources that are used during the dry season. However, rapid encroachment into the rangelands by settlers (both from within Borana and from outside) has in many cases been unstoppable. Customary institutions are struggling to control land fragmentation. Communal directives are ignored and individuals continue to plant crops and put up enclosures. In addition, herders who are prevented from accessing grazing areas by community leaders may petition the local government offices and return with formal permission to use the areas and pay taxes on the land, so increasing their “right” to it. This further weakens the authority of customary institutions over the management of resources, and local governments have come up with no solutions (Edosa et al., 2005).

As a result, a process has been under way over the past few years to plan settlement and other land use more effectively in order to keep rangelands intact and the livelihoods that depend upon them productive. For some years now, new settlements have been prevented in key grazing areas, and where settlements have already been established in these areas households have been moved out to other areas. *Gada* elders have led this process with support from local administrative offices.

Other influences encouraging voluntary settlement or resettlement have included the need to access services such as schools or water points. Development actors and particularly government have failed to provide mobile services that support the movement required for pastoral livelihoods, and as a result the only way to access such services is through settlement in the areas where the services are being provided – even though this means that pastoral livelihoods are compromised. Government often encourages this settlement process through service provision schemes (see Section 4.1). In addition, information on these settlement schemes and the inclusion of local communities (land users) in the decision-making process related to them and the resulting settlement process are sorely lacking.

This is exemplified by the case of the Mursi. Rarely are they able to access information about land decisions made around them. And when information is available it is often unclear or contradictory. This is despite the fact that the Mursi are not new to settlement or resettlement, and would be open to change if only they were properly included in decision-making processes. Indeed, one of the biggest changes for Mursi society resulted from their own community land use planning in the 1980s. In a process led by Mursi from Mara, a decision was made to leave their existing location due to an ongoing drought and to move to a cooler, wetter area (*lami ba lalna*) (see also Turton, 1987). Many Mursi moved to Makki in the Mago Valley, where they were able to establish a better life. Indeed, as one elder put it:

“Every year we had better and better crops. We never got hungry compared to the traditional land, compared to the grassland (*mis*). We had much food. The thing that changed was that the grain silos were bigger than the ones in Omo, or in Mara. The people could not eat it all so they would sell it to other Mursi people and to the Ari. This was a big thing. Mostly they would give the grain for free, which is the way it is within the Mursi. ... If the grain that was given for free was not enough for my family, they will bring a cow to sell and get more. This would all depend on the size of the family.”

However, in 2010 the Mursi were informed that a large state-run sugar plantation would be established in the area. The information about the plantation has not been clear including what will happen to the Mursi who are currently living in the identified site. This lack of clarity has contributed to tensions in the area between the different stakeholders, and concerns amongst the Mursi as to their future.

In the Afdem community, members pointed out that it was their fathers and forefathers who established the current land use plan that guides the use of the land today. At that time settlement was insignificant, but over time it has become an increasingly important issue and one that is being addressed by the current generation. The elders indicated that decisions about where people should settle are made in a way that protects the land from outsiders. As part of this plan, the elders have encouraged some households to settle in the border area between their own community and other communities like the Oromo and the Hawiya. This helps to protect the land from those farming communities.

### 3.2 DECIDING ON AND MANAGING THE ACCESS AND USE ARRANGEMENTS OF DIFFERENT USERS

In the past, pastoralists had access to vast tracts of rangeland that were managed through customary institutions at different levels and for different resources. The sound management of rangelands was, and in some cases still is, promoted through norms of inclusion (and to a lesser extent exclusion) designed for pastoral activity. For example, these norms are called *seera marraa bisanii* in Boran – “the law of grass and water”. Knowledge of seasons, mobility patterns, and local geo-political dynamics is crucial to understanding the way that land is utilised among multiple resource users and understanding both cooperative and non-cooperative modes of utilisation.

Resources tend to be managed as common property, with access derived in the first instance through being a member of the group. Social capital plays a crucial role in facilitating the establishment of and negotiation for non-exclusive forms of rights to grazing resources. Increased threat from climate change (rainfall variability) and the absence of formal insurance for livestock loss (e.g. due to drought) increase the necessity to sustain inter-clan cooperation and the reciprocal sharing of grazing commons (Beyene, 2010). However, customary rules and regulations were developed in times when everyone in these areas was a pastoralist. Today the situation has changed, and the multiple actors with different interests and needs make the governance of land and resources much more challenging.

There tend to be two levels of use to be negotiated in rangelands: one is “normal” or “permanent” access i.e. by those who have primary use and access rights to the land and resources; while the second is “occasional” or “temporary” access i.e. by visitors from neighbouring or close-by areas. It may be that occasional and temporary use is a regular event every year and/or season. This type of use tends to be negotiated with the host elders and, in the spirit of collective and reciprocal use, permission to use resources would normally be granted. Restrictions would only be put in place if the resource was under pressure from use by its own “normal” users e.g. in times of drought or when there was an unusual situation such as conflict occurring. The use of land for purposes other than grazing (e.g. firewood collection, hanging of beehives, use of thorn bushes for fences) tends to be (though is not always) open to everyone from the community.

In Nyangatom, the “group” tends to be defined as a territorial section, and this group is able to access rangeland resources within its vicinity (territory). Different clans tend to stick to their own territorial sections: moving into another territorial section without first giving notice to the host clan is against the custom and is considered illegal.

Afar land used to be exclusively owned and used by the clan, though neighbouring communities negotiated the sharing of the resource. During previous regimes, Afar land was divided under different administrative regions. After the establishment of the regional state of Afar, the Afar people developed a sense of unity and resource sharing beyond the clan boundary, which previously had required bargaining with the host community. The changing of rules was meant to allow peaceful sharing of the resources. Though this occurred across the Afar region it also resulted in the abandonment of the practice of reserving grasses for periods of scarcity.

More often in Afar today, *Du’abe* (rangeland managers) make decisions about land use with the government. If a local government makes a decision, it will normally also check this with the clan leaders before taking action. The plan and its implementation are then enforced by *Fei’ma’Aba* across the region, and the decision of the elders has support from the government. Punishment procedures are put in place for those who refuse to accept and implement such decisions. Similar to the pastoral Hamar, any decision ratified by the *Ali sera* and *Yasin sera* is unanimous and individuals who use land in the commons for a different purpose than the one planned face punishments, such as the confiscation of the land under use and the slaughtering of livestock. It was reported that implementing community land use plans has become easier as clans exercise different sets of rules and regulations to put them into effect. Land use activities are only acceptable if they have the consent of the community or clan leaders. According to the tradition and norms of the Afar pastoral community, it is immoral and against the custom to use communal lands for individual benefit.

Resource sharing is not always peaceful, however, and this is increasingly the case as pressures on land continue to grow. The rangelands of Afdem are also used by Oromo pastoralists, the Hawiya (Somali clan), and occasionally by the Afar. There are some differences in spatial and temporal mobility patterns between the Oromo and the Issa pastoralists, however.

The Oromo use the dry season grazing areas and also access important salt and mineral licks



during the rainy season, when the Issa pastoralists move to their wet season grazing areas. At this time their own grazing areas are covered with crops. The Oromo also trade in cereals and *chat* and use donkeys to transport their goods. On their way back, they use the donkeys to collect and carry sacks of salt and minerals for their livestock. Though this arrangement had been in place from some years without conflict, over the years the Oromo started to make more permanent claims over parts of the dry season grazing area, resulting in conflict between the two groups that has now lasted for several years. The government recently demarcated the regional border to prevent further conflicts between the two groups, and at the same time the Issa pastoralists stopped their Oromo counterparts collecting salt and minerals from the area. The focus of the conflict has now shifted from resources to livestock and the two groups are retaliating against each other with a series of livestock raids.<sup>22</sup>

Access for the other groups (including the Somali Hawiya) who use the Afdem rangelands is more peacefully negotiated. Elders from the group meet their Afdem counterparts and explain to them the reasons for wanting to access the land. The Afdem Issa elders then discuss the matter amongst themselves and would normally agree to allow access.

### 3.3 FACILITATING MOBILITY

The ability to move livestock to different pastures is a key strategy for mitigating exposure to erratic rainfall, and reliable access to a wide range of pasture resources has long been essential to the viability and sustainability of such systems. Common property regimes and land use planning decisions made by pastoralists facilitate this mobility.

Pastoralists move for a number of reasons, including:

- » To access better grazing, fodder, water, and salt licks;
- » To manage rangeland resources in order to optimise productivity;
- » To conserve grazing for the dry season as a risk mitigation strategy;
- » To guard against parasites and pests;
- » To give well-grazed areas time to recover;
- » To avoid areas that flood at certain times of the year and/or where there is a high prevalence of mosquitoes;
- » To access markets, dipping tanks, and veterinary points, or other services;
- » To avoid conflicts with other land users.

