

The Causes and Mechanisms of Karimojong Child Migration

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Note on Language

For reasons of practicality, this report accepts the legal definition of a child as a person below the age of eighteen. The term “child” as used in the report, therefore, applies both to young children and adolescents. The Karimojong distinguish between the two categories and refer to children below the age of twelve or so as *ɲidwe* (singular: *ekoko*); adolescent boys are called *ɲikaracuna* (singular: *ekaracunait*) and girls – *ɲapesur* (singular: *apese*).

Glossary

<u>Singular</u>	<u>Plural</u>	<u>English</u>
<i>Apese</i>	<i>ɲapesur</i>	girl
<i>Awi</i>	<i>ɲawuyoi</i>	kraal
<i>Ebokorait/Abokorait</i>	<i>Dibokora/Dabokora</i>	a male/female member of the <i>Dibokora</i> (Bokora) section of the Karimojong which primarily inhabits Napak District
<i>Edosoit/Adosoit</i>	<i>Didoso/Dadoso</i>	a male/female member of the Karamojong ethnic group (<i>Didoso</i> or <i>Dodoth</i>) which primarily inhabits Kaabong District
<i>Ekaracunait</i>	<i>ɲikaracuna</i>	adolescent boy or young man
<i>Ekarimojongoit/ Akarimojongoit</i>	<i>Dikarimojong/ Dakarimojong</i>	a male/female member of the Karamojong ethnic group (<i>Dakarimojong</i> or Karimojong) which

		which primarily inhabits the Moroto, Nakapiripirit and Napak districts
<i>Ekoko</i>	<i>ɲidwe</i>	small child
<i>Ejot/Ajot</i>	<i>Dijie/Dajie</i>	a male/female member of the Karamojong ethnic group (<i>Dijie</i> or <i>Jie</i>) which primarily inhabits Kotido District
<i>Ekasikout</i>	<i>ɲikasikou</i>	elder
<i>Elejilej</i>		small-scale income generating Activities
<i>Emasenikoit/ Amasenikoit</i>	<i>Dimaseniko/ Damaseniko</i>	a male/female member of the <i>Dimaseniko</i> (Matheniko) section of the Karimojong which primarily inhabits Moroto District
<i>Epiantait/Apiantait</i>	<i>Dipian/Dapian</i>	a male/female member of the <i>Dipian</i> (Pian) section of the Karimojong which primarily inhabits Nakapiripirit District
<i>Ere</i>	<i>ɲigeria</i>	manyatta

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Executive Summary

The Karimojong, an agropastoralist Eastern Nilotic Ateker ethnic group which inhabits the southern half of Karamoja in North-eastern Uganda, have traditionally practiced a dual settlement system which required regular movement between semi-permanent settlements, the centres of agricultural production, and largely mobile camps to which cattle, the base of the Karimojong livelihood system, were taken during the dry season. The report demonstrates that the current practice of child migration from Karamoja is in many ways a continuation of traditional Karimojong mobility patterns, in which children always played an active role. The Karimojong understanding of childhood positions young people as important creators of value. Children's labour contribution to household and community economy is necessary for survival in a challenging, marginal environment subject to frequent natural shocks and serves as an integral element of a process of instruction which prepares them for adulthood. The Karimojong way of life conditions children to an independent, highly temporalized, and frequently unstable existence.

The multiple natural, political and socioeconomic shocks which affected the Karimojong (and other Karamojan ethnic groups, including Ateker Dodoth and Jie) in the course of the twentieth century eroded many aspects of their traditional livelihood system, contributing to gradual emergence of new mobility patterns. The practices of the Bokora, one of the three sections of the Karimojong, have undergone a particularly radical transformation. Triggered by a wave of violence in the early years of the twenty-first century, many Bokora children began to migrate from Karamoja.

The report reveals the factors which determined the dominant role of the Bokora in the evolution of Karimojong migration behaviours in general, and in the phenomenon of independent child migration in particular:

- The Bokora traditionally had a closer relationship with neighbouring Iteso than other Karimojong.
- The earliest Christian missionary activity in Karamoja was concentrated in the Bokora territory. Mission schools in Karamoja and the boarding

schools outside the region, to which some Bokora children were sent, increased social acceptability of children's absence from their homes.

- As the traditional Karimojong livelihood system gradually eroded during the twentieth century, some Bokora adults and adolescents disconnected their migration behaviour from traditional movement to dry season grazing areas and began to engage in small-scale income generating activities in Teso. This practice was supplemented in the last two decades of the twentieth century by migration (of the Bokora and Pian, members of another Karimojong section) to urban centres in Eastern Uganda.
- The Bokora, particularly in Lokopo and Lopeei sub-counties of Napak District, were affected by raiding and consequent loss of livestock, the basis of their livelihoods, to a greater extent than other Karamojan groups due to their successful disarmament in 2001-2002. This development triggered both the emergence of independent child migration from Karamoja and the establishment of protected military livestock kraals. The kraals limited cattle owners' access to their animals and prevented children from performing tasks for which they had traditionally been responsible. Inability to fulfil their obligations to their parents led some children to take advantage of an alternative measure – migration – in an attempt to create value for their families.
- Large-scale Bokora child migration resulted in the establishment of social networks which have reinforced the practice and indirectly led to its considerable expansion in recent years.

Increasing participation of non-Bokora children in the phenomenon suggests expansion and growing reach of these networks and changing attitudes to child migration among other Karimojong.

The report further identifies categories of households and individuals most affected by child migration:

- Vulnerable (poor, child- or female-headed) households and ones with history of migration or with parents who are unwilling or unable to migrate are more likely to produce independent child migrants.

- Older children, girls and children strongly motivated by desire to raise funds for their education or experience a new, different environment migrate particularly often.

Children usually make the decision to migrate themselves. Migration forced by parents is unusual. Most children raise money for transport to the chosen destination through small-scale income generating activities in their communities. Those unable to do so may travel to their destination in stages. Family members may provide funds for transport. Recruitment of children by strangers is unusual and confined to areas which became involved in child migration more recently.

Children migrate both to rural and urban destinations. Many experience exploitation, mistreatment and violence. Because of considerable benefits of migration, however, many children – including those who have been returned to their home communities through government relocation programmes – migrate regularly. There is no evidence that separation of migrants from their parents weakens family ties.

The phenomenon of Karimojong child migration has expanded in recent years to include more Karimojong groups and destination areas. Current level and types of assistance received by the affected individuals, households and communities are unlikely to contain the phenomenon.

Introduction

The phenomenon of Karimojong child migration emerged in the early years of the twenty-first century in the wake of two decades of insecurity and droughts which affected the territory occupied by the ethnic group in southern Karamoja. Although mobility has traditionally formed an important element of their livelihood system, the current practice appears to constitute a radical break with previous behaviour of the Karimojong, whose movements used to be restricted to Karamoja and neighbouring areas and involved all family members. The practice of independent migration of Karimojong children to other parts in Uganda, where they engage in small-scale income economic activities and panhandling, is certainly unprecedented. Participation in the phenomenon has been limited to the Karimojong despite their close cultural, linguistic and social ties to related Karamojan ethnic groups who have been equally affected by the shocks which the region experienced in recent decades. Although Karimojong child migration has attracted considerable attention, little is known about the factors which contributed to the emergence of the phenomenon, its connection to traditional mobility patterns, the categories of people whom it has affected to the greatest extent, the reasons and manner in which the decision to migrate is made by particular people and the experiences of the migrants.

This report endeavours to enhance our understanding of Karimojong child migration. The next chapter provides background information on the Karimojong based on existing literature, discusses the contributions which other scholars have made to our knowledge of the phenomenon, and identifies gaps in this knowledge. It is followed by a methodological section which explains the methods which were chosen to fill these gaps and describes the data collection and analysis process. The findings are presented in three chapters which consider structural and particular determinants and mechanisms of Karimojong child migration, respectively. The conclusion summarizes the findings, suggests possible future developments, and identifies areas where further research is necessary.

Background and Literature Review

The Karimojong (Dikarimojong) inhabit the southern half of the region to which they have given its name and are traditionally subdivided into three sections: the Bokora (Dibokora) in the west (in what is now Napak District), Matheniko (Dimaseniko) in the east (in Moroto District) and Pian (Dipian) in the south (in Nakapiripirit District). The Karimojong and two other Ugandan groups of the Eastern Nilotic Ateker Karamojong Cluster, the Dodoth (Didoso) and Jie (Dijie) are referred to as the Karamojong (Dikaramojong) and are generally considered to be agropastoralist peoples (Knaute, 2008a; Knighton, 2010). The mostly semi-arid plains of Karamoja which they occupy allow cultivation (unlike the much drier Rift Valley lands of the Turkana, their fellow Ateker), but – with frequent droughts and as many as five out of every six crops bound to fail – agriculture is an unreliable livelihood strategy (Mamdani, Kasoma and Katende, 1992). The Karimojong (and other Karamojong) have, consequently, traditionally depended primarily on migratory rearing of cattle for their livelihood (unlike the Iteso, an Ateker people settled to the southwest of Karamoja, who have been able to rely on agricultural production to a greater extent).

Although pastoralism formed the basis of the Karimojong livelihood system (and their culture), agricultural activity – even accommodated to the demands of animal husbandry) – provided them with an important additional source of food, enabling them to successfully deal with frequent shocks (droughts, disease, raids) which threatened their survival (Mamdani, 1982). The tension between the requirements of mobile pastoral production and sedentary cultivation was resolved through the implementation of a dual settlement system and strict division of labour along gender lines. The largely permanent *ɲigeria* (manyattas; singular: *ere*) are situated in a location suitable for agriculture and cattle herding during the wet season; in the dry season, the cattle would be taken to *ɲawuyoi* (kraals; singular: *awi*) in areas receiving more rainfall (Gray et al., 2003; Stites et al., 2007a; Stites and Akabwai, 2010; Stites et al., 2010). Like in many other (agro)pastoralist societies, economic production is structured by gender and age (Hodgson, 2000). Children

traditionally begin to work at an early age. Girls and women are responsible for most elements of agricultural production, including clearing the land, planting, weeding and watering crops, as well as for milking and watering animals, preparation of food, its transport between *ɲireria* and *ɲawuyoi* and other domestic duties, including gathering wild greens and fruits, collecting firewood, fetching water and caring for children. Men take care of livestock, their families' most important assets: young boys herd goats, gradually assuming responsibility for cattle, while older boys and men are charged with ensuring security of the livestock and settlements; they may also help women with harvest (Stefansky Huisman, 2011; Stites et al., 2007a).

The dual agropastoral livelihood system of the Karimojong allowed them to withstand frequent crop failure in the region. It has been shown that even in a year with almost complete crop failure, most agropastoralist and pastoralist Karamojan households would be able to survive on resources available within the pastoral system (Levine, 2010). Agropastoralism and pastoralism are, therefore, widely recognized – at least in academic literature – as the most viable livelihood strategies in Karamoja (and other areas in the drylands of East Africa) (Ekaya, 2005; FEWS NET, 2005; Knighton, 2005).

