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***Men Own Cattle, Women Own Gardens, Or?"
Gendered Land and Livestock Tenure in the Context of Livelihood Change and
Social Transformations among the Jie Pastoralists of Karamoja, Uganda.***

Abstract

Pastoralism in Karamoja, North-Eastern Uganda, has increasingly come under pressure over the past decades due to a multiplicity of different factors including climate change, repeated loss of grazing lands to protected areas, farming and mining as well as increasing land tenure privatization, and significant livestock losses as a result of decades of armed conflict and disarmament. Moreover, development interventions in the region have since colonial times aimed at curtailing pastoralist mobility, promoting sedentarization and the adoption of agriculture. Facing these pressures, many families in Karamoja have shifted away from pastoralism as their primary source of livelihood and placed more emphasis on crop cultivation – a development evident in the progressing acquisition of former grazing lands for cultivation purposes – as well as other ‘alternative livelihoods’. Considering that pastoralist production is traditionally structured along gender lines, livelihood change and associated social transformations are often experienced differently by men and women. As production patterns change, gender relations change, with implications for the distribution of roles and responsibilities within society, as well as the way women and men access, use and control critical resources such as land and livestock.

It is against this background that my dissertation seeks to understand how gendered land and livestock tenure in Karamoja have evolved over time in response to abovementioned social transformations. Drawing on qualitative fieldwork conducted predominantly in newly established agricultural settlements in Karamoja between 2013 and 2015, I analyze how gender and labor relations are currently being renegotiated, and how women’s and men’s customary rights to land and livestock are changing as a result. In doing so, I aim to shed light on social power relations manifesting themselves in renegotiation processes at family and (to a limited extent) communal levels, and explore how women and men experience and cope with changing roles and rights in different ways. Thereby differences existing between women and men as well as among women and men – based on age, marital status and other relevant factors – are taken into consideration. To allow for broader contextualization of research findings, the dissertation furthermore attempts to understand the nature of contemporary social transformations, tracing their historical roots and examining their perceived newness and permanence.