There are three main seasons in Mursiland: these include the rainy season (*oyo*), the short rainy season (*luru*), and the dry season (*sukengo*). People and livestock move according to these three seasons. For example, during the rainy season people do not move a lot since there is plenty of water and grass. During the short rainy season, people must begin to plan ahead by going to burn remaining grass in the dry season area a few months before the dry season comes. Not only does this create a flush of good new grass, but also when the grass

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<sup>22</sup> During this research the Oromo were reported to have taken 18 camels from the Issa, who in return had captured around 200 sheep, goats, and cattle from the Oromo. Negotiations were going on between the two groups for the return of the livestock.

is shorter there are fewer tsetse flies. The pastoralists will move to these areas once the dry season comes in October. During the dry season some people will also go to dig wells (e.g. in Mara, Moizo, Toley, Kamenna, Debbiyabilicho, Gomai, Malankorri) while others will move to the big rivers, the Sala, Oso, Makki, and Omo, where there is water all year round. Different clans and individual families have user rights over the land, and there are traditional and seasonal movements to the Omo, Mago, Mara, and Elma rivers and other important water courses, grazing lands, and cultivation areas. The mapping of these movements and the Mursi's traditional and current land use practices is an important tool and process for giving them greater hope in negotiating future land use plans in their area.

Although the Mursi are agro-pastoralists and have permanent settlements, it is vital for them to maintain the movement of their livestock at certain times of the year. If they stay in one place, the area will become overgrazed and turn to scrub, which is no place for cattle. Cattle are especially vulnerable during the dry season and must be moved to higher ground to stay healthy and to access salt licks (*garsan*) and hot springs (*ra*). All members of the Mursi can access all grazing lands; however, people tend to remain within their own local districts (*bhuranyoga*).

The Mursi people live in and identify with five local districts.<sup>23</sup> These *bhuranyoga* are Baruba, Mugjo, Biyogolokarre, Gongolobibi, and Ariholi, about which British anthropologist David Turton has written extensively (Turton, 1987). People move freely across and between these local districts with their cattle and can cultivate in any area, except for the banks of major river courses like the Omo, Mago, and Elma rivers, where permission to cultivate must be obtained from the owners. Grazing land, however, is considered to be open for all Mursi, and all can access hot springs and salt licks.

Knowledge about what is good for the cattle often involves knowing, for example, when the animals need to go to the salt licks. This is usually indicated if cattle eat grass but are not satiated and when it appears as though they have not drunk water even when they have. The cows will then be taken either to the salt licks or the hot springs. As one Mursi elder explained:

“Garsan is salt lick for the cattle and ra is medicine for cattle and for humans. All people will come together and decide on which salt lick or hot spring is best. They will say, ‘That one, that garsan in that place is very good in this season.’ They will move there and give it for two or five days or once the cattle stop eating it. After the cattle have finished eating the mineral salt, they will need to go and live in a place where there is fresh pasture and plenty of water. The salt will clean their stomach and rid them of disease, and the cattle will eat. They will have a healthy appetite again and will continue to eat more even if they are full. They will become fat and will provide a lot of milk and, of course, this also makes the people healthy and happy.”

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23 A sixth is currently being contested, but at the time of writing there were still only five official *bhuranyoga*.

Restrictions on movement apply at certain times, however – for example, when young men from different districts challenge each other over grazing areas in order to engage in a competitive stick fighting sport called *donga*. Only the young herders can move freely to fresh pastures and watering points and lay temporary claim to certain grazing areas.

“Once the word is out that men from a certain *bhuran* have ‘taken’ a certain grazing or watering area, other young men will say: ‘Okay, I will move my cattle there. I heard you are staying there, but you have to move me by force, that is, through a *donga* competition. Mostly the young people engage in stick fighting and will all graze freely together when the fun has finished.”

(Mursi pastoralist, personal communication, 25 May 2014)

To understand where to move the cattle, it is necessary to have extensive local knowledge of the environment. The Mursi have a vast knowledge of tree species, shrubs, grasses, soils, insects, reptiles, and other wildlife, all of which affect the well-being of their cattle. During interviews with elders about the knowledge needed about their environment, they responded:

“There are some big problems for Mursi cattle with tsetse fly and ticks. In some areas there are poisonous trees, which kill sheep and goats. One must know for example where the tsetse fly live, e.g. in cool places, by small rivers and small bushes, and in places where buffalo are found. Mursi know where there are tsetse around Elma, Jameri, Magolony, Chawui, Oosso, Mako, Warr [Omo], Mara, and Dhol, mostly in the rainy season and sometimes in the dry season. They live in the areas where there is very tall and old grass. Always when the cattle go there, they love those areas. But when the cattle go, they will get ticks. The *Komorū* [ritual priest] can do a ritual to get rid of the ticks. Ticks bring more disease than tsetse fly: the tsetse has one or two diseases but ticks have more. We have no medicine for that. For tsetse we have *ma korra* [trypanidum]. The ticks are getting worse and tsetse fly is getting less.” (Mursi elders, personal communication, 5 July 2014)

Local knowledge also involves knowing how to read the entrails of animals. Some people who read the entrails of cattle can determine whether or not the big rains will come. Entrails show everything from the weather to predicting cattle diseases. “The entrails will say now this place is very clean and nice, go there. And people move to there” (ibid). Anyone can make smaller decisions regarding the cattle, but a major decision will come from the elders. They will bring the issues to the *Komorū* and will do what the people say and want. More critical problems, such as drought, famine, war, and epidemic diseases, will be solved by the *Komorū*, as described above, though the *Komorū* does not make such decisions alone.

In Afar the clan leaders (the *Yasin sera* and *Ali sera*) sit down together with the rangeland managers (*Du’abe*) at the beginning of the rainy season and decide on where the livestock should be moved (based on information collected by scouts (*Geba*) – see below). The *Du’abe* then facilitate, mobilise, and deal with that agreed movement of livestock and any resulting

conflicts, as well as the rotational use of the grazing land. They are guided by the higher executive powers of the clan leaders, but ultimately they are responsible for the day-to-day movements of livestock. If resources (including water) are good, then whole households will move with the livestock. However, if they are scarce, it is likely that only the herders will move and the rest of the household will remain at the settlement.

Table 3.2: Major movements of livestock across the Afar region

Name of zone/ <i>woreda</i>	Major areas of mobility		
Zone 1: Dubti, Aysaita, and Afambo <i>woreda</i>	Doka: Chifra and Aura <i>woredas</i> between the Hida and Uwa rivers	Awassa: close to Awash River	Close to Awash River
Zone 2	Movement eastwards into Erebti and Afdera <i>woredas</i>	Retreat areas in the eastern part of Dalol, Koneba, Berehale, Aba'ala, and Megale <i>woredas</i>	–
Zones 3 and 5: east and west of Awash River, south of the Kombolcha–Mille road	Movement eastwards to Gewane and Alledegi Plains, and west to foothills below main escarpment	Most retreat areas are next to or near the Awash River	Amhara region (Chefa Valley), Argoba and Amhara mountainous areas
Zone 4 and Chifra	Movement eastwards into Teru and Awra <i>woredas</i> , and the eastern parts of Yallo, Gulina, Ewa, Chifra, and Mille <i>woredas</i>	Western parts of Yallo, Gulina, Ewa, Chifra, and Mille <i>woredas</i>	Oromia zone of Amhara region, close to Awash River and Teru

Source: PFE (2010)

In the case of Ogaden pastoralists in Somali region, movement can be categorised into two types. The first type is that of the agro-pastoralists who are settled along the Wabi Shabele river basin. The majority of the household, including the heads of families and their children, stay at permanent settlements close to the river and engage in irrigated crop farming. Selected representatives from the villages take livestock to pastures until the pasture in the local area improves, when they will come back. Movement is conditioned by the shortage of pasture and grazing areas within their localities. The second group of pastoralists herd livestock with the whole household. This group is mobile all year round; they usually return to their original location, depending on the availability of pasture and water. The pastoralists from Afdem *woreda* tend to operate a satellite system similar to the first type of movement. Mobility, as practised by the Afar and Somali, is the core strategy of the Hamar too. It requires negotiated access to resources on the rangeland belonging to others. In such cases, alliances developed through livestock sharing play a significant role in pre-planning, during movement, and in utilisation of the resources. In the pre-planning phase, herdsman already staying in herd camps located in and outside of the Hamar territorial jurisdiction send their observations and experiences back to elders in the villages. In the past this would be through word-of-mouth through messengers but increasingly today, mobile phones are used. These include information on rangeland conditions, such as the nature of the pasture, water, rain, shrubs, trees, and diseases (tsetse fly, tick and worm infestations), as well as security, all of which feeds into the decisions of the elders and provides a basis for monitoring and evaluation processes. In Gambella, pastoralists tend to move within the *woreda*, as sufficient resources tend to be available most of the year round. Within this area,

however, the whole household may move from one seasonal grazing area to another. The second most influential group of elders – the *Tuc* – are responsible for mobility. Increasingly the mobility of the Nuer is compromised by insecurities caused by the influx of Falata pastoralists from Sudan.