The Karimojong livelihood system was not, however, prepared for the multiple political and natural shocks which affected Karamoja during the course of the twentieth century. Ugandan colonial and postcolonial authorities sought to establish control over the Karimojong and other Karamojan ethnic groups and limit practices which they considered to be undesirable (primarily unchecked migration and cattle raiding commonly practiced in the region) and promoted alternative livelihood strategies (particularly sedentary agriculture). The extent to which these policies have negatively impacted the Karimojong has been vigorously contested (Mamdani, 1982 and 1986; Gartrell, 1985). It is unquestionable, however, that the desire to impose military control over Karamoja backfired when, following the collapse of Idi Amin's government in 1979, arms depots at Kotido and Moroto were looted by local Karimojong, precipitating three decades of intensive raiding, including previously unknown intersectional raiding among the Karimojong (Gray, 2003; Knighton, 1990 and

2006a; Mirzeler and Young, 2000; Olowo Onyango, 2010; Stites et al., 2007a).

Conflict was accompanied by natural shocks which exacerbated its damaging impact. There is evidence that annual rainfall in Karamoja is decreasing, reducing the availability of grazing lands and the crop growing period, while livestock has been affected by diseases (Mubiru, 2010; also Oxfam, 2008; Stites et al., 2007a). Successive famines have killed thousands of Karamojans, while many others have depended on food distribution for survival. Today, twenty percent of the rapidly growing population of Karamoja is food insecure, and nearly forty percent is moderately food insecure (McKinney, 2009).

The multiple shocks which the Karimojong experienced in recent decades have undermined their ability to rely on traditional livelihood strategies. Crops failed due to drought, while cultivation away from settlements was feared as it made people, particularly women, vulnerable to raiders (Nangiro, 2005). The number of livestock declined considerably as a result of disease, drought and raids; to contain the latter, during the 2000s cattle were concentrated in army-controlled kraals, potentially undermining the social status of young men who had traditionally been responsible for the protection of livestock (Stefansky Huisman, 2011). The loss of cattle and subsequent erosion of the basis of Karimojong livelihoods has challenged previously well-defined gender roles. Women's traditionally underprivileged position in relation to men appears to have been further weakened in recent past (Oxfam, 2000). As the importance of cattle herding – the traditional domain of men – has decreased, women have had to assume greater responsibility for household food security (Czuba 2012; Stites et al., 2010b). Insecurity has been controversially claimed to have undermined traditional governance structures (Eaton, 2008a; Gray, 2000; Mirzeler and Young, 2000; Mirzeler, 2007a and 2007b; Mkutu, 2010; Stites et al., 2007a; cf. Knighton, 2003, 2006a, 2007 and 2010). Local safety nets have weakened and there are reports of increasing abuse and neglect, including domestic violence (Czuba, 2012; Stefansky Huisman, 2011; Sundal, 2010).

The erosion of traditional Karamojong livelihood system and the threat which it poses to cultural and social practices of the Karimojong exemplifies the challenges faced by agropastoralist and pastoralist societies in the marginal environments which they occupy. Such peoples' ability to survive is based on successful mitigation of their dependence on unpredictable ecosystem dynamics through adaptability to constantly changing circumstances. Movement between *ɲireria* and *ɲawuyoi* has always been an integral aspect of life for the Karimojong and had been preceded by longer-distance migrations of their Ateker ancestors, who only arrived in Karamoja in the eighteenth century (Knighton, 1990). Given the spatial imbalance in the distribution of resources and income between Karamoja and other parts of Uganda, migration from the region can be seen as a sensible adaptation strategy (cf. Kwankye et al., 2007; Tacoli, 2007). It is not clear, however, whether the migration of large numbers of Karimojong, especially women of children, large numbers of whom have been present in Ugandan urban centres since the mid-2000s, can be linked to traditional Karimojong migration patterns.

Although the phenomenon has elicited some attention, largely due to the high visibility of Karimojong child panhandlers in Kampala, the research studies which directly deal with it are limited in scope (Stites et al., 2007b; Stites and Akabwai, 2012; Sundal, 2010) or of low quality (Gackle et al., 2005; Russell et al., 2005). They emphasize the sudden emergence of migrant Karimojong communities in Ugandan cities in the middle of the first decade of the twenty-first century and focus their attention on the experiences of migrants in receiving communities (Gackle et al., 2005; Russell et al., 2005; Stites and Akabwai, 2012; Sundal, 2010). The shocks which inhabitants of Karamoja experienced in recent decades and their consequences, including insecurity and conflict, loss of livestock, poor harvests and collapse of social safety nets, are speculated to have caused sudden migration (Stites et al., 2007b; Stites and Akabwai, 2012). It is certainly likely that the disintegration of the traditional livelihood strategies, insecurity and their social effects have contributed to the decisions to migrate taken by Karimojong individual

households, but they do not offer sufficient explanation of the unique character of the phenomenon.

While many East African agropastoralist and pastoralist societies have been affected by natural, political and socioeconomic shocks and experienced gradual erosion of traditional livelihood systems (frequently combined with, if not caused by, insecurity and conflict) in the postcolonial era, no other group in the region has followed the migration pattern of recent Karimojong migrants (Berhanu and Fayissa, 2010; Desta and Coppock, 2004; Fernandez-Gimenez and Le Febre, 2006; Forstater, 2002; Hogg, 1986; Lynn, 2010; Österle, 2008; Sikana and Kerven, 1991; Starr, 1987). In Uganda, the Lord's Resistance Army insurgency saw as many as two million people relocate to internally displaced persons' camps, but did not lead to mass distress migration to urban centres (Refstie and Brun, 2011). Although all Karamojong have been affected by the shocks of recent decades, migration to urban centres appears to be limited to the Karimojong and, in particular, their Bokora section.

The Bokora, whose lands border Teso, are claimed to have long had a closer relationship with the Iteso than other Karimojong; they would apparently take their herds to grazing lands in Teso during the dry season and establish long-term associations with Iteso, which included trade and labour (Stites et al., 2007b). It is not clear why other Karamojong groups have not formed similar relationships with the Iteso and other neighbouring ethnic groups; in addition, this rural-rural migration was in many ways a continuation of traditional Karamojong livelihood strategies and did not involve the radical decision to abandon one's community, way of life and – very often – family. The dominance of the Bokora in Karimojong migrant communities appears, therefore, to be more likely attributable to their greater exposure to raiding and, consequently, loss of cattle, which is asserted to have resulted from the 2001-2002 disarmament drive in which the Bokora (but not other Karamojan groups) gave up most of their arms (Knighton, 2010; Stites et al., 2007b). This raiding apparently affected especially the Lokopo and Lopeei sub-counties of Moroto District (from which the Bokora-dominated Napak District was carved out in 2010) (Knighton, 2010). This claim is not, however, substantiated by

quantitative data on vulnerable households in Karamoja (Lutaaya and Lee, 2012).

Women and children are acknowledged to form the majority of the migrant population. They are the most vulnerable members of their communities and may be exposed to additional challenges following the death of or abandonment by husbands, fathers and other male guardians (Stites et al., 2007b; Sundal, 2010). Given the scale of Karimojong migration, however, it is unlikely that most migrants are widowed, orphaned or abandoned. The reasons why some Karimojong decide to leave their homes and families and the effects of migration on family structure have not yet been addressed. In particular, independent child and adolescent migration, which is thought to be widespread (Gackle et al., 2005; Russell et al., 2005; Stites et al., 2007b; Sundal, 2010), appears to be an especially drastic survival strategy with a potentially highly pronounced impact on both individual migrants and their families.

Its specific causes in the Karamojan and Ugandan setting are unclear, but sources from other African countries suggest that adolescent migration can be a socially acceptable livelihood strategy intentionally chosen by young people who wish to obtain valuable new skills, experiences and assets, and fulfil work obligations to parents. In West Africa, migration of adolescents, particularly girls, from dry savannah communities which provide poor, precarious livelihoods to its inhabitants, has become a well established practice (Beauchemin, 1999; Hashim, 2005; Kwankye et al., 2009). Like in Uganda, where the presence of Karimojong children in urban centres has proved unpopular with local and national authorities, labour migration of young Burkinabé and Ghanaians has attracted strong negative moral evaluation (Hashim, 2005; Whitehead et al., 2007). Discourses condemning adolescent migration stem from normative ideas of children as a category excluded from creation and negotiation of value, which are increasingly rejected amid greater scholarly appreciation of young people's ability to exercise agency (Hashim, 2005; Iversen, 2002; Thorsen, 2007; Whitehead et al., 2007). Although independent adolescent migration disrupts existing intra-family and intra-

community relations, spatial dislocation which it creates does not have to be experienced by migrants and their parents as a rupture and provides young people with an opportunity to transition from full dependence on their parents to adulthood (Whitehead et al., 2007).

Karimojong children's participation in traditional mobility patterns suggests connection with current independent migration, but the ways in which the Karimojong conceive of the phenomenon, its causes and consequences have not been established. In contrast to young West African migrants who are primarily adolescents, many Karimojong present in Ugandan urban centres are young children, suggesting unique dimensions of Karimojong mobility. It is not known whether there are specific categories of children, based on their age or characteristics of their families, who participate in the phenomenon. The decision-making process, including the role of children's own agency, is equally unclear. Existing studies only consider Karimojong migrants in a select number of urban centres (Kampala, Mbale and Moroto), which are easier to reach than more isolated rural areas, but exclusive migration to urban destinations would be surprising given the ethnic group's agropastoral traditions and, at least among the Bokora, previous exposure to agricultural work for the Iteso (Stites et al., 2007b). In addition, because migrants rely on public transit to travel the significant distances between their home communities and destination areas, there is tension between the extreme poverty likely responsible for the decision to migrate and the cost of travel (cf. Stites et al., 2007b).

Both the causes of child migration from Karamoja and the ways in which it is undertaken are, therefore, unknown. We do not know why Karimojong children and adolescents leave Karamoja (and why other Karamojong do not do so), why most of them belong to the Bokora section, what categories of individual migrants, households and communities are involved, what forms migration takes and how it is related to traditional mobility patterns and other established practices, how and by whom the decision to migrate is made, where and for what purpose the migrants go and how the phenomenon is

understood by its participants, their families and communities. This report is intended to address these gaps.

Methods

In order to answer the questions identified in the preceding section, extensive research was conducted in Karimojong communities which have participated in child migration from Karamoja. As it is generally recognized that the Dodoth and Jie are not involved in the phenomenon, they would be unlikely to provide useful information on the reasons why they do not migrate. For this reason, fieldwork was limited to the Karimojong. Purposive sampling techniques were used to select Karimojong communities with different magnitudes of children who migrate with the intention of establishing commonalities and dissimilarities between different areas of Karamoja.

Key informants (social workers who work with Karimojong child migrants for the International Organization for Migration's partner organizations, Dwelling Places in Kampala and International Institute for Cooperation and Development in Moroto) identified Lokopo and Lopeei sub-counties of Napak District as primary sources of child migration, other sub-counties of Napak District as secondary sources, and Moroto and Nakapiripirit districts as areas where migration is occasionally practiced. Based on their recommendations, twenty research sites were identified: fourteen in Napak District (three in Lopeei Sub-county, four in Lokopo Sub-county, three in Matany Sub-county, two in Ngoleriet Sub-county, and two in Iriiri Sub-county), three in Moroto District (two in Ngoleriet Sub-county and one in Rupa Sub-county), and three in Nakapiripirit District (one each in Loregai Sub-county, Nabilatuk Sub-county, and Namalu Sub-county) (the list of research sites can be found in Appendix I). Fieldwork was conducted, therefore, in seven communities with a high proportion of child migrants, seven communities with average numbers of migrants, and six communities where the practice is rare.

Following site selection, local leaders (Local Council 1 chairpersons, elders) were approached and asked for consent and support for research activities in their communities. Qualitative approaches developed to provide rich, in-depth data about complex social phenomena were deemed most suitable for the study of Karimojong child migration and determined the use of data collection techniques which could best combine the directionality and agenda of the

survey with the flexibility of the unstructured, open-ended interview. Ninety-one individual semi-structured interviews were held with the local leaders, parents of children who have left their communities, and former child migrants who have returned to their communities. Twenty-one local leaders, fifty-one parents and nineteen former migrants were interviewed. In addition, the catechist at the Catholic church in Lokopo in Napak District – which had been identified by other informants as the site of a key event in the history of child migration from Karamoja – was interviewed. Individual interviews were complemented by twenty focus group discussions (FGDs) with adult community members of different age, gender and social status (both involved in child migration or not), one of which was held in every research site. Overall, two hundred and ninety-one informants participated in data collection, which took place over a ten-week period between the 30th April and 6th July 2012.

It followed a research instrument developed for the project (Appendix II), but questions were sometimes modified during the course of an interview or FGD in order to capture the informants' knowledge more fully, enable them to express their views and opinions and reveal local knowledge and understanding. Member checks were applied at the end of each interview and FGD to ensure descriptive and interpretive validity of findings. They were complemented by iterative questioning and frequent debriefing sessions at the IOM office in Moroto. A Dakaramojong-speaking research team member took detailed notes in English. In addition, all interviews and FGDs were recorded and transcribed and translated in situations when important information had not been included in the interview notes.

Assent was obtained before each interview and FGD and participants were fully informed of the nature of the research in order to prevent any breach of ethical guidelines (consent and assent scripts and forms for adult and child participants can be found in Appendices III-V). Respondents were guaranteed anonymity to ensure their ability to speak freely about a range of controversial issues and avoid response bias. Obtained data were stored in locked cabinets

or on password-protected computers and all hard copies of interview and FGD notes were destroyed following transcription.

Analysis of data incorporated both observer impression and coding techniques. Nvivo, a computer assisted qualitative analysis software package, was used to code sources, distinguish important themes, trends and patterns, and aid interpretation of data. Every attempt was made to ensure accuracy and quality of findings through a number of techniques used during data collection and analysis. Aforementioned strategies employed during the data collection process – member checks, iterative questioning and debriefing sessions – were complemented by method and data triangulation to achieve credibility (internal validity). Although semi-structured interviews and FGDs are similar methods and suffer from the same limitations as types of the interview, method triangulation is possible as it is recognized that simultaneous use of different methods compensates for their individual shortcomings and exploits their respective benefits (Brewer and Hunter, 1989; Guba, 1981). In addition, inclusion of different sites and categories of informants in the sample allowed data triangulation. It is hoped that a detailed description of the research process contained in this section ensures confirmability and permits potential dependability (reliability).

Findings

The Evolution of Karimojong Mobility Patterns

Karimojong children, both very young ones (*ɲidwe*; singular: *ekoko*) and adolescents (*ɲikaracuna*; singular: *ekaracunait* for boys; *ɲapesur*, singular: *apese* for girls), have always played an integral, and essential, role in the economic and social life of their families and communities. Karimojong conceptions of children and childhood do not reflect the liberal normative ideal of young people as a category disassociated from performance of valued work and entail an active upbringing in which children's work both serves as an important source of labour and allows transition to adulthood. Children's responsibilities, therefore, mirror those assumed by adult members of their communities. For instance, because production of value in Karimojong society follows a strict division of gender, girls and boys undertake different forms of labour, which prepare them for the responsibilities of grown-up women and men. Transition to adulthood is based upon successful performance of children's tasks, which permits assumption of greater responsibilities. This gradual process ensures individual community members' ability to perform their function within the household and communal economy; even more importantly, as boys and men were always responsible for the health and safety of livestock – their families' most important assets – the quality of education which they received secured their survival in a marginal environment marked by harsh climate and interethnic conflict.

Participation in communal movements was traditionally an intrinsic element of this work-based system of instruction. Regular mobility mitigated the challenges and dangers posed by the difficult environment. It permitted diversification of subsistence strategies to include both agricultural and pastoral production, providing the Karimojong with a successful livelihood system which protected them from recurrent natural shocks. Simultaneously, however, their way of life was characterized by a high degree of temporality, uncertainty and frequent conflict over scarce natural resources available in the contested spaces between which the Karimojong migrated. Their dual settlement system ensured a degree of stability, but an *ere* could be relocated

if its existing site was found unsuitable due to adverse environmental or security developments, outbreaks of disease, or intracommunal conflict, while *awi* locations had to be changed regularly due to exhaustion of pasturage and livestock excreta.

Many dry season pastures to which the Karimojong travelled were located in fertile areas in southern and western Karamoja, but *ɲawuyoi* were also established in Iteso, Kumam and Langi territories. Permission from local inhabitants was normally sought by groups of *ɲikaracuna* sent ahead of the main party. Because this migration could also be beneficial to the hosts, whom it provided with an opportunity to trade with the Karimojong, permission was frequently granted. Some Karimojong entered into long-term (even intergenerational) associations with Iteso and Kumam (such relationships between *ɲitungakan*, or “stock associates”, were also practiced within Karimojong society and between the Karimojong and various other ethnic groups; Gulliver, 1972), but this custom does not appear to have been widespread (and apparently died out in the second half of the twentieth century; cf. Stites et al., 2007b).

Most Karimojong migrants engaged in more ad hoc relationships with their host populations instead. When they arrived at their destination, they would often lease oxen which they had brought with them to the local Iteso or Kumam. The latter would provide the migrants with food for the duration of their stay and retain the oxen for the following year. The oxen would be used by the host to cultivate in their own fields and in gardens assigned to the Karimojong; produce from the latter would be given to the Karimojong, together with the oxen, when they returned following harvest. This partnership (which, according to a large number of informants, was different to stock association) could be renewed a number of times if it proved beneficial to both parties. It was frequently so for the Karimojong, if only because it provided them with a safe destination for their annual migration. All Karimojong sections participated in this practice, although it is likely that the Bokora took advantage of it more often than the Matheniko and Pian.

Karimojong children took part in this migration from an early age. While most men moved to *ηawuyoi* with livestock (usually leaving only elders at the *ηireria*), migration arrangements of women – and their children – were more complex. They could travel to *ηawuyoi* in waves, with some women joining their husbands, while others remained at the *ηireria* to perform tasks necessary to recommence agricultural production once rains returned. Alternatively, women could migrate with men to the *ηawuyoi*, leaving only older men and women at the *ere*, to which they would return a few weeks before men to prepare for crop planting. Children would, consequently, first travel to *ηawuyoi* at a very early age, when they could not be separated from their mothers. Children of a few years of age would also often migrate – particularly when food stores at the *ere* were insufficient following a poor harvest – to take advantage of ample food (milk and blood) available at the *ηawuyoi*. This exposure to periodic movement and occasional absence of parents prepared children for the roles which they were expected to play later in their lives. Starting at the age of five or six, children began to engage in age-appropriate labour which, especially for boys, included regular migration between *ηawuyoi* and *ηireria*.

Boys of that age assumed responsibility for herding calves, goats and sheep. Their work would be overseen by *ηikaracuna*. They would follow livestock to the dry season grazing locations but, because they were considered too young to leave their mothers, they would only go to *ηawuyoi* if both parents migrated. They would leave the *awi* early to return to their *ere* with their mother until they reached approximately ten years of age, at which point they were allowed to graze cattle and remain at the *awi* with their father and other men. They began to be considered *ηikaracuna* when they reached their early teenage years.

Girls did not necessarily participate in migration between *ηireria* and *ηawuyoi* so early. They began to assume work responsibilities at the same age as boys, but they could initially remain at the *ηireria* in order to assist older community members, especially their grandparents. Alternatively, they could follow their mothers to *ηawuyoi* and help to water animals and carry out some

household tasks. They assumed greater responsibilities over time and, at the age of ten or so, began to look after young children, help boys to graze animals, and travel between *ɲireria* and *ɲawuyoi* more independently, without their mothers' supervision. Like boys, they ceased to be thought of as *ɲidwe* in their early teenage years.

This gradual expansion of responsibilities prepared young Karimojong for adulthood. Becoming an adult was associated with marriage. For boys, it often signified the ability to marry after they had been given their first cows by their fathers (often in their late teenage years), rather than the reality of marriage; because girls might not marry as early, they could be formally considered children until later age, even though they would lead effectively adult lives.

Lives of such adolescent Karimojong and their progression to adulthood became increasingly affected by external influences during the course of the twentieth century. The Bokora, in particular, were early exposed to Christian missionary activity: Anglican missionaries first arrived in Lotome in 1929, establishing a school there a year later, and were soon followed by the Catholic Combonis who set up a school in Kangole. While these establishments, and other schools formed in the following decades, could only cater to small numbers of Bokora (and other Karimojong) children, their existence created a connection between the Karimojong and the outside world which supplemented the existing relations with neighbouring ethnic groups.

The latter relations also underwent gradual change: as old stock associations began to disappear, new forms of exchange (which no longer necessary guarantees equal standing of their participants) emerged. In the second half of the twentieth century, as insecurity in Karamoja increased and frequent droughts led to poor harvests, adolescent Bokora began to undertake *elejilej* (or paid manual labour) in the Iteso and Kumam areas to which their communities migrated during the dry season. Payment for their work was initially in kind, as Karimojong moral economy had no use for cash, but over time purchasing goods became more viable. Young Bokora would also

increasingly travel for work independently of their communities' migration to dry season grazing areas.

These developments appear to have taken place prior to the period of great Karamoja disequilibrium which began with the collapse of Idi Amin's regime in 1979. The combination of natural, political and socioeconomic shocks which befell Karamoja in the following decades led some Karimojong to modify their migration patterns. Growing numbers of adolescent and adult Bokora migrated to Teso to engage in *elejilej*. The duration of their stay in host communities could increase depending on the current situation in Karamoja, but these migrants continued to fulfil gender roles prescribed by Karimojong customs: men would herd their employers' animals, while women performed household tasks.

Some Karimojong chose a more radical strategy, however, and moved to more distant destination areas outside the traditional Karimojong migration zone. Most of them migrated to the urban centres of Busia and Mbale, while smaller numbers travelled to rural areas in Bunyoro and Kapchorwa. Busia, Mbale and, a few years later, Iganga became the first urban centres with large numbers of Karimojong migrants. Some of this migration was short-term, but many Karimojong also settled; they formed a large proportion of the population of Namatala, a slum on the outskirts of Mbale. While the migration for *elejilej* in Teso appears to have been dominated by the Bokora, people from all Karimojong sections participated in this new phenomenon. Numbers of the Matheniko were likely small, but insecurity in Nabilatuk Sub-county (in what is now Nakapiripirit District) displaced many Pian who were forced to settle in Namatala. Among the Bokora, migrants from Matany Sub-county, the site of the largest trading centre in their lands, appear to have been the first to move to the new urban destinations, and were subsequently followed by inhabitants of other parts of the Bokora territory. Migration to towns in many ways entailed a radical transformation of the livelihoods of Karimojong migrants who now had to enter monetary economy and support themselves through trade or wage labour. At the same time, however, it demonstrated the strength and resilience of Karimojong society as, even though displaced from

their home region, migrant Karimojong maintained connections with their communities. A degree of organization was ensured and movements away from the communities were supervised by *ɲikasikou* (elders; singular: *ekasikout*), whose permission was prerequisite for migration just as it had been in earlier times. Continuation of elders' powers in this regard was particularly remarkable given the fact that their authority was at that time challenged by younger, uninitiated men emboldened by widespread gun ownership and profits from raiding in an increasingly unstable and violent environment. This instability and violence continued to drive large numbers of Karimojong away from their communities and, by the end of the 1990s, the new migration patterns became widespread among the Bokora and, to a lesser degree, Pian. While the earliest form of individual Bokora migration for *elejilej* in Teso was restricted to adults and adolescents who could most easily find employment, the increasingly long-term migration which emerged during the 1980s and 1990s encouraged relocation of entire families.