### 3.4 CONSERVING SACRED SITES

Land use planning serves not only to manage rangeland resources, but also to conserve and manage access to ritual settings or sacred sites. In Afar, each clan has its settlement areas (*metaro*), communal graveyards, and ritual sites. In Borana, the importance of ritual settings, places, and ritual links cannot be over-emphasised. Places and settings that are of significance to ritual and worship involve sycamore fig (*Ficus sycomorus*, known locally as *odda*) and other trees, running water, mountains and hills, stones, the sky, and the earth. The sycamore fig is associated with the *Qaalluu*, ritual priests. Most *Gada* and other rituals are performed under an *odda*. These are places of worship and reference, where prayers and sacrifice are offered. Olam (2003) adds that these ritual links to *Ayana* (spirit) and *Waaqa* (god) also come in the form of the human body in “one’s hair, eye, stomach, blood, shadow, and so on”. The sycamore fig tree is featured on the Oromia flag with the background colours black, red, and white, which are also the colours of the *Gada* system. They represent the life cycle: black for those yet to enter active life, red for those in active life, and white for those who have passed through it.

Despite the importance that the Borana give to sites such as sycamore fig trees, other land users can pay little respect to them; there have been examples of government offices being built next to a tree or even towns growing up around them (e.g. in Arero). In Hamer too, government plans for resettlement of the *Hamer* people along the Omo River mean not only that they will be in more direct contact with neighbouring groups with whom they have conflicts, but also that the Hamer will be unable to easily access their ritual places.

In Mursiland, ancestral places are called *bade*, which are important sacred sites – usually certain trees or forested areas. The *bade* is where ancestors (including ritual priests) are buried and where important ritual rites are performed by the *Komor*. For the Mursi they are the most sacred and powerful places in all of Mursiland, comparable to a temple, church, or mosque. They are so sacred to the Mursi that no-one is allowed to cut or destroy any tree from a *bade*, and people are prohibited from collecting firewood from these areas. The consequences are severe: it is said, for example, that snakes will come to the house of transgressors or hyenas or lions will come to eat their cattle (Lugolinyebanna Biobibesseno, Mursi, personal communication, 10 August 2014). Only cattle are allowed to break the rules and freely enter and browse within these sacred areas.<sup>24</sup> The most important aspects of land use in Mursiland, then, are in relation to cultivating, herding, and ritual practices, all of which require local knowledge of the land.

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<sup>24</sup> Two of the authors are currently developing a map which includes the different locations of *bade* throughout Mursiland and their local histories.

### 3.5 PREVENTING OR RESOLVING CONFLICT

In some pastoral areas, conflicts are an everyday occurrence that is managed through a number of means. Knowledge of seasons, mobility patterns, and local geo-political dynamics is crucial to understanding the way in which the land is utilised by multiple resource users, in both cooperative and non-cooperative (even conflictual) modes of utilisation.

In Hamer, herding scouts are sent to “spy” on the territories of other groups and to bring back information needed to plan rangeland use in order to avoid conflict and/or to plan cattle raids. Cattle raids tend to take place during the dry season and particularly if the targeted community is known to be experiencing drought. During such times of stress the capacity of the community to prevent cattle raids is severely reduced, allowing the Hamer to take advantage of them. This excludes the month of Tajo mingi (roughly October), however, which is considered to be a “bad luck” month.<sup>25</sup> During this month no hunting, waging of war, or raiding against enemies is carried out.

However, with other neighbours the Hamer need to maintain more peaceful relations. The majority of their livestock is scattered across herd camps in rangelands that are traditionally known to have belonged to the Kara, the Murle at Kizo, and the Mursi, including in Mago National Park. Maintaining peaceful relations with the Beshada and Kara is vital for securing access to these areas. The Kara benefit from their relationship with the Hamer through the provision of livestock, meat, milk, and milk products and protection from other larger and hostile groups. They in turn allow the Hamer to use their rangeland, access water points at different locations on the Omo River, and farm on alluvial soil deposits. Maintaining amicable relations with their neighbours is important for the Hamer not only for accessing resources and land, but also for economic purposes such as the exchange of goods. This may not always be easy and, as Box 3.4 illustrates.

#### BOX 3.4: WORKING TOGETHER FOR LAND USE PLANNING IN HAMER

With the exception of a longstanding hostile relationship with the Dassenach, currently the Hamer are on friendly terms with their neighbours. However, this does not necessarily mean absolutely peaceful relationships: these can become strained or conflicts can break out for various reasons. One example was the Beshada’s call in 2011 for the Hamer to withdraw their livestock from their territory due to a lack of grazing. They requested the Hamer to refrain from entering Beshada grazing areas and to consult the *Bita* (supreme leaders) for regulated access to the rangeland. This request shifted power relations between the two groups (who also commonly marry). The Hamer used to have hostile relations with the Murille and, although they are currently on good terms, the government’s plan to settle the Hamer on land traditionally known to have belonged to the Murille may renew old hostilities. According to respondents, the government personnel involved in planning the new villages have not consulted either the Murille or the Hamer on their location.

25 Many associate the term *mingi* with the Hamer’s cultural practice of abandoning any child with an unusual growth of milk teeth, which is supposed to curse and bring bad luck to the family. However, the term has a wide range of meanings covering actions that are supposed to bring evil and destruction for the family and the community. Generally, the Hamer associate this month with bad luck.

Customarily, most pastoral communities have allowed neighbouring groups and/or visitors to use the resources and land in their area, in particular in times of plenty. Such use is an important part of reciprocal relationship and trust building and of peace-making. In Somali region, multiple institutional arrangements define non-exclusive property rights (for example, between different pastoral and agro-pastoral clans) in order to increase the social and economic efficiency of grazing resource users (Beyene, 2010).

Recent conflict in Afar over the ownership of land for cotton and crop cultivation involved different clans.<sup>26</sup> When such conflicts occur over land “ownership” and/or access, clan leaders work to settle the disputes through different approaches. An increasingly favoured approach is to divide land and demarcate it between different clans and/or sub-clans as separate landholdings. These demarcations use roads, rivers, and natural features as references for the clan territories. The local government recognises the decisions made by the local elders and clan leaders, and the demarcations will be incorporated into the administrative structures of government and ratified accordingly.

Often conflict resolution and peace-making activities, including those facilitated by government and NGOs, focus on elders as the main participants. However, as described above (for the Hamar), the elders may be the decision-makers in conflict, but it is more often than not the case that the youth are assigned by the elders to take action. Therefore it is important that the youth are also included in peace-making processes.

### 3.6 INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION CHANNELS

Over the past decade, it has become easier for local decision-makers to access information for land use planning. This can be attributed to better government attention to developing pastoralist regions and improving pastoralist livelihoods, as well as more targeted capacity-building initiatives by development actors and their donors. Key facilitation roles have been played by the expansion of telecommunication services including mobile phones, access to markets, and weather information broadcast via radio.

However, customary communication practices are still the most relevant means of information sharing for many pastoral communities. Most pastoral societies have a system of scouts (usually youth), who are sent out by leaders to assess the location, quality, and quantity of resources, including grazing and water, before decisions are made about where and when to move. Scouts are seen as trustworthy and strong, and with a good character. Their role is particularly important during the drier seasons.

In Somali region these scouts are called *Sahan* and in Afar *Geba*. In order to call clan leaders and community elders for a meeting, the Afar make an announcement through *dagu* (the Afar communication system that obliges each person to pass on the information to another). The gathering will select and send an expedition team to assess the state of different rangeland sites before moving the herds. The term *Geba* translates literally as “range explorer” and the overall process is referred to as *eddo*. The *Geba* are responsible for assessing the quantity and quality of the grazing, and how many livestock it can sustain.

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26 This conflict included clashes between the Misara and Mahisera; Geliela and Yamberedi; Yamberedi and Madima; Modaito and Badul; and Dababura and Modaito.