Family migration was responsible for the formation of large, stable Karimojong communities in Busia, Iganga, and Namatala. It was in these multigenerational settlements that the first generation of Karimojong children raised outside Karamoja experienced and attempted to make sense of urban spaces. There was regular movement between the new urban communities, rural areas in which Bokora found employment, and Karamoja. At the turn of the century, when security conditions in the region were rapidly deteriorating, some of the local Bokora children and adolescents had already spent time away from their home communities. In the Lokopo and Lopeei sub-counties, which were particularly affected by raiding at that time, the Catholic church in Lokopo Trading Centre, an institution well established in the local community nearly a century after the arrival of the first Comboni missionaries, offered a safe haven from violence which had claimed the lives of many of those children's family members.

“There was only one church, in Lokopo, where children would meet together. There they planned when to move to town (...) The church accommodated them for some time (...) Later some children went to their homes and others

went to Kampala because the church did not have funds to support them.”
(Catechist, Catholic church in Lokopo Trading Centre, Lokopo Sub-county, Napak District)

“Children who had been to Kampala before came to the church nicely dressed. They started talking about where they had come from and others followed them later to the city.” (Local Council 1, Lokopo Sub-county, Napak District)

“Some ten years ago, some children from Lokopo went to Kampala and when they came back, they told other children here how good cities are. Afterwards all children wanted to follow them.” (Local Council 1 chairman, Lopeei Sub-county, Napak District)

This group is recognized in different communities in Lokopo and Lopeei as the first independent child migrants to Kampala, while other Bokora acknowledge the two sub-counties as areas where the phenomenon originated. It is not clear what employment the migrants found in Kampala, but their experience there was apparently positive. Over the next few years, as large numbers of independent Bokora adolescents migrated to Ugandan cities, a trend supplemented by continued increase of the existing adult and family migration to an expanding number of urban centres, the Karimojong – particularly women and girls – became a familiar sight across the country. Many of them were not from Lokopo and Lopeei: raiding and resulting loss of livestock also affected other Bokora communities (if not to the same extent) and young people from other Napak sub-counties, particularly Matany and Ngoleriet, quickly joined earlier migrants. These new groups included large numbers of young children. Many Bokora – including adolescents – also continued to migrate to more traditional destination areas in Teso, in which they engaged in *ejejeje*. In Lokopo and Lopeei communities in which fieldwork was conducted nearly all households have participated in child migration; in many of them, all children have migrated:

“Children started going one by one and now there are so many going (...) when you come back from the garden you realize that your child is no longer at home” (Parent of a child migrant, Ngoleriet Sub-county, Napak District)

Children and adolescents from the two sub-counties usually move to urban centres, unlike adults who tend to favour Teso. This division is not so pronounced in other Napak sub-counties, although many – perhaps most – families in Matany and Ngoleriet have children who have migrated. In Iriiri Sub-county, movement to rural Iteso and Kumam areas is more commonly practiced and not as widespread as in other parts of the district. Migration has also become a more individual business than previously and *njikasikou* are no longer consulted by those who wish to leave their communities.

At the same time, migration from Pian communities has remained largely restricted to Busia and Namatala, centres to which the inhabitants of Nakapiripirit District had been migrating for a few decades. Only small numbers of Pian end up in Kampala and other major cities. Independent child and adolescent migration from Matheniko areas was not practiced until the end of the first decade of the twentieth century. Very few Matheniko, boys and men more often than girls and women, leave their land and those who do move primarily to rural, pastoral areas, including some very distant (for example Ankole), in which they largely engage in wage labour using skills acquired in the context of Karimojong agropastoral economy. This small-scale Matheniko migration is an example of a rapidly decreasing number of Karimojong movements which continue to be connected with pastoral production. Much of remaining Karimojong livestock has been concentrated in kraals established by the Uganda People’s Defence Force (UPDF) during the 2000s to contain widespread raiding. As cattle in these protected kraals are controlled by the army, and not their owners, traditional migration between *njireria* and dry season grazing areas has greatly reduced.

These new trends have continued to emerge and evolve even though security conditions in Karamoja improved considerably in recent years. This paradoxical development continues other perplexing aspects of Karimojong migrations, which have seemingly abandoned the patterns of mobility

traditionally practiced by the Karimojong. The following section aims to shed light on the causes of the changes in Karimojong mobility – in particular the emergence of independent child and adolescent migration – their dynamics, and the reasons for ethnic and geographic concentration of the new developments.

Structural Determinants of Karimojong Child Migration

There is a broad agreement among the Karimojong – Bokora as well as Matheniko and Pian – whose families and communities have been affected by child migration that the phenomenon is caused directly by a small number of factors which force children to relocate:

“There were many raids. Everything we owned was taken away.” (Parent of a child migrant, Matany Sub-county, Napak District)

“Many people were killed by enemies during the raids. This is why children have gone to peaceful places such as towns.” (FGD participant, Iriiri Sub-county, Napak District)

“When a child sees that people are dying, she runs away to town.” (Local Council 1 chairman, Lokopo Sub-county, Napak District)

“There was hunger. Staying at home was very hard because food was not there.” (Child migrant, Lopeei Sub-county, Napak District)

Following the events of 1979, raiding continued unabated for three decades. Although insecurity and violence had always been integral facets of Karimojong life, interethnic conflict increased greatly during the period of great disequilibrium and was augmented by previously unheard of intersectional conflict between the Bokora, Matheniko, and Pian. Formerly dependable interethnic alliances which had maintained a degree of political stability disintegrated rapidly amid essentially incessant raiding. Arrival of large numbers of UPDF soldiers in Karamoja, as well as growing recognition of unsustainability of the status quo, allowed gradual emergence of relative order

in the second half of the 2000s as many guns were given up as part of disarmament initiatives, seized by the UPDF, or hidden away from *njireria*. Although many aspects of traditional culture and livelihoods have emerged largely unscathed from the great disequilibrium and some Karimojong, particularly Matheniko and Pian, have been able to continue agropastoral production with the assets which they have retained, the cost of the developments of recent decades has been great. Thousands of Karimojong, especially men, have been killed in raids, while others died due to environmental shocks and lack of medical attention (Gray, 2010). The number of cattle has declined considerably across the region, while agricultural production has remained a challenging livelihood option due to unpredictable weather patterns. Shortage of food is a common occurrence, particularly in the months leading up to the harvest, and many people's perceptions of their situation are centred on hunger; nearly all informants declared that they had experienced it in recent years. Although some communities, and particular households, have been affected by insufficient nourishment and other aspects of poverty to a greater extent than others, the multiple shocks to which they have been exposed have had adverse impact on all Karamojans. Given the scale of deprivation in the region, recent Bokora migration patterns emerge as a sensible livelihood option; its geographic reach, however, suggests existence of additional factors which have not affected those Karamojans who have not chosen to leave their homeland.

The Bokora likely lost a greater ratio of their livestock than other groups. Research participants agree that, following the 2001-2002 disarmament drive, during which most Bokora gave up their arms, they were subject to frequent raids by the Jie, Matheniko, and Pian. These raids were uncommonly brutal and resulted in a large number of fatalities both among the *njkaracuna* responsible for protection of livestock and other community members (including many women and children). As the Bokora no longer possessed guns, they could not defend themselves and their property, or raid other communities to obtain new cattle. Inhabitants of Lokopo and Lopeei sub-counties claim to have been affected by raiding in that period to a greater extent than other Bokora and this assertion is confirmed by the limited

available quantitative data on raiding in Napak (Knighton, 2010). Although the number of livestock in the possession of Matheniko and Pian (as well as other Karamojong) has also reduced, it is acknowledged that the Bokora lost their cattle earlier and, in all likelihood, this reduction has not been as substantial as in Napak in general, and in Lokopo and Lopeei in particular. It is not clear why the widespread loss of cattle among the Bokora was not detected by the household survey conducted by IOM and the World Food Programme in 2010 (Lutaaya and Lee, 2012). This inconsistency is likely due to the survey's exclusive focus on vulnerable households. There is no reason to think that the most vulnerable non-Bokora Karamojans have more cattle, or any other assets, than the Bokora, but they appear to represent a smaller proportion of their section or ethnic group than the vulnerable Bokora, a fact not captured by the study due to its unrepresentative sample.

Decades of raiding and resulting loss of cattle effectively eroded the basis of the traditional Karimojong livelihood system. In recent years, the Karimojong have had to rely on agricultural production to a much greater extent than ever before. In the 2000s, the region experienced a number of droughts, which made the shift to cultivation extremely difficult (although abundant rains received since 2010 have contributed to greater yields from agricultural production). Resulting food scarcity could be only partially mitigated through work available at richer households which often also had limited food reserves. In areas closer to major trading centres, particularly the district towns of Moroto and Nakapiripirit, many people – particularly women – have relied on *elejilej* undertaken for townspeople to provide food for their families. The trading centres in Bokora lands are much smaller and work opportunities in Kangole, Matany or Iriiri have been, consequently, more limited. The practice of migration for *elejilej* to Teso became, therefore, an increasingly important source of food for the Bokora. The growing numbers of Bokora who participated in this migration – as well as the emergence of individual child migration – suggests an evolution of the understanding of mobility within the section. This shift was made in response to the radically changed environment, to which the Bokora have had to adapt their livelihood strategies

in order to enable the section's, and individual households', survival, but its roots lie in developments which had affected them in the previous century.

In addition to their relationship with Iteso and Kumam, the Bokora have been exposed to the outside world through contact with Christian missionaries and the innovation of Western education which the missionaries brought to Karamoja. Mission schools established in Bokora lands were too few to directly impact most people, but they successfully educated a Bokora elite which travelled beyond Karamoja and found employment outside the traditional livelihood system. Some Bokora children also received scholarships which allowed them to go to boarding schools in other parts of the country, exposing them to different ways of life and new political and socioeconomic developments which late colonial and postcolonial Uganda was undergoing. Although numerically small, this group of educated Bokora was able to convey some of their experiences to their relations and inhabitants of their natal communities. Their impact is likely seen in the high contemporary rates of school attendance in Napak (Lutaaya and Lee, 2012) and great desire for education declared by Bokora children, some of whom decide to migrate independently to raise money for unofficial payments charged by the ostensibly free government schools. Bokora – and other Karimojong – children always spent most of their time with their parents but were also early given responsibilities which required them – especially boys – to acquire a degree of self-sufficiency. The absence of children sent to boarding schools further shifted the ideal of a child's role, and their success later in life made independent relocation of a child outside Karamoja not only acceptable, but also desirable. A child who left her family could alleviate the risks which her household and community faced in an unpredictable environment and could, consequently, be a valuable asset even in an economy centred around agropastoral production.

This conceptual evolution was augmented by migration of those Bokora who had not received Western schooling for *elejilej* to Teso. As conditions in Karamoja gradually deteriorated, this migration became increasingly detached from the annual movement to dry season grazing areas. Many of its

participants were young and the benefits of their migration – including food which they brought back with them – compensated for their absence from duties prescribed for them within the Karimojong livelihood system. When it became impossible for young Bokora to carry out these duties within their communities, migration emerged as an even more attractive option.

As raiding escalated in the early 2000s, the Ugandan government realized that, given porous borders and its hitherto unsuccessful disarmament operations, it could not be effectively contained while cattle remained exposed to attacks. It determined to supplement its attempts to disarm Karamoja's inhabitants with a system of kraals which would be controlled by the UPDF and, therefore, eliminate the need for traditional *ɲawuyoi* which had previously had to be defended by the now disarmed men. These protected kraals, combined with disarmament, had some success in reducing the number of raids, but they also greatly limited livestock owners' access to their animals.

Many Karimojong could no longer obtain milk and blood, important sources of nutrition, or perform indispensable tasks for which different family members – including young people who grazed, milked, water and, defended animals – had been responsible in *ɲawuyoi*. Most of the kraals were initially established in Nakapiripirit and Napak district. Some of them were disbanded over time; today, cattle continue to be kept in protected kraals in Kaabong and Napak, while inhabitants of Abim, Kotido, Moroto and Nakapiripirit districts have had their livestock returned to them. The range of duties required of young Karimojong has declined across the region due to loss of cattle, but protected kraals in Napak have disrupted the traditional roles of young Bokora for a much longer time (because fieldwork was not conducted in Kaabong, it is impossible to speculate on the impact of kraals on the Dodoth). Absence of appropriate employment for young people was frequently mentioned by Bokora informants who, on the one hand, decried children's lack of productivity and, on the other, were afraid of the potential negative consequences of the only available solution to this problem:

“If they all go to towns, who will remain with me? And what about when I grow old? Who will take care of us?” (Parent of a child migrant, Lokopo Sub-county, Napak District)

Interviewed children spoke of their duty to support their families:

“When our neighbours started eating their food, my brothers and sisters always cried. This is why I decided to go to town to look for food.” (Child migrant, Nadunget Sub-county, Moroto District)

Children’s decision to migrate emerges, therefore, as a way of fulfilling work obligations to their parents, something which they can no longer do in their communities due to the erosion of traditional Karimojong livelihoods.

Simultaneously, as parents cannot provide for their families, although they acknowledge their moral guardianship over children, they are more inclined to allow them to leave, especially when they cannot go themselves.

Many Bokora adults also migrate – some with families – but their number is acknowledged to be smaller than that of children. In some cases, adult people who grew up in a radically different environment find it difficult to consider leaving their way of life – even though it has been all but destroyed – or, if they leave, cannot adjust to life at their migration destination (Sundal, 2010):

“My husband and I went to Jinja and to Kampala, but it was hard, so we came back. We decided that the girl would stay there because she was mature.” (Parent of a child migrant, Lopeei Sub-county, Napak District)

Bokora children, in particular, have an important motive to relocate in the desire to raise money for school payments which was mentioned by a number of informants as the main determinant of their migration. This ambition may or may not be shared by their parents, who are confronted with additional challenges as, for some, costs of migration may outweigh its benefits. This applies particularly to large families with multiple children (very common in a region which has seen a population explosion in the last few decades) which face greater transport, food and accommodation costs, while some of the children may be too young to work and require their mother’s attention

(thereby preventing her from working as well). Costs are considerably smaller for independent migrants, child and adult alike, whose choice of destination may be additionally better suited to their skills. Migrants are attracted to their destination by the available employment and an opportunity to escape the difficult existence in natal communities, but sophistication and vibrancy of migration areas – particularly urban centres – also appeal to many, perhaps especially children, for whom migration can be an adventure and a chance to experience a different life and see places of which they had heard from earlier migrants from their communities.

Karimojong (mostly Bokora) children who have returned from urban centres often lived on the streets or in difficult conditions in slum areas. Due to their ethnic origin, way of living and economic activities in which they engaged, they were marginalized by townspeople and were acutely aware of their marginalized position in the urban spaces. Once they return – possibly with food and money – however, they imitate city practices which they witnessed to make an impression on their peers in Karamoja. Unable to live like the people whom they encounter in urban areas during the migration, they transpose city behaviours and styles to their community of origin and act them out there (Thorsen, 2007). They demonstrate their “sophistication”, without necessarily divulging details of their more negative migration experiences, making an impression on their peers who may be unable to contextual information which they receive (Whitehead et al., 2007). Returned migrants at the Lokopo church in the early 2000s played this role when, against the backdrop of violence caused by post-disarmament raiding in Napak, they persuaded the first known group of independent Bokora child migrants to seek refuge in Kampala. These migrants, and thousands of their successors since, have continued to encourage their peers to follow them. In a common scenario, a recently returned child migrant organizes a group of other children from the community who together undertake to travel to an agreed destination.

Consequently, the large initial number of migrants from Lokopo and Lopeei – originally affected by raiding and loss of cattle to a greater degree than other

Bokora, but today not much poorer than other parts of Napak (Lutaaya and Lee, 2012) – produced a larger augmentation effect than children from other sub-counties who began to participate in the phenomenon later. Bokora movement from Karamoja is additionally facilitated by comparatively easier access to public transport. The existence of large numbers of Bokora in many Ugandan cities, and some rural areas of Teso, provides child migrants with a community of people who speak the same language, share experiences, help one another to obtain jobs, and to survive in a new alien, frequently hostile environment. These communities were first established by Bokora migrants in reaction to the poverty of their people and as an extension of their earlier migration practices, but they have grown largely as a result of positive feedback on the benefits of migration received by potential migrants and the appeal of an existing support structure which they represent. While raiding, loss of livestock, erosion of the traditional livelihood system, and resulting widespread hunger constitute trigger factors of contemporary Bokora child migration, it was expanded and sustained by the combination of social acceptability of children's absence from their homes (made possible by earlier exposure to the outside world) and power of social networks which the Bokora have created. Other Karamojan children, including the Matheniko and Pian, had been affected by the disintegration of their ways of life to a somewhat smaller degree and, more importantly, they had not begun to reconceptualize their mobility in the ways the Bokora had and were, consequently, less willing to participate in the new phenomenon and encourage their coethnics to do the same.

The character of Karimojong child migration has been evolving. It was initially dominated by adolescents who could find work in urban centres – and the rural areas to which they have continued to migrate in continuation of older movement to Teso – but identification of panhandling as a profitable economic activity subsequently led to a rapid growth in the numbers of small children arriving in Ugandan cities, particularly in Kampala. Earlier Bokora dominance also appears to have diminished; social networks constructed by migrants and their connections to their home communities were necessary to establish large Karimojong presence in destination centres. Over time, however, as

knowledge of Bokora migration spread across Karamoja, other vulnerable children have begun to consider following their peers from Napak.

Non-Bokora Karimojong child migration continues to be a relatively insignificant phenomenon – and, among other Karamojans, child migration appears to be non-existent – but, as inhabitants of the whole region continue to struggle with extreme poverty, additional shocks may potentially trigger a shift in their adaptation strategies. The Matheniko affected by child migration, for instance, attribute the emergence of the practice to decreased food rations provided by the WFP, which apparently forced some children – as well as adults – to relocate to the district town of Moroto where participation in *elejilej* enabled them to obtain food. Having already made the decision to leave their communities, some children were more inclined to continue their migration and moved to rural areas in other parts of Uganda. The number of destinations to which Matheniko children migrate appears to have increased considerably in the last few years, with very small numbers of them in urban areas in Uganda (and Nairobi), a development reminiscent of the gradual territorial expansion of Bokora migrants, whose initial movement to Teso was over time supplemented with a growing list of urban destinations.

Non-Bokora participation in child migration represents realization of the potential benefits of participation in the phenomenon:

“It started when a boy brought food. He was really smart. The rest of the children found out from him that there were good opportunities in town. Now, households which take part in the migration of children employ many people in their fields, because they have a lot of money. This persuaded many parents to send their children to towns to do the same.” (Local Council 1 chairman, Matany Sub-county, Napak District)

Children who return to their communities from rural or urban centres bring money, food and utensils which form an important element of survival strategies developed by many households and communities in recent years. Profits from migration vary widely between individual children: some return with little; others can earn as much as UGX 300,000 and enough food to last

their families for months during a few months-long trip to Kampala. Families of returned children frequently support other members of their community with food which they have received, raising their social status and creating a system of support which suggests continued existence of some aspects of Karimojong moral economy.

Karimojong society has been in many ways transformed by the multiple shocks which it has faced in recent decades. Mobility patterns have also changed and child migration from Karamoja seemingly indicates their complete disintegration. Just like some facets of traditional non-market economy have survived the developments of the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries, however, current child migration represents partial continuation of earlier behaviour. Rather than a dramatic rupture caused by widespread raiding, child migration emerges as a product of a long process during which the Bokora gradually modified their mobility patterns due to increased exposure to the outside world. Children have taken advantage of growing acceptability of independent migration to fulfil their responsibilities towards their families and communities. While *njikasikou* are no longer consulted by individuals who wish to migrate, the strength of social networks among migrants points to preservation of communal connections and identities. The developments examined in preceding paragraphs allow us to understand the factors which contributed to the emergence of Karimojong child migration, triggered the advent of this phenomenon, sustained its gradual evolution and expansion, and explain the differences between communities which it has affected. The forms which child migration takes in individual households and communities, and the reasons why certain categories of persons and households migrate in larger numbers remain unclear. These issues are considered in the following chapter.

Particular Determinants of Karimojong Child Migration

Structural factors determine broader trends in Karimojong child migration and are responsible for the phenomenon's inception, expansion and its certain

specific attributes, such as Bokora dominance. Involvement of individuals and households in the practice and the different forms which it takes are, however, dependent on factors located at lower levels of the social structure. These latter factors largely control the demographic categories which participate in the practice which, although widespread, does not encompass all persons and families.

Roots of the contemporary phenomenon of Karimojong child migration lie principally in traditional mobility patterns practiced by the ethnic group. Movement between *njireria* and *njawuyoi* included both adults and children, who all had different responsibilities in the process. It gradually evolved into independent migration of adults and adolescents to engage in *elejilej*; at some point, likely around the time when first Karimojong relocated to urban centres such as Busia and Namatala, *elejilej* migrants began to take their families with them. Following the events of the early 2000s, initial wave of large-scale Karimojong migration to towns and cities around the country included many women accompanied by their children (Sunda, 2010). Today, many children continue to migrate with their parents. Joint migration is an easier undertaking for families with fewer children, which face smaller transport, accommodation, and food costs. Many large families, therefore, practice independent child migration instead. Because many adults find it easier to find employment and adapt to new surroundings in rural areas, particularly in Teso, family migration to such destination is also more widely practiced (while independent child migrants tend to move to urban centres). Many parents also decide against migrating themselves and send their children with or to members of extended family who live or intend to relocate outside Karamoja. Families in which parents are disinclined to migrate and which have no migrant relations are, therefore, more likely to be involved in independent child migration, although the latter practice affects other types of families as well. In fact, independent child migration is recognized as the most common form of the phenomenon.