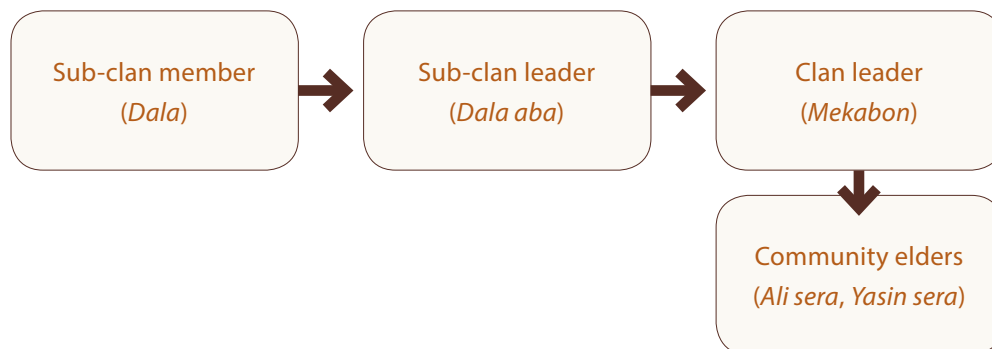
The assessment includes rainfall and soil moisture conditions, the availability of water, livestock diseases, and monitoring of competing users. When the *Geba* complete their *eddo*, upon return they present their findings to the *Du'abe* (range managers) and clan leaders, who will then make a decision about where and when to move. On arrival at the site, the first thing that grazers will do is to check the information provided by the *Geba*.

Amongst the Nyangatom, it is the "Buffaloes" and "Antelopes" who are responsible for herding and also for assessing the quantity and quality of the grazing. This information will be relayed back to the elders, who then make decisions about resource use. The larger community is also expected to report back with any new information on grass and water availability when they are moving around grazing areas. On some occasions and particularly in times of stress, cultural-religious leaders perform ritual activities to obtain information from spiritual beings in order to assist community leaders in their decision-making. This information can be related to grass and water availability, livestock health, and conflicts or hostile neighbours. In Nyangatom, for example, it is the *Emuron* and in Hamar the *Moara* (both ritual experts or 'priests') who take this responsibility, telling fortunes and making forecasts about future availability of grass and water, and specific events. Amongst the Mursi, young men and boys are expected to inform the elders about the status (quantity and quality) of grazing, browse, and water.

Information is often exchanged around the fire between days of migration and when people from different areas meet in one place. Information is shared regarding rainfall, water availability, and security matters. Other information exchanged may be about conflicts over resources such as land and livestock, any needy members of the clan, and other problems that community members might be facing. Those receiving the information are then expected to share it with their leaders.

In Gewane in Afar region, information relevant to land use decisions is shared between different land users. Members of a sub-clan (*Dala*) pass the information on to their leaders (*Dala aba*), who in turn share the information with clan leaders (Mekabon). Community elders (*Ali sera* and *Yasin sera*) are responsible for approving or rejecting clan-level decisions. At least ten men from each sub-clan are selected to gather together for the process of decision-making on land-related issues, based on their roles and power in the community. An oral report from the discussion is passed on to the *Dala* and *Dala aba*. Likewise, land use planning information is shared with NGOs operating in Gewane district. Information flows follows the structure shown in Figure 3.1.

Figure 3.1: Flow of information within the community of Gewane *woreda*



From outside the community, information regarding land use activities is obtained with the help of NGOs and government through training, workshops, and even field trips. The government, in collaboration with NGOs, may meet clan leaders and community elders to share information and experiences. In Afar, information on land use, including decisions made by government about irrigation and settlement schemes, was shared with pastoralist representatives (clan leaders and elders) at a series of training workshops and conferences held in the towns of Logia, Semera, and Asayta. It was anticipated that they would then share the information with sub-clan leaders and others in the community. *Kebele* officers tend to be responsible for relaying government messages to communities at the local level. Information then moves across the Afar region and beyond by means of the *dagu* system. In recent years the expansion of telecommunications and radio has provided a different medium for information flows, moving information more quickly but in a less institutionalised and personalised manner.

In Borana, information is discussed and exchanged at meetings (*cora*) often held under a sycamore fig tree. Only men are allowed to participate in these meetings; women may attend, but they may not actively participate. However, they can make their feelings and ideas known indirectly:

“Wherever the meeting is held, women can always make their feelings known about the subject of the deliberations indirectly. They sing work songs (*karrile*) that are intended to lighten the burden of their chores. These work songs often contain some pointed commentary on some infelicitous expression heard in the men’s meetings or a direct criticism of some unjust or unwise decision the men are contemplating.” (SIM, 2005).

The communication of ideas and feelings by women is just one example of the Borana’s way of indirect communication. In many ways their communication follows this model and thus lacks directness; it involves communicating in ways appropriate for given situations, almost always in a way that will keep the peace in the community and between individuals. Indirect communication also avoids humiliating or bringing shame or disgrace to particular individuals (*ibid*).

Increasingly, there are new sources of information relevant to land use planning, and pastoralists could do well to consider these carefully in their own land use planning processes. Such sources include government offices (for example, many districts are now developing “*woreda* risk profiles” as part of disaster management planning); teachers; health extension workers; police and security officers; agricultural extension and development agents; religious institutions; academics, including anthropologists; and NGOs. These actors can provide information on wider development plans, trends, and developments. As development interests in pastoral areas continue to grow, it will become ever more important to ensure that communities consider these “external” sources of information as well as their normal “internal” ones, and also try to ensure that they are part of the wider land use planning and development processes in which these external actors might be involved.

# The involvement of governmental and other actors

## 4.1 GOVERNMENTAL ACTORS

Government planning processes in pastoral areas (as elsewhere in Ethiopia) can be top-down and lacking in community participation. There is little systematic identification or planning of resource or land use, including of current land uses. To date, government planning processes at national, regional, and sub-river basin levels have not included communities to any significant degree. Often land surveyors and researchers appear in villages to collect information without the communities having any idea what the information is being collected for. Most often, it seems, government officers summon community representatives to provide feedback on plans that have already been written. These representatives are then expected to take the information back to share with the larger community. This limits the amount of input that communities can provide: it is much more difficult to contribute to something that has already been developed, rather than contributing to a process from the beginning.

Communities are, however, involved in the more detailed planning and implementation of activities at the local level. Both government and NGOs support community action planning in different programmes and projects: for example, in order to define community development priorities and to mobilise communities into action on the ground. Much of this action focuses on rangeland management and rehabilitation and on soil and water conservation measures. For instance, the Productive Safety Net Programme (PSNP), which works across the majority of pastoral areas, supports community action planning in order to define community priorities for public works activities. These include structures for soil and water conservation, bush clearing, and the establishment of enclosures. However, this community action planning is not well linked to government land use planning processes or, therefore, to larger development plans.

Agricultural experts provide extension and advisory services, which also influence the decisions that community members make about land uses. To date, these services have focused disproportionately on crop agriculture rather than on livestock (even in pastoral areas). With the accompanying free hand-out of seeds and tools, this has pushed communities into changing their land use from grazing to crop farming. Technical support for livestock and for improving livestock productions systems is missing.

There can be a lack of communication or coordination between different government offices, which can result in plans focused narrowly on specific sectors and conflicting decisions. Government structures concerned with peace and security, in particular, can serve to undermine community initiatives. Political and administrative units of the government coordinate and monitor development and security affairs in each village, with the government receiving timely updates through community representatives and organisational structures.

The federal government (then led by the Ministry of Federal Affairs) has established a Pastoral Development Policy and Strategy Framework including phased voluntary sedentarisation along the banks of the major rivers as the main tool for “transforming pastoral societies into agro-pastoral systems from mobility to sedentary life, from rural to small pastoral towns and urbanization”. It was anticipated that all of the population of Somali region (600,000 households targeted for irrigation-focused commune programmes and 221,957 range-focused commune programmes), all of Afar (189,000 hh irrigation, 70,555 range), two-thirds of Beneshangul (100,600 hh irrigation), and two-thirds of Gambella (46,000 hh irrigation) will benefit from the scheme (Delelegn 2012). However the speed of the planned settlement has been slow, and with challenges including ad hoc provision of promised services etc.

The allocation of land for commercial large-scale investments is increasing. Decisions of larger (often foreign) investments are made at federal level by the national Agricultural Investment Land Administration Agency, whilst local-level investments are made at regional or woreda levels. Often local land users are not involved in such decision-making processes. The lack of land certificates (either group or individual) in pastoral areas means that the payment of compensation to local land users for land appropriated is unclear.

Large-scale commercial and mechanised farming has increased rapidly in Gambella in recent years as major tracts of land have been leased to foreign and domestic investors, including some areas critical for wildlife. The major commercial crop types grown (or planned) are palm oil, rice, cotton, sesame, groundnut, maize, and soybean. Most of the proposed farmland borders on community grazing land and therefore will restrict pastoralists’ movements to traditionally used grazing areas, unless projects are properly planned and implemented. Communities receive information about government development programmes from *kebele* representatives and have recently started to work more closely with development agents in order to harmonise community land use planning with government plans.