Its prevalence can be partly attributed to structural factors – hunger and lack of employment for children within the undermined traditional livelihood system – which force children to relocate, but household characteristics determine the

families most affected by the practice. More vulnerable households are widely acknowledged to be responsible for the majority of independent child migrants “(...) because families are different. Those who have food do not send children to town, but I have nothing. This is why I sent my child away.” (Parent of a child migrant, Matany Sub-county, Napak District)

“Households which cannot afford even one meal in a day are the ones which take part in migration of children.” (FGD participant, Lopeei Sub-county, Napak District)

Hunger and other aspects of poverty affect particularly female-headed households – women who have lost their husbands (and, often, fathers) and do not have a male guardian, whose support is vital in a society governed by strict gender norms – and orphans which are, consequently, overrepresented among migrants. In addition, children from families in which new forms of migration have already been practiced (for instance, by parents who used to engage in *elejilej* in Teso or by siblings who previously migrated to towns) are more likely to migrate due to their greater familiarity with destination areas and better understanding of potential benefits of relocation.

Characteristics and desires of an individual child also constitute important factors. Based on interviews conducted with children or their parents, most migrants tend to be between approximately five and fifteen years of age and, therefore, belong to both categories of children distinguished by the Karimojong: *njidwe* and *njikaracuna/njapesur*. Very few small children migrate independently, both because of their inability to exercise agency at that age, and because they lack skills necessary to find employment. Most very young children who engage in panhandling on the streets of Kampala and other larger urban centres appear to have travelled there with older guardians. Older children develop a sense of responsibility towards other family members:

“When my mother wanted to go herself, I said that I would go and that she should stay with smaller children.” (Child migrant, Matany Sub-county, Napak District)

“The love which children have for their parents makes them go and work in cities and come back later to support them.” (Local Council 1 chairman, Lopeei Sub-county, Napak District)

Their commitment, energy and skills often enable young people to return with considerable amounts of food and money.

The type of skills which Karimojong children and adolescents have acquired prior to migration is largely dependent on gender. Girls are prepared from an early age to perform household tasks, which are often similar to the *elejilej* activities in which they engage when they migrate. Boys’ training, on the other hand, is firmly ingrained in the framework of pastoral production. This fact accounts for geographical distribution of child migrants: girls can choose to move to either urban centres or rural areas as their skills are in demand in both types of destinations, while boys more frequently migrate to pastoral areas where they can continue to work as livestock herders (boys who move to towns often have to resort to panhandling and petty crime in order to survive). Many parents also state preference for female migration, because girls are considered to be more loyal and responsible, but possibly also because women are less embedded in the cultural, economic and social relations of their agnatic kin as they ultimately leave their communities for other clans:

“The girl knows the family’s problems well. She knows what is missing at home. Boys only play and forget to support the family.” (Parent of a child migrant, Lopeei Sub-county, Napak District)

Older girls may also be more inclined to leave their home communities due to frequent rapes and lack of husbands who are supposed to ensure their wellbeing. Consequently, considerably more girls than boys participate in child migration.

A child who migrates may also have a personal motive independent of her or his family circumstances, skills or gender. *“I tried selling firewood but could not raise money for books, pens and fees”*, recalls a girl from Lopeei who subsequently left for Kampala. Desire for education is widespread in Napak

and inability to raise funds necessary to attend schools is a reason which many interviewed Bokora children stated as a key influence on their decision to leave their homes. Other children are attracted by the energy and refinement represented by urban destination centres, which offer the promise to realize their aspirations:

“My mother wanted me to go, but it was also my dream to be in the city.”
(Child migrant, Lopeei Sub-county, Napak District)

Such factors are especially important when the child makes the decision to migrate herself. Children are greatly affected by poverty and insecurity which they experience in their communities and can be more determined to escape them than older Karimojong, whose lives have often been dominated by suffering:

“Adults can do without food for a day, but children want to eat frequently. Because there is no food in Karamoja, they go to Kampala or Jinja where food is available.” (FGD participant, Iriiri Sub-county, Napak District)

Many parents understand their children’s motivations and consent to migration. In such cases, a family meeting may be held to determine the child’s destination and organization of transport. Parents’ objection will not, however, necessarily persuade a child not to go if they wish so:

“Children escape poverty. When they see that there is no food at home, they do not waste time asking parents for permission to leave.” (Local Council 1 chairman, Nadunget Sub-county, Moroto District)

Such disapproval may be related to a particular child’s perceived unsuitability for migration (due to her or his age, gender, skill or other factors), rather than opposition to the practice:

“We made a decision for the eldest son to go to Apeitolim [a fertile rural area on the Western border of Napak - KC], because all people in the community were going there, but we did not let the girls go, even though they wanted to. We only realized that one of the girls had left when she called from Jinja. The

other girl told us that she was going to the church, but she disappeared and only called after two days. When I asked her the day she called why she had left, she told me: 'There is no food at home. How can you feed me?'” (Parent of child migrants, Lokopo Sub-county, Napak District)

It is common for children to run away from their homes when they are confronted with actual or anticipated parental objection to their desire to migrate. This scenario is particularly likely when the child has the support of friends with whom she has agreed to leave the community. Such groups are frequently encouraged to move by a recent returnee who recounts to them her positive migration experiences, assures them of availability and quality of accommodation and work, and helps to arrange transport to their destination. Once the decision is made, irrespectively of location, individual and household characteristics or particular decision-making processes, Karimojong children's migration experiences follow a relatively uniform set of trajectories.

Mechanisms of Karimojong Child Migration

The important economic role which children always played in Karimojong society and their experiences in a highly temporalized, unstable and often dangerous environment equipped them with important skills, strength and resilience which translated into well-defined social status, consequent sense of worth and ability to make independent choices. While many other elements of their way of life disintegrated in recent decades, indirectly affecting their place in society, the system of learning of the Karimojong has been largely preserved. Children are, therefore, well prepared to exercise individual agency in the decision-making process which determines their participation in child migration and to make arrangements necessary for relocation (cf. Hashim, 2005; Iversen, 2002; Thorsen, 2007; Whitehead et al., 2007). Most children raise funds for transport to their migration destination themselves, taking advantage of the limited income generating opportunities available in their communities. Girls find employment in the fields of fellow community members or in neighbouring villages and trading centres, gather firewood and

thatch for sale, make local alcoholic beverages (*ŋagwe*, for example *ekwete* or *epurot*) or, together with boys, help adults to make charcoal. Boys also catch rats for sale. Some children steal money or other valuables from their parents, but this practice does not appear to be widespread.

Elejilej undertaken in children's communities are not profitable and it can take a considerable amount of time to raise enough money to purchase a bus ticket to their destination. Those children who cannot or do not want to wait rely on support from their families or from recently returned migrants who have persuaded them to migrate. Returnees may have sufficient funds to pay for transport for a number of their peers who undertake to reimburse the cost once they have earned some money. If migration is supported by a child's parents or other family members, they may also fund the journey or contribute to the cost through involvement in paid labour, sale of household assets, or loans from village savings and credit associations (VSLAs) which exist in some communities. Relatives who have already left may send money through returning friends, acquaintances, or other community members.

Involvement of outside migration facilitators is uncommon and virtually unheard of in the primary sources of migration in Lokopo and Lopeei sub-counties. Research participants in a community in Lopeei reported that a regular adult migrant employed by Iteso as a cattle herder would sometimes find jobs for local children in Teso. Children determined to migrate may also find occasional support from members of the local political establishment: one child was allowed to spend some time in a member of parliament's Kampala house before she found accommodation, while a parent who could not raise money for transport for her children was given UGX 30,000 by a Local Council III chairman from a neighbouring sub-county. Because the social network among children from Lokopo and Lopeei is so well established, there is no need for more organized groups of facilitators, who may also find it difficult to operate in the two sub-counties due to their relative isolation. However, in trading centres situated on the main road from Moroto to Soroti – Iriiri, Lorengechora, Matany, as well as Moroto itself – some Iteso traders or their Karimojong associates actively recruit local children, who are provided with

food and told of the opportunities awaiting for them if they choose to migrate to Teso. In Moroto, Banyankole traders play a similar role. In addition, local recruiters operate in some areas of Napak and send groups of (sometimes very young) children to Kampala, where they engage in panhandling and other small-scale income generating activities. Some of these recruiters can be members of extended family, who promise to provide a child with education; many of such children are sent to work instead.

Some independent child migrants who do not receive support may not be able to raise enough money in their communities to pay for transport to their chosen destination. For this reason, it is not uncommon for migrants to travel in stages, stopping at communities on route to earn more money and fund the rest of the journey. This practice does not appear to be related to the distance between Karamoja and the destination. Inability to raise sufficient funds for transport is, therefore, unlikely to determine the choice of destination, which tends to be based on perceptions of quality of life and work availability communicated by previous migrants. Rural areas, particularly in Teso, are usually thought to be more welcoming: Iteso employers speak a closely related language and have a better understanding of Karimojong culture and the experiences of migrants than townspeople. Even other rural destinations – in Busoga, Lango or, for a much smaller proportion of migrants, Ankole – supply an environment closer to that to which Karimojong children are accustomed and a market for which their skills are particularly suitable. Urban centres offer more entertainment and promise greater income, which can be spent on food, utensils and school payments. Some towns – such as Busia, Iganga, Jinja, Kampala and Mbale – have large and well-established Karimojong communities which draw migrants; it is these cities, consequently, that most children select as their destinations. Because other centres – for instance Lira, Masaka and Mbarara – see less competition for the types work for which child migrants are best prepared, they also attract some Karimojong.

Karimojong children's education focuses on skills which are necessary in an agropastoral economy, but are not valued by the outside world which requires expertise provided by Western education. For this reason, the migrants

perform poorly paid menial labour or find alternative, and sometimes illegal, forms of income generation. In rural areas, their work is largely limited to agricultural and pastoral production, although girls may also make *marua* (local brew) or undertake domestic work for inhabitants of the communities to which they migrate. Urban centres offer a greater variety of jobs and a number of those children who move there – most of them girls – find employment in markets, where they help to carry, sort and measure produce, or sell charcoal. Because their skills are not highly regarded, however, many have to resort to other activities, which expose them to violence from city dwellers or authorities. Collecting food left unconsumed in market places or spilt from trailers by inattentive drivers is a common strategy which generates anger among traders and businesspeople. Many children engage in panhandling in the streets of Kampala and, less often, other Ugandan towns. *“Begging is good because there is no energy wasted”* (FGD, Lokopo Sub-county, Napak District) and it can generate considerable income for children. This income is apparently large enough to justify the practice of “leasing” children. A mother from Lopeei who migrated to Kampala with her daughter recalls:

“Sometimes I would go with the child to beg and sometimes my Karimojong friends would rent her out. They cheated me and brought me little money, so I took the child back.”

Although profitable, panhandling attracts the attention of authorities and townspeople who do not welcome children’s intrusion in the ordered city spaces in which they do not belong (cf. Young, 2003). Mendicants are frequently assaulted on the streets; many of interviewed children were detained at the Kamparingisa juvenile detention centre and a girl from Lopeei reported that she had been severely beaten by the facility’s older inmates.

Panhandlers are not the only Karimojong children who are mistreated during their migration. They are expected to work excessively long, sometimes seven days a week, and can be beaten by their employers if they damage goods entrusted to them. Inability to pay rent also frequently results in assaults. Rape was not reported in interviews, but some girls were “married” and gave

birth to children while they were away. An adolescent girl from Matany reported that she had been beaten by a married man who fathered her child. A young woman from Lopeei claimed that her child had been taken from her by the Kampala Capital City Authority officials in 2011 and that she had not been allowed to reunite with the child.

Some parents are not aware of the conditions in which their children live and work during migration. Most families (including those in which children migrated against their parents' wishes or without their knowledge) maintain regular contact, however, and children are able to communicate their experiences. Local Council 1 chairmen in home communities usually own mobile phones (while none of the interviewed parents did) and children can contact them from phones borrowed from chairmen's counterparts in the places to which they have migrated, fellow migrants or, if their migration has been particularly successful, their own phones. Frequent communication indicates durability of family life in Karimojong society which, after all, was constructed around mobility which sometimes necessitated brief separation of different family members (cf. Whitehead et al., 2007).

Many migrants' negative experiences of migration and their parents' natural distress when they hear about their children's suffering guarantee reluctance to any further movement away from their home communities. Whether they return voluntarily or through a government programme following their detention at Kamparingisa, many children are afraid to go back to urban centres. Although migration to rural areas rarely results in mistreatment as bad as its urban equivalent, many children's failure to return with food which they expected to obtain for their families can also be upsetting. At the same time, because potential benefits of migration are considerable, many other children continue to return to their selected destination (or, occasionally, multiple destinations). Many children, including those who have been returned to their home communities through government relocation programmes, migrate regularly. An average circular migrant spends a few months in her urban or rural destination of choice; upon return with money, food and other goods, she remains in her home community until food or the means to

purchase it are exhausted. Depending on the success of her trip, and her family's generosity in dispensing it to needy neighbours, a migrant can stay at home for a period from a few weeks to many months. This type of migration, which is different to distress migration practiced by some households in reaction to lack of food, tends to take place during the dry season, when children's assistance in agricultural activity is not necessary. Due to loss of cattle, dry season movement to *ηawuyoi* has largely ceased and children's presence can be very costly to households with very limited resources at their disposal. Child migration facilitates conservation of food stocks and offers children an opportunity to fulfil their obligations to their parents and obtain much-needed additional assets. For many families, the advantages of such an opportunity far outweigh its costs.

Conclusion

The contemporary phenomenon of Karimojong child migration is in many ways a continuation of traditional mobility patterns of the ethnic group. Karimojong conceptions of childhood differ from the Western liberal ideal and associate it with production of value and fulfilment of multiple obligations towards family and community. These obligations always played an essential role in Karimojong agropastoral economy and their successful completion – a test of an individual's ability to support her family and community and, consequently, ensure the survival of the Karimojong way of life – allowed children's progression towards adulthood. Because mobility was a central and necessary practice in a society functioning in a marginal, unstable and frequently dangerous environment, children's lives included regular movement between the two foci of the dual settlement system of the Karimojong, the *njireria* and *njawuyoi*. Children's participation in their community's migrations was an important component of their instruction and prepared them for a challenging, highly temporalized and often dangerous existence.

Multiple natural, political and socioeconomic shocks which the Karimojong experienced during the course of the twentieth century gradually altered this way of life. In response to these shocks, the Karimojong – in particular the Bokora, one of three sections of the ethnic group – modified their mobility practices in order to replace lost sources of livelihood. The Bokora, who had had a closer relationship with neighbouring Iteso and Kumam – to whose lands they would take their cattle during the dry season – than other Karimojong, began to migrate seasonally to Teso where adolescents and adults engage in *elejilej*, or small-scale income generating activities, for the local population. As the conditions in Karamoja continued to deteriorate, this migration ceased to follow traditional movements of cattle. In a more radical break from tradition, the difficult years after 1979 saw the emergence of migration to towns of Eastern Uganda which resulted in the establishment of large urban Karimojong communities. Subsequent decades did not bring respite to the Karimojong, who were exposed to incessant interethnic and intersectional cattle raiding, violence and droughts which effectively eroded

the basis of the traditional livestock-centred livelihood system. In reaction to this development, in the early years of the twenty-first century Karimojong children – the vast majority of them Bokora – began to migrate independently to Ugandan urban centres. Started in a church in Lokopo by children from Lokopo and Lopeei Sub-counties, the practice quickly spread to other parts of the Bokora-dominated Napak District. In recent years, more children from the other Karimojong sections, Matheniko and Pian, also began to participate in independent migration.

The Bokora have dominated the phenomenon partly because they have lost a greater proportion of their cattle than other Karimojong. They were the only Karamojan group effectively disarmed by the government in 2001-2002 and subsequently suffered from raiding by other Karamojans, including other Karimojong. Violence and loss of livestock which they experienced served as a trigger for the earliest wave of Bokora child migration from Lokopo and Lopeei.

Traditional Karimojong mobility patterns allowed for occasional separation of children and their parents. Among the Bokora, social acceptability of absence from their families was further increased by greater exposure to missionary activity and Western education – including in boarding schools outside Karamoja, to which a significant number of Bokora children was sent – promoted by Christian proselytizers in the region. At the same time, Bokora migration for *elejilej* in Teso gradually established normality of independent movement outside Karamoja.

Bokora children were also affected by the erosion of the traditional livelihood system to a greater degree than other Karimojong due to the establishment of protected military kraals for livestock. These kraals, intended to contain cattle raiding, limited cattle owners' access to their animals and, consequently, prevented children from fulfilling obligations to their families which are a central element of the Karimojong understanding of childhood. For many Bokora children, migration from Karamoja emerged as the sole opportunity to carry out their duties.

The acceptability and appeal of child migration increased as the Bokora established growing communities in destination centres and returned to Karamoja to encourage their peers to join them. Combined with hunger and insecurity in their home communities, the prospect of prosperous and – due to the presence of many Bokora in rural and urban areas around the country – relatively safe lives away from Karamoja convinced many children of the attractiveness of migration as an option which would both ensure their greater quality of life and allow them to fulfil their obligations to their families. The existence of social networks explains the gradual expansion of the phenomenon of child migration to different parts of Napak District and, subsequently, among Matheniko and Pian children. Because the Karimojong share cultural and social traditions and language with the other two Karamojong ethnic groups – the Dodoth and Jie – who had not been exposed to outside influences to the same degree, it is possible that the phenomenon will continue to expand to include new populations.

Although the practice of child migration is widespread in some communities, specific categories of households and individual children are more likely to be involved than others. Most independent child migrants come from particularly vulnerable (poor, child- or female-headed) households or ones with a previous history of migration from Karamoja (for example, for *elejilej* in Teso), with parents unable or unwilling to migrate (often because the cost of family migration for large families outweighs its benefits). Older children, considered more responsible and more aware of their obligations to their parents, are more likely to leave Karamoja. Although both girls and boys migrate, due to strict division of labour in traditional Karimojong livelihood system girls are more likely to possess skills sought after by potential employers in destination areas. In addition, girls are thought to be more responsible and loyal to their parents and, ultimately, because Karimojong society is exogamous, are less important to their families. Some girls may also choose to migrate because of high incidence of rape in their communities. Other children, irrespective of their gender, leave their homes to raise money for school payments or to experience a different lifestyle in an unknown environment.

Most migrants make the decision to leave themselves, demonstrating children's ability to make informed choices and exercise their agency. Few parents instruct children to migrate, although many are consulted by children who wish to go. A significant proportion of children run away from their homes. Even when the manner of their departure is so dramatic, migrants tend to maintain regular telephonic contact with their parents. There is no evidence that migration constitutes a rupture in family life. This is likely due to recognition of the value of children's work and their responsibilities and acceptability of occasional separation between parents and children in Karimojong society. Further research, particularly in urban centres – among migrants who have spent extended periods of time away from their homes – is necessary to establish whether children's sense of obligation towards their parents declines over time as they continue to be exposed to alternative value systems during their migration.

Most migrants raise money for transport to their chosen destination through *elejilej* in their home communities. In some cases, they travel in stages, working in communities on route to the destination. A minority of children receive financial support from their parents or other family members. Numbers of other people who facilitate migration appear to be small, and their presence seems to be limited to areas of Karamoja which began to be affected by child migration at later stages. While the number of small children, who are unlikely to make an informed decision to migrate, among panhandlers in Ugandan urban centres is considerable, it is possible that such children are recruited to this type of work within the cities, having been brought there by family members. Only further research in urban areas can establish the existence of such recruiters.

This report offers only a glimpse of children's experiences during migration and more research is required to increase our very limited understanding of what happens in destination areas. In particular, child migration to rural areas has received no scholarly attention, although a significant proportion of children select them due to their reputation as cheaper, more welcoming and safer. Towns, to which the majority of children choose to migrate, offer an

opportunity to earn more money and a more exiting, diverse environment, but they can also be dangerous for the Karimojong. Many children are exploited, mistreated and exposed to violence during their migration. Because benefits of migration can be considerable for their families and communities, however, many of them regularly move between their home communities and chosen destinations.

Reports of the rewards of migration are likely responsible, in combination with continuing poverty in Karamoja and changing attitudes to the practice, for the emergence of non-Bokora Karimojong child migrants in recent years. It is unclear whether participation in the phenomenon will expand in the near future. For now, very few Matheniko and Pian children, and – based on available information – no Dodoth, Jie or representatives of other Karamojan ethnic groups, have chosen to follow in the footsteps of their Bokora peers.

The list of destinations, both rural and urban, to which Karimojong children migrate has gradually expanded over the years and now includes areas very distant from Karamoja. The presence of very small number of migrants in Kenya suggests that the phenomenon might assume a more international character in the future.

It is unlikely that child migration from Karamoja can be effectively contained unless its root causes are addressed. Children began to leave their homes in response to erosion of the traditional Karimojong livelihood system, which has deprived them not only of food, but also the opportunity to fulfil their obligations to their families and communities and – by extension – learn to become an adult Karimojong. Expansion of the phenomenon in recent years suggests that the level and types of assistance which the migrants' communities currently receive from the government and international and non-governmental organizations are not sufficient to dissuade Karimojong children from further migration.

Appendix I: Research Sites

Lorunget, Nakwamoru Parish, Lopeei Sub-county, Napak District, 9th May 2012 and 14th May 2012.

Lorengelup, Nakwamoru Parish, Lopeei Sub-county, Napak District, 10th May 2012 and 14th May 2012.

Lopeei Trading Centre, Lopeei Parish, Lopeei Sub-county, Napak District, 11th May 2012 and 15th May 2012.

Kalukmeri, Akalale Parish, Lokopo Sub-county, Napak District, 16th May 2012 and 31st May 2012.

Lorikitae, Akalale Parish, Lokopo Sub-county, Napak District, 17th May 2012 and 17th May 2012.

Kokorio, Lokupoi Parish, Matany Sub-county, Napak District, 21st May 2012 and 23rd May 2012.

Kachodo, Kayepas Parish, Matany Sub-county, Napak District, 22nd May 2012 and 23rd May 2012.

Nawoikorot, Konyanga Parish, Ngoleriet Sub-county, Napak District, 24th May 2012 and 29th May 2012.

Naitakwae, Kakutalem Parish, Ngoleriet Sub-county, Napak District, 28th May 2012 and 29th May 2012.