In the 1980s Mursi members established a settlement in Makki in order to ensure better access to resources for growing crops as well as raising livestock. In 2011 they were informed that the land was required for the Omo-Kuraz Sugar Development Project, and that land in a settlement area would be provided to them in compensation. Though this would mean that they would need to reduce their cattle numbers, job opportunities would arise in the sugarcane factory. There has been a lack of involvement of the local community in these decision-making processes, which has left the community confused and unsure about their future.

Local governments often fail to share information acquired from higher levels of government with communities. Even where the land use planning interests of both government and communities are clearly shared, government actors have done little to involve communities in decision-making processes. The issue of planning settlements in Hamer *woreda*, South Omo zone, is an example of this. Communities shared the interest of government in having more consolidated planned settlements; however, they were not included in the decision-making processes and as a result a number of issues have arisen with potential long-term negative consequences (see Box 4.1).

**BOX 4.1: PLANNING LAND FOR SETTLEMENT ALONG THE OMO RIVER IN HAMER**

The Hamer have been trying to establish settlements and cultivate land in the fertile alluvial plains near the Omo River since imperial times. Intermittent conflict with the Dassenech and Nyangatom, as well as the risk of malaria, prevented them from doing so. The site is also far from their customary territory and ritual places (including the place where they carry out their famous “cattle-leaping”, the rite of passage for men symbolising the move from childhood to adulthood). This site however has been identified as a resettlement area for the Hamer by the regional government. This is causing concerns not only for the Hamer, but also for the Murille who have been customarily occupying the land and were not consulted in these plans.

Seemingly, the settlement is going ahead on the understanding that the *Bit*a (the rule-maker) will allow the Hamer to cross the Kizo River in order to reduce the distance and time required to access their traditional territory. However, outstanding issues such as the likelihood of increased conflicts with neighbours (even with heightened security in the area) remain unaddressed. If only community members from both those being resettled (the Hamer) and those who occupied the proposed site (the Murille) had been part of the decision-making process and plans, it is likely that many of the problems now being experienced, could have been avoided and/or solutions found more quickly to resolve them.

The process of settlement, or villagisation, is having impacts on other parts of South Omo too. In Nyangatom *woreda* the aim is to consolidate scattered villages in order to facilitate the provision of services and a centralised administration around the district capital. The implementation of the programme has already commenced in Ayipa, Kangaten, Nakeriaman, and Napotokoit *kebeles*. Lorenkachaw *kebele* was expected to be part of the plan in 2015 and a new settlement will be established in Karemegnimas village. In addition, in the northern part of the district at Lorenkachaw *kebele*, the government plans to establish a 70,000 ha sugarcane plantation on land that has traditionally been used for dry season grazing. Investors have already been allocated land for crop-growing in Ayipa, Narogy, and on the other side of the Omo River. A large amount of land in Lorenkachaw *kebele* has also been identified for communal enclosures, supported by NGOs (see below). All these factors are likely to increase the pressures on land and resources locally.

Although “awareness-raising” of schemes such as the proposed sugar plantation is now being carried out, the majority of local land users have not been involved in decision-making processes related to the use of these lands they have traditionally used. Participation in the planning process has been limited to elders and a few *kebele* administration officials. Under customary practices, agricultural land use should be decided upon by individual land users; however, the local government has taken over the mandate to plan the use of land for small-scale irrigation without consulting the community. This is undermining the customary system.

In Afar too, the commune or villagisation programme is being implemented with little community consultation. In Gewane, this plan is currently being implemented in Geli dora, Gebeya bora, and Egile *kebeles*. Here the villagisation process is being decided and executed in collaboration with the *woreda* agricultural and rural development office, *woreda* cabinet, and clan and *kebele* leaders. Surveys were carried out to assess the irrigation potential of the area before movement of households took place. The scheme is intended to improve people's lives with infrastructure such as schools, health centres, and electricity, and each household being moved will be granted a 1 ha plot of land in the new area. However, it has been reported that many communities are not happy with the resettlement plan as they feel that the land given to them is of inferior quality to that that which they had before. A community elder told an interviewer:

**“We expected to be better off from villagisation, but what is happening is we are worse off. The selected areas don't have enough water supplies. Especially our women and children are severely affected as they travel long distances to fetch water.”**

A conference was held in Dubti three years ago to discuss the issues of villagisation, ownership of land, and other land use problems currently facing local people. One of the hottest issues was that of land ownership. The recent emergence of a more individualistic way of life is contributing to a number of inter- and intra-clan conflicts over the use and ownership of land. A new land policy and legislation for the Afar region propose “joint” ownership between the government and clans. However, firm steps to implement the policy (including defining appropriate mechanisms for this) have yet to be taken.

It is not only agriculture that drives government-led changes in land use, but also conservation. National parks are often established in pastoral areas due to the large amount of biodiversity, including large mammals, which have been protected by their extensive production systems and the general respect given to them by pastoralists. These parks tend to be established without the input or participation of local communities, despite them being potential key allies for protecting wildlife and the environment.

There are two national parks that overlap with traditional Mursi grazing lands, cultivation areas, sacred grounds, hot springs, mineral salt licks, and watering points. Mursiland is sandwiched between the Omo National Park, situated on the west side of the Omo River, and the Mago National Park, to the east of Omo National Park, within the South Omo zone. Despite good intentions to initiate conversations with local communities (e.g. together with the African Parks Foundation in 2005), government park conservation policies have been dominated by a top-down approach that has left the Mursi community out of decision-making processes, especially with regard to boundary demarcation, sharing of rights, hunting concessions, and wildlife conservation programmes in their area. Traditional Mursi land use practices such as hunting (for skins and wild meat during times of hunger), seasonal dwellings, grazing, and cultivation have been banned within the park boundaries.

Slowly, however, the Ethiopian Wildlife Conservation Authority (EWCA) is promoting a more community-based approach to conservation, and steps have been taken in this direction around Gambella National Park. In fact here the EWCA was able to claim back some land that had been allocated to a commercial agricultural investment project by Indian company Karuturi, by proving that it was a biodiversity hotspot and a wildlife corridor. This also benefited the local pastoralists, who used the area for grazing.

In Mursiland, the Tama Wildlife Reserve was set up by the government with the intention of giving it to the Mursi community to manage, with a base in the Dara mountains where many wild animals can be found. However, it remains unclear what the future plans are for this reserve, especially in light of the new agro-commercial developments described above.

#### 4.2 COMMERCIAL INVESTORS, INCLUDING TOUR OPERATORS

Commercial investors and related investments are increasingly appearing in pastoral areas, including foreign investors who are being provided with large tracts of land by the federal (sometimes regional) government. As described above, the Agricultural Investment Land Administration Agency has already identified large tracts of land, the majority of which is found along rivers in pastoral areas. In addition, local investors will be allocated land by the regional government or even by the *woreda*.

In some areas, including Gewane *woreda*, clan leaders have allocated land to investors. Investors who seek to invest in land that is customarily clan-controlled should meet clan leaders directly for permission to use it.<sup>27</sup> Without the permission of clan leaders and community elders, no individual pastoralist household is allowed to allocate land to outsiders. Once the investor has been granted the land in this manner, they are said to have fully guaranteed access to its use. The clan leaders and community elders are responsible for any matter associated with the provision of the land to the investor. Clan and sub-clan leaders distribute the income earned from the investor amongst clan members.

When commercial companies (particularly foreign companies) come into an area, they tend to have little, if any, knowledge of the local environment, local people, or livelihoods systems. An interesting example is provided by the Ethio-Djibouti Railway, which is currently under (re)construction. The federal government is mainly handling the construction of this railway and the work is contracted to a Chinese company. However, the design of the project was not discussed with key stakeholders, including the regional government. Construction work started almost three years ago, but it was only as this progressed that the community realised how the project affected them: the railway was constructed on an embankment about 3m high, which hindered animals and people from crossing to the other side. Realising this, the community complained to the regional government about the situation. As a result, the regional president travelled to the area and witnessed for himself how unsuitable it was for the pastoral community and their livestock.

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<sup>27</sup> This would be for locally arranged and relatively small investments only, as decisions on large-scale investments are made either by the regional government or more often than not by the federal government via the Agricultural Investment Land Administration Agency.



Now the government has agreed to build tunnels under the railway line that will allow people and animals to cross easily. In Afdem, the community have been told that about 26 tunnels will be built under the railway as it crosses the *woreda* there.

Tour operators and commercial investors focusing on conservation and/or tourism have also increased their interest in Ethiopia's pastoral areas in recent years. In Mursiland, there is a controlled hunting camp owned and operated by a Greek businessman, Naso Russos. The camp is near the Omo River, a traditional Mursi (and Bodi) grazing area and an important area for salt licks and hot springs. Russos was given permission by the Ethiopian government in early 2000 to develop the area for game hunting, but the Mursi were never consulted and there was no cooperation with the community. As a Mursi leader explained:

“This was our good land in the dry season and now they say, ‘No, you are not allowed to live here.’ The benefit that he is getting should be shared with the community, but this has never been the case. Russos came in before 2002 or 2003, African Parks Foundation [APF] came in 2005. This was the next stage of outside involvement in Mursi traditional land use. African Parks was more transparent about their plans. They gave the plan to the Mursi and translated the plan into the Mursi language and read it to the Mursi, and the people were happy and accepted it. Unfortunately though, promises that APF had made were not kept, which created mistrust. Maybe this was because the owner died and the new manager who came changed everything. Promises of a grinding mill and cattle medicine...were never kept. [...] The people waited and waited ... but only on the Nyangatom side did they receive money. We heard this. Mursi people were not interested to cooperate. We don't know what happened or why they left.”

#### 4.3 NON-GOVERNMENTAL ACTORS

With only a few overstretched personnel on the ground, NGOs have limited access to information and little time to make use of it when planning land use projects. Therefore they tend to plan with their own objectives in mind. Uncoordinated planning processes by different NGOs working in the same area and on a project-by-project basis mean that already overburdened community members are often obliged to repeat planning activities such as community action planning with different organisations.

In South Omo, NGO-supported interventions are relatively new: development activities such as rangeland management, livelihood improvement, and livestock marketing commenced only a few years ago. NGOs involved in land management in Mursi have included missionary organisations and PACT Ethiopia. At the time of writing, no NGO projects relevant to land use were operating. Missionaries previously involved in developing crop improvement schemes began to introduce different seed crops to Mursi in 2004. This included testing different varieties of sorghum, fruit trees, and vegetables. Promises were made that there would be irrigation in the Makki area in order to grow crops and improve food security. Unfortunately the project failed since the new crops, particularly sorghum, did not prove to be superior to traditional crops. As one Mursi man from Makki put it:

“The seed was good, but the head of the sorghum was tall and big and the stalk was short. Most Mursi said that this was not a good thing. It was the perfect size for the baboon since it was very short. The missionaries studied everything about agriculture, but in the end they left. We hope maybe they will try again to do something good in the future.”

PACT Ethiopia also set up a programme aimed at improving water resources and education. Mursi elders described PACT’s involvement in land use issues as follows:

“They came and talked with the community and went and dug the small ponds to collect the rainwater in a place called Kola and one around Nebise, and there were others as well. But the place where they were digging for the catchment area was not the right place. Some Mursi people said, ‘You have to come and do it here.’ But the NGO said: ‘No, this area is very good. We know better about this because here you can also make a small garden in this open area, plant vegetables in this area. We know this area is good for you.’ The Mursi disagreed and said, ‘That area [over there] with the rocks is perfect for the rain catchment.’ And the NGO said to us, ‘Where can you plant your vegetables there?’ We finally said okay, go head with your plan. When the rain came, it brought all the mud and covered the pond and also the concrete well; it was not made well and it shifted to a different place and was broken. It never caught the water. It failed. Our cattle never used this place as they had intended. That area became so muddy that the cattle would get stuck there and die. In the rainy season some children tried to swim and one child got stuck [in the muddy pond] and died. Cattle, goats, many of them died. It never worked. These two places Kola and Nebise never work for us, we have more experience than outsiders. Their project never worked. None of them have worked.” (Mursi elders, personal communication, 2 July 2014)

A number of NGOs have tried to support the establishment of communal enclosures, with the goal of regenerating degraded grasslands. Such enclosures may be either fenced or unfenced. Often, planning for these enclosures suffers from a lack of experience and understanding of how the land has traditionally been used for different purposes and why. As a result there is a danger that they can break up or fragment the rangelands, promote individualistic attitudes, and block livestock mobility. In addition, the land contained in the enclosures is often not enough to meet the grazing requirements of the livestock population in the area.

The NGOs who have supported these activities have tried to take a participatory approach that is also gender-sensitive: not least, women should agree as they are the ones expected to build the fences around the enclosures. In addition, some projects have tried to include youth as enclosure committee members, as they can read and write and so are able to keep records of activities and attendance. Whenever the project calls for an activity on the land, the management committee leads the process; it summons the members for consultation and advice when deemed necessary, and coordinates people to implement the decisions accordingly. Meetings are held with community elders and staff from the local *kebele*

administration to decide on where the enclosures should be located. Relevant government officials are involved in monitoring the work done by the community and the committee and organise experience-sharing visits to other sites in the district or outside it.

In Nyanagatom, government and NGOs have been encouraging the establishment of enclosures since 2008. At Lorenkachaw, Ethiopian NGO Action for Development (AFD) has established an enclosure of around 40 ha. In 2013, the Horn of Africa Regional Environmental Centre and Network (HoA-REC&N), part of Addis Ababa University (AAU), enclosed an estimated 80 ha of land in Kadokochin, Putaputa, and Namadei. Community elders, youth and women, and *kebele* administration staff were involved in the planning process, led by representatives of HoA-REC&N. The enclosures have a management committee to stop intruders and to stipulate rules and regulations for use.

However, although the enclosures were established and awareness was raised on addressing issues such as rangeland degradation, the community has failed to scale up the approach. This is said to be due to a lack of consensus amongst the wider community about the benefits of enclosures and weak motivation amongst community members for continuing to develop them, despite their participation in the planning phase. The process of establishing the enclosures was detached from wider processes of community land use planning, and was driven by the NGOs themselves. The amount of land enclosed was too small to accommodate the grazing requirements of livestock in the area. A lack of experience on the part of both the implementing organisations and the end users also contributed a great deal to the failure. Community members tend to participate because they want to benefit from payments for work and the provision of equipment, but they have failed to see the real value of the activities. Community members respond to NGOs' calls for action, but are not leading the process on their own terms. In addition, follow-up by the NGOs once the enclosures have been established seems to be poor, with little thought having been given to the long-term sustainability of the programmes. In Nyangatom, the community has since suggested that such enclosures should be used only for feeding weak and sick livestock, which are unable to move with the rest of the herd to other locations.

The PRIME project, led by Mercy Corps and CARE International, has taken a somewhat different approach to pastoral and rangeland development. Working through three key stages of investigation, negotiation, and implementation, a key starting-point is developing an understanding of how pastoralists use the land in different ways, and in particular for grazing. Framed in a participatory rangeland management (PRM) approach,<sup>28</sup> a key initial step is to facilitate a process of participatory mapping of the rangeland and its resources by local communities. This map is then digitised. In Borana, there are five main *dheeda* (grazing areas), with each *dheeda* split into dry and wet season grazing. Once the use of the rangelands is understood, then the community are supported through a planning process to identify priorities, processes, and activities in which to invest for action.

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28 The PRM approach was developed by Flintan and Cullis (2010), based on experiences of PFM (participatory forest management).

This may include clearing the invasive species *Prosopis juliflora* or rehabilitating a well. A rangeland management plan is produced to guide these activities, and this plan should also be used as the terms of reference for an agreement between local government and the local community to formalise use rights to the land. As such, PRM seeks to formalise customary planning processes for rangelands and rangeland resources, while at the same time improving security of access to them. Though the approach has been scaled up across many of Ethiopia's pastoral areas (to a large degree facilitated by PRIME), the securing of a formal agreement that gives use rights to pastoralists for the rangeland and its resources has proved challenging – the government institutional structures are not yet in place to properly enable this.

Figure 4.2 Grazing units (*dheedda*) of Borana Zone, including wet and dry season grazing



The willingness of projects such as PRIME to offer support to pastoralists and the presence of organisations involved in natural resources management in the area are assets. Different types of training are carried out with communities, linked to NGO activities. Usually clan leaders and community elders are invited to such meetings, as not only will they share the information but their influence will promote and facilitate the transfer of ideas, practices, and information to sub-clan leaders and clan members in their respective localities. Communities also learn from new actors such as farmer-agriculturalists, who are increasingly settling in pastoral areas. However, despite the support that NGOs have been giving, some pastoral communities have criticised them for targeting their own objectives and priorities, rather than those of local people.

# Changes, challenges, and opportunities

Pastoralists face cycles of drought, rangeland degradation, destocking of animals, rangeland recovery, and restocking of animals on a regular, if not always predictable, basis. As such, pastoralists are not averse to, and even embrace, change. However, there are a number of newer and more formidable changes taking place. These may happen as a result of internal forces led by pastoralists themselves, or by external forces beyond their control. These changes can have both positive and/or negative impacts, with different challenges and opportunities for pastoral land use planning.

## 5.1 CHANGES TO THE RANGELANDS

Once viewed as the perfect example of sustainable pastoralism, the Guji-Borena pastoral zone is now facing numerous challenges of land use and environmental change that are resulting in a deepening degradation of the rangelands. These changes are due to both internal forces (changes in society, including more individualistic attitudes) and external forces (the influence of development projects privatising rangeland resources such as water).

Initially in Afdem *woreda* in Somali region, elders and others in the community discouraged conversion of the rangelands to crop farming, and argued that the fields should be destroyed. However, needy households explained their situation and the elders agreed that they should be allowed to farm. Although the number of households engaged in farming in the *woreda* remains insignificant compared with the pastoralist majority, the shift to crop cultivation and the frequent destruction of trees, mainly for charcoal production, are growing trends. Charcoal production, in particular, has destroyed the best camel browsing areas within the dry season grazing zone. Occasionally measures are put in place to try to control such wanton resource use (for example, a recent ban by the regional government on making charcoal from indigenous trees), but they tend to have little impact.

The importance of good relations between neighbouring groups in order to access resources and land, as well as for interactions such as market exchange, has already been highlighted. But with agriculture expanding and in some places tourism too increasing its influence (e.g. in South Omo), the future is bound to bring increasing pressure on relations between neighbours, with likely detrimental results. In Somali region, for example, there have recently been land use conflicts between the Somali Issa and Oromo Hawiya pastoralists. And in Gambella in recent years Falata pastoralists from Sudan have expanded their dry season movement as far as Duma swamp (close to the Alwero River) and most of the wet season grazing areas of the Nuer community in the eastern part of Nuer Zone; this is resulting in increasing tensions between the two groups. One of the greatest challenges to land use faced by pastoralists in Gewane, Afar is conflict with the Somali Issa, which challenges their movement to *Alta* in the wet season.

This conflict originally began as competition over grazing and water but today it has become highly politicised, with the Issa planting the flag of the Somali national regional state in areas of the rangeland into which they have expanded. Afar clan elders try to reclaim these lands by recruiting and sending Afar youth to confront the Issa, which leads to regular skirmishes (sometimes resulting in deaths) and cattle raiding.

Many of the customary rules that exist in pastoral society were developed at a time when everyone who was using the rangelands was a pastoralist. Today, there are many different actors with interests in the rangelands, including different land users. At the same time, and as opportunities have opened up to them through traders and others coming into and through pastoral areas, pastoralists themselves are supplementing their livestock production with farming and activities such as charcoal-burning. In the past, any significant level of farming was prohibited in the rangelands. However, crop cultivation is becoming increasingly more common, either as a result of outsiders coming into these areas and being allocated land or because poorer pastoral clan members have lost their herds due to drought and are unable to rebuild them. It is becoming more and more difficult for elders to restrict crop farming in rangelands. This in turn has weakened the authority of the elders and customary institutions, which further contributes to a lack of control or influence over land use decisions.

Many elders in Afar are finding that the door they have opened, allowing a few people to use the rangelands for other purposes such as farming, is now difficult to close: it is difficult for the elders to refuse permission for farming as this would appear to be discriminating. This has been compounded by a lack of investment in livestock as a production system, including livestock extension and health services.

Climate has influenced land use, and particularly in the drylands where rainfall and its distribution are key factors. In Nyangatom, changes in climate are reported to have disrupted regular rainfall patterns. The duration of rain through the rainy season has become short and there is not enough run-off for livestock use. Recurrent and severe drought has resulted in a reduction of water and grass available on the rangelands and the continued encroachment of thorny bushes. The Nyangatom complain that climate change is forcing them to abandon their previous grazing sites, and now they increasingly look to Omo National Park and across the border to South Sudan for grazing and water. Changes in seasonal patterns of rain and scarcity of water mean that it has become more difficult to graze the same area for any length of time.

However, with more sophisticated technology to identify groundwater locations, for example, water is increasingly being provided to areas that were once water-deficient through measures such as drilling boreholes. This is not only having an impact on land use but also on land users, with different and often non-local land users migrating into areas to take advantage of these changes. As the different types of land user increase, it will become more and more difficult to reach consensus on land use.

Land and resources are increasingly being fragmented and/or privatised. In some pastoral areas of Somali region, including Harshin district, the whole area has been divided up into private enclosures (see Flintan et al., 2011), directly linked to the development of individual birked supported by both government and NGOs.

In SNNP the area covered by enclosures is not big (not least because local communities are still struggling with the concept); however, those that are established are contributing to the fragmentation of the rangelands. In addition, although the enclosures are managed “communally”, not all community members benefit from them equally. In some *kebele* people have been able to benefit from selling the grass from inside the enclosures and in others users have been able to take out loans through the enclosure management committee to cover medical expenses or to start small businesses. Overall, community members expressed the opinion that enclosures should be kept for weak, sick, or pregnant livestock, which are unable to move with the larger herd to find grazing and water.

Settlement amongst some pastoral groups is not new but today pastoralists, and the Mursi in particular, are facing a number of external influences including strengthened conservation strategies and the very recently established large-scale sugar plantations along the Omo River, which are currently having a mainly negative impact on their livelihoods. The Lower Omo is due to become the largest irrigation complex in Ethiopia with the Ethiopian Sugar Corporations’ Omo-Kuraz Sugar Development Project as described above.

Past experience shows that ambitious and well-meaning projects like this have often had tragic consequences for the people they were intended to benefit, if planners fail to involve local people in project planning and thereby to respect local knowledge. Such developments are forcing change at a rate that many local communities are finding difficult to keep up with and adapt to. New infrastructure such as roads is opening up pastoral areas to further change. Recently, the Ethiopian Roads Authority completed the construction of the 121km Etang–Jikawo/Lare asphalt road in Nuer zone. More schools will be built, the local clinic has been upgraded, and electric power has been extended beyond Lare town. This will have knock-on impacts on the lives of the Nuer.

## 5.2 REDUCTION OF MOBILITY

In many pastoral areas pastoralists and their livestock are finding it increasingly difficult to move along their traditional routes. The establishment of permanent livestock camps in such places is destroying the traditional herd-splitting strategies that previously protected the rangelands from over-exploitation. Pastoral households have long kept two herd camps at Lokulan and Tiriga grazing areas in Nyangatom. This strategy of dividing livestock prevented potential loss of assets and conflict from raiding. Now, it has become difficult to ensure sustainable and peaceful utilisation of the rangeland due to increased competition and over-utilisation in a few locations in the district and beyond.

Traditionally, Nuer pastoralist land was communally owned. The Gambella Nuer relied on livestock for their livelihoods and were able to move freely across vast rangelands in the Baro and Akobe landscape in search of water and pasture, without restrictions. In recent years, however, pastoralist movement to the Akobo River basin has been restricted due to conflict with Murille pastoralists, and most Nuer have abandoned settlements south of the Gilo River. Previously, they used to move up as far as the border with Sudan; however, this long-distance movement has been halted due to changes in land use and restrictions on movement outside the Nuer zone. Pastoralist movement is further reduced due to large-scale farming, the establishment of protected areas, and villagisation.



In South Omo, conflicts between Nyangatom territorial sections are much more common than conflicts within sections. The dispute between Aypa and Lorenkach territorial sections is one example. Sparks flew between the often disagreeing sections when a group of Aypa moved their livestock into Lorenkach territory without prior consultation. As a result, young herdsmen tried to block the movement and this led to brutal retaliatory attacks. The root causes of conflict include imbalances between available resources and a growing livestock population, cross-border and domestic conflicts preventing access to rangelands in remote locations, and lack of appropriate land use planning to support livestock production and rangeland management amongst other land uses. Invasion by *Prosopis juliflora*, small-scale irrigation on fragmented land, high pump running costs, insecurity of tenure over communal grazing and private farm land, poor infrastructural development, along with the absence of water resources and development interventions to improve the productivity of the rangelands, are all additional challenges in the district that also, in one way or another, contribute to reductions in mobility.

Nyangatom elders interviewed for this study suggested that the attempts under way in many areas to settle pastoralists, as well as the loss of land to the planned sugar plantation, will have significant impacts on movement and other aspects of pastoralism. These include:

- » An increased reliance and dependence by the community on government for services and other aspects of their livelihoods;
- » A disconnect between people and livestock, with livestock being kept well away from settlements, making it more difficult to manage and oversee them;
- » A breakdown of traditional and customary practices, with clans being increasingly divided as interaction between them reduces;
- » A loss of pastoral identity for the youth, who will find it difficult to establish a role in the new lifestyle, and are likely to migrate to urban areas and become labourers;
- » A general breakdown of social and cultural values;
- » Unhealthier livestock due to lack of movement and changed grazing patterns;
- » Pressures on national parks and wildlife as pastoralists search for grazing and water.

### 5.3 CHANGES TO GOVERNANCE STRUCTURES

In many pastoral areas the authority of customary institutions has declined. This has been a result of various forces including political marginalisation, reduced respect from pastoral youth, an influx of non-pastoralists into pastoral areas diluting the pastoral majority, and a lack of appropriate adaptation of customary institutions to new problems in pastoral areas.

Amongst the Somali Issa, the power of the “12 houses of Issa” has been severely eroded and now it can be common for individual pastoralists to decide themselves where they go for grazing and water and the routes they take, rather than being guided by these elders. However, where relations with external groups such as the Oromia Hayiwa are concerned, this tends to be left to the customary authorities. Poorly planned rangeland use by pastoralists, with no regard to the wet and dry season grazing mobility patterns in Afdem and other parts of Somali region, is a big concern.

In Hamer and Nyangatom districts, the introduction of enclosures has led to the establishment of enclosure management committees, which include elders, youth, and women as members. These committees work with local government development agents to plan the use of the enclosures and to implement the plans, including monitoring and enforcement of rules and regulations, stopping intruders entering the area, and fining those who do. Such new groups or institutions do not always sit easily with customary institutions and may, in fact, conflict with them.

Customary social support systems (such as the redistribution of livestock from wealthy pastoralists to poorer ones) are also declining – not only because of more individualistic attitudes but also because there are just too many poor people to look after. This has had a direct impact on land use, with “drop-outs” or others looking for alternatives to pastoralism, including attempting to farm crops. The role of pastoralists (men, women, and youth) within the pastoral system is changing as new land uses are being introduced and new challenges and opportunities are arising – but how these roles will manifest themselves in future remains an unanswered question.

However, in other areas customary institutions have remained robust despite the challenges and are still able to hold on to their authority in the traditional way and/or in a way that has adapted to new problems and challenges. Understanding the status of these institutions is important when considering how they can be supported in matters such as land use planning and rangeland management.

# Conclusions and recommendations

The following conclusions and recommendations are made to those making decisions about land use in the pastoral areas of Ethiopia.

Though it is clear that pastoralists do plan, this planning is becoming less effective as competition for land use in pastoral areas is increasing and the number of actors and interests in pastoral areas grows. In the past where government land use planning has occurred it has failed to adequately recognise and incorporate and/or build on local land use planning processes, and pastoralists in particular are often left out of decision-making processes. Effective land use planning at different levels with both vertical and horizontal integration can support local planning processes and help reduce competition between different land users and reduce the likelihood of conflicts. Fragmentation, blocking of movement, and access to communal resources are all challenges that require attention.

Often the administrative boundaries of government planning processes do not match those of local land users, either spatially or temporally. This may lead to divergence between the two. Local land users are more likely to relate to and commit to planning processes that are built on what they already know, rather than a process imposed from outside and of which they have little understanding. Incentives to do this can be more effective than directives. Local control over processes of change provides greater opportunities for adaptation and is likely to increase feelings of ownership and responsibility

## **Recommendation 1**

*Formal land use planning by government and partners is required in pastoral areas to reconcile the increasing clashes between different conflicting land uses, and to optimise the production opportunities that these areas present. Formal land use planning should be inclusive of pastoral communities and other land users, and build on the local planning processes already taking place. Lower levels of planning should feed into regional and national plans, and higher-level plans should provide a facilitating framework and guidance of local ones. Adequate coordination and information exchange between different actors requires facilitation.*

## **Recommendation 2**

*The integration and complementarity of governmental and local/customary planning processes needs to be fully optimised. This requires a full understanding of both processes and how best they can be combined or developed. Some compromises may be required, but the end result should be a stronger land use planning process that will better serve the interests of different sets of actors. Implementing this process should be through incentives, rather than directives.*

Documenting how land and resources are used in pastoral areas can be important in raising awareness and understanding on how land and resources are used, by whom, when and why. It can also be an important first step in the formal legitimisation of this land and

resource use through the act of transferring previously undocumented local knowledge and use of land to paper. Participatory mapping of land and resources is a particularly effective tool in this regard.

### **Recommendation 3**

*Comprehensive collection of information is required as a first step in the land use planning process, including both physical/scientific and socio-economic data. Pastoral communities should be supported in mapping and documenting their land and resource use, including dry and wet season grazing areas, water sources, cropping areas, settlements, cultural sites and livestock routes. Local government should participate in this process in order to provide an opportunity for it to increase its understanding of this use and incorporate it into land use planning processes, and to provide some formal legitimacy for the process and the maps themselves. Maps should be produced in a way that is useful and accessible for both local land users and for government.*

It is commonly the case that local land users are not included in decisions about land and resource use and their implementation, including the conversion of lands to other uses. This is particularly the case for pastoralists because of their mobile lifestyle, meaning they may not be readily available for related meetings. Often decision-making processes are unclear, even to those responsible for them. As the trends described in this paper have shown, this can compromise the benefits to local land users of decisions made and in worse case scenarios, harm them. Such a situation is likely to have additional wider impacts on local to national economies, and resource use and distribution.

Community-led land use planning works through elected committee members and customary social networks, elders, and clan chiefs to plan land use in rangelands. Through customary law enforcement and decision-making structures, pastoralists try to maintain a balance between resources on the land and growing demands, while resolving conflicts through negotiation. However, even successful community-led land use initiatives can lack technical skills and information to fully plan land use effectively and to benefit from opportunities created.

### **Recommendation 4**

*Pastoralists and other local land users should fully participate in decisions made about land use in pastoral areas, including in their formulation. The significant knowledge that pastoralists have of their lands and resources should be a starting point for understanding how these can most productively be used. Consideration of all land uses, including cultural and ritual use of land, and the multiple layers of use and users should be included in decisions about land use. Capacity building of regional and local government may need to be carried out to support land use planning at the local level in order to ensure that rangeland users play a central role in decision-making processes.*

### **Recommendation 5**

*All decision-making processes related to land and resources should follow formally agreed-upon and timely procedures that provide for documented, transparent and fair negotiations and agreements. Relevant documents should be translated into local languages and shared verbally with communities before decisions are finalised. Recording (written and/or via*

audio) of meeting minutes in order to have a written and visual record of consent processes can be of help where people cannot read and write. Once the plan is understood, people can then return to the negotiating table to further discuss it and to raise their questions and voice their concerns. This is particularly important in processes that demand significant change e.g. resettlement. Technical information useful for land use planning, including by communities, should be shared in an appropriate format. In times of resettlement, the services promised need to be established prior to relocation to enable smooth adaptation by communities to the new situation.

#### **Recommendation 6**

*Clear steps for conflict prevention (e.g. consensus building and negotiation) and/or conflict resolution (or transformation) need to be incorporated into decision-making processes on land use planning. In addition, interventions are required to build agreement between different land users, including between different ethnic groups. These should build on successful customary practices of peace-building and conflict resolution.*

Land issues and land use planning are government responsibilities in Ethiopia; however, NGOs can play a supportive role. This can include covering the costs of testing or piloting new initiatives, and providing technical support and opportunities for government to learn from experiences elsewhere. Where NGOs have encouraged land use change (e.g. enclosures), this has often been done without full consideration of the wider impacts of this change on surrounding areas and/or on the communities involved. NGOs are also poor at coordinating interventions on the ground, so one intervention may support a particular approach that conflicts with what another NGO is doing. Where new groups or institutions are established, their relationship with existing customary institutions should be fully understood and prepared for.

#### **Recommendation 7**

*NGO support and interventions relating to land and resource changes should be better coordinated and NGOs should be more aware of the full impacts of change that they may initiate. The capacity of government to oversee this coordination, particularly at the local level through activities such as local land use planning, requires building. NGOs should play a stronger role in supporting government land use planning initiatives, including the cost of piloting, capacity-building, and implementation.*

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We dedicate this publication to the memory and family of Cherie Enawgaw. Cherie carried out the Gambella case study research for this Issue Paper. It was with great shock and sadness that we learnt of Cherie's recent death from a heart attack. Cherie was a very special person who actively advocated for community-based conservation approaches through his studies and his work with the Ethiopian Wildlife Conservation Authority. His generosity in sharing his in-depth knowledge on wildlife and people of Ethiopia and his enthusiasm for learning about all things new made him an insightful and supportive colleague. He will be sorely missed.

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The International Land Coalition (ILC)'s Global Rangelands Initiative is a programme facilitating learning between and providing technical support to different actors who are working to make rangelands more tenure secure. In Africa the Rangelands Initiative is led by a small coordination and technical unit made up of ILC members RECONCILE (in Kenya) and ILRI (in Ethiopia). The Rangelands Initiative supports ILC members and their government partners to develop or influence enabling policy and legislation, and/or to implement policy and legislation in a manner that better supports productive and sustainable rangeland use. A key input to this is the joint identification of solutions based on innovation and good practice, through research, knowledge generation, and experience sharing. This series of Issue Papers documents and shares some of the information and knowledge generated during these processes.