Locholi, Lokuwas Parish, Matany Sub-county, Napak District, 30th May 2012 and 31st May 2012.

Nabokath, Iriiri Parish, Iriiri Sub-county, Napak District, 4th June 2012 and 11th June 2012.

Lolet, Lorengechora Parish, Iriiri Sub-county, Napak District, 6th June 2012 and 11th June 2012.

Natumkasikou, Nakadeli Parish, Rupa Sub-county, Moroto District, 19th June 2012 and 06th July 2012.

Nakapelimen, Nadunget Parish, Nadunget Sub-county, Moroto District, 20th June 2012 and 22nd June 2012.

Lokilala, Nadunget Parish, Nadunget Sub-county, Moroto District, 21st June 2012 and 22nd June 2012.

Naturum, Napenayia Parish, Loregae Sub-county, Nakapiripirit District, 26th June 2012 and 29th June 2012.

Nabiltatuk Trading Centre, Nabilatuk Parish, Nabilatuk Sub-county, Nakapiripirit District, 27th June 2012 and 29th June 2012.

Nakayot, Kokuwam Parish, Namalu Sub-county, Nakapiripirit District, 28th June 2012 and 29th June 2012.

Napeilet, Kayepas Parish, Lokopo Sub-county, Napak District, 3rd July 2012 and 5th July 2012.

Napusligoi, Kayepas Parish, Lokopo Sub-county, Napak District, 4th July 2012 and 5th July 2012.

Lokopo Trading Centre, Lokopo Parish, Lokopo Sub-county, Napak District, 6th July 2012.

Appendix II: Research Instrument

I. Local leaders

1.

1.1. What are the traditions of mobility and movement in this community?

1.2. How often would people traditionally move to *ηawuyoi*? Would some of these *ηawuyoi* be in Teso or Lango? Would people go to Teso or Lango for any other reason than grazing cattle? Was it always seasonal migration?

1.3. Did people have established relationships with people to whose lands they would travel? Are you familiar with stock associates? What do you know about them?

1.4. What categories of community members would leave the community to go to any of these places (including *ηawuyoi*)? Would it be adult or young men, women, boys or girls? How old would a child need to be to be taken to any of these places?

1.5. Would children ever leave the community unaccompanied?

1.6. Did people require elders' approval when they left the community?

2.

2.1. How have these practices changed in recent past? Why have they changed?

2.2. Did people stop going to any of the places described above? If so, why?

2.3. Did they start going to new places? If so, why?

2.4. What places are these? Why do they go to these places, and not others?

2.5. When did people start going to these places? Is it a recent development, or did people start going to rural Teso/Lango or urban centres such as Busia and Namatala some decades ago? Which places did they initially go to? Are the current destination areas different? If so, why is this the case?

2.6. What categories of community members go to these new places?

2.7. If they are different to the people who would traditionally leave the community, why is this the case?

2.8. Do people require the permission of elders or the LC1 to leave the community?

3.

3.1. Is child migration widely practiced in this community?

3.2. Why do children leave this community?

3.3. Why do children leave this community in such numbers, while other similar Bokora/Karimojong communities have many more/fewer child migrants?

3.4. We know that people leave Napak District more often than other parts of Karamoja. Why is it so?

4.

4.1. When did children start leaving the community? How did this practice start?

4.2. Did first child migrants from this community copy what children from others did?

4.3. How was information about child migration and its benefits distributed between different communities?

5.

5.1. Where do the children go?

5.2. Do more children go to rural areas or urban centres? Why is this the case?

5.3. Which rural areas/urban centres do children go to?

6.

6.1. Do more adults or children leave the community? Why is this the case?

6.2. Do adults go to different places than children? If so, why is this the case?

7. Do more boys or girls leave the community? Why is this the case?

7.1. Do boys go to different places than girls? If so, why is this the case?

7.2. Do boys and girls engage in different economic behaviour in places to which they migrate?

8. What households within the community tend to be involved in child outmigration? Are they richer/poorer, better/worse educated, male/female-headed, have a history of outmigration?

9.

- 9.1. What forms of child outmigration are practiced in this community?
- 9.2. Do people usually leave with their children, do they send a child unaccompanied, do many children run away or do they leave out of their own volition but ask permission from parents? Why is this the case?
- 9.3. What proportion of migrants fall under each category?
- 9.4. If parents send a child unaccompanied, why do they not go with their child?
- 9.5. If children run away, why do they do it? Do they simply escape poverty, or do they also face abuse or exploitation in their homes?
- 9.6. If parents give permission for a child to leave the community, why is this permission given? Are they allowed to go because of any benefits of child migration to families and their budgets? If this is the case, why will the parents not go with their children to work?

10.

- 10.1. If children go unaccompanied, are there usually family members, friends or other known people awaiting the children at the destination?
- 10.2. If not, how do children find accommodation and work there?
- 10.3. Are there some people in or outside the community who facilitate child outmigration (arrange transport, pay for transport, promise to arrange jobs and accommodation at destination)? If so, who are those people? Have you ever heard of such people operating in Karamoja? If so, what do you know about them?

11.

11.1. When children leave, do they usually stay in the places to which they go, or do they come back? If they come back, how often do they do so? Why do they come back? Do more children stay in destination areas permanently, or return to the community on a regular basis?

11.2. When children come back, do they bring food and/or money with them? How much food/money do children usually bring? Do these contributions from children form an important component of their families' budgets?

12.

12.1. What do you think about child outmigration?

12.2. Do you think it is a violation of children's rights, survival strategy for the child/his or her household, a tradition grounded in cultural practices and traditional livelihood strategies (such as movement between *ɲireria* and *ɲawuyoi* or to grazing areas)?

13. Have you previously encouraged or discouraged child outmigration in the community? If so, why did you do it?

II. Child migrants who have returned to their communities

1. Have people in your family/household moved to cities or towns outside Karamoja before you did, or were you the first to leave Karamoja?

2. Have other children in your family/household also moved outside Karamoja?

3. Did you leave Karamoja because you were told to do so by your parent(s) or guardian(s), or did you decide to leave yourself? Did any people outside the household, including local leaders, say that they wanted you to leave or stay?

4. Why did you decide to leave the community/Why did your parent(s)/guardian(s) decide that you should leave the community?
5. Did your family members want you to leave? If so, why was this the case?
6. Why did you, and not other household members, leave?
7. Did you leave with a household member, a relative, friend, some other person, or were you sent on your own? Why was this the case?
8. Did any people outside the household arrange or help to arrange transport, a place to stay in the city and work for you there? Did they pay for transport? Why were they asked/allowed to do this?
9. Which urban centre or rural area did you go to? Why did you choose to go to that place?
10. When did you leave? How long did you stay there?
11. What were your expectations of life in the place you went to?
12. Where did you stay there? Did you stay with people you knew from your community or another place in Karamoja?
13. What work did you find there? Did someone from your community or another place in Karamoja help you to find a job?
14. Were you mistreated in any way during your stay there? Who mistreated you? What did they do?
15. What contact did you have with your family/household members while you were there?
16. Why did you return? How many times have you been there? Do you return on a regular basis?
17. When you return/ed, do/did you bring money, goods or other goods to your family? Do you know their value?

18. Do you want to go back to the place from which you have returned?

19. Would you want more children in your household and community to move to urban centres or rural areas? Why would you want it to happen?

III. Parents of child migrants

1.

1.1. What are the traditions of mobility and movement in this community?

1.2. How often would people traditionally move to *ηawuyoi*? Would some of these *ηawuyoi* be in Teso or Lango? Would people go to Teso or Lango for any other reason than grazing cattle? Was it always seasonal migration?

1.3. Did people have established relationships with people to whose lands they would travel? Are you familiar with stock associates? What do you know about them?

1.4. What categories of community members would leave the community to go to any of these places (including *ηawuyoi*)? Would it be adult or young men, women, boys or girls? How old would a child need to be to be taken to any of these places?

1.5. Would children ever leave the community unaccompanied?

1.6. Did people require elders' approval when they left the community?

2.

2.1. How have these practices changed in recent past? Why have they changed?

2.2. Did people stop going to any of the places described above? If so, why?

2.3. Did they start going to new places? If so, why?

2.4. What places are these? Why do they go to these places, and not others?

2.5. When did people start going to these places? Is it a recent development, or did people start going to rural Teso/Lango or urban centres such as Busia and Namatala some decades ago? Which places did they initially go to? Are the current destination areas different? If so, why is this the case?

2.6. What categories of community members go to these new places?

2.7. If they are different to the people who would traditionally leave the community, why is this the case?

2.8. Do people require the permission of elders or the LC1 to leave the community?

3.

3.1. Has your family always followed the same practices as the rest of the community? If not, in what ways has it been different?

3.2. Is there anything different about history of mobility (in particular mobility of children) in your family?

4. Is migration from Karamoja (including child migration) a new phenomenon in your family? When did people from your family start leaving Karamoja?

5.

- 5.1. Why is child outmigration practiced in this household, but not in others? Is your household different than others?
- 5.2. Is it female-headed, does it have more/fewer assets, better/worse educational attainment?
- 5.3. Has it been affected to a greater degree than others by insecurity and violence (including loss of life among former household members) or economic changes (including loss of livestock or erosion of other key livelihood strategies)?
6.
 - 6.1. How many children from your household have left the community?
 - 6.2. When did they leave?
 - 6.3. How old are they?
 - 6.4. What places did they go to? Why did they go there?
7. Was child outmigration the result of a decision taken by the household head, the entire household, or the child herself?
8. Did the child leave with a household member, was she entrusted to relatives, friends, other people, or was she sent unaccompanied? Why was this the case?
9. Why did this particular child (and not other household members) leave?
- 10.

10.1. Did any people outside the household arrange or help to arrange transport and accommodation and income activities at the destination?

10.2. Did they pay for transport?

10.3. Why were they asked/allowed to play this role?

11.

11.1. Do you know what the child does (did) in the city?

11.2. What contact have you had with the child since outmigration?

12. Do you think that the child has been exploited or mistreated?

13.

13.1. Has the child ever returned home (if so, was it through a return programme or spontaneous)? If so, how long was she away?

13.2. Do you expect her to return?

13.3. Does she return home on a regular basis? If so, how much time does she spend in the community and how much time does she spend at her migration destination?

14.

14.1. If the child has returned/returns regularly, did/does she bring any money, food or other goods with her? If so, do you know the value of these items?

14.2. Is such a contribution important to your household budget? Is this contribution a reason why the child has left the community?

15. Would you want more children in your household and community to migrate to urban centres or rural areas? Why would you want it to happen?

IV. Focus group discussions

1.

1.1. What are the traditions of mobility and movement in this community?

1.2. How often would people traditionally move to *ɲawuyoi*? Would some of these *ɲawuyoi* be in Teso or Lango? Would people go to Teso or Lango for any other reason than grazing cattle? Was it always seasonal migration?

1.3. Did people have established relationships with people to whose lands they would travel? Are you familiar with stock associates? What do you know about them?

1.4. What categories of community members would leave the community to go to any of these places (including *ɲawuyoi*)? Would it be adult or young men, women, boys or girls? How old would a child need to be to be taken to any of these places?

1.5. Would children ever leave the community unaccompanied?

1.6. Did people require elders' approval when they left the community?

2.

2.1. How have these practices changed in recent past? Why have they changed?

2.2. Did people stop going to any of the places described above? If so, why?

2.3. Did they start going to new places? If so, why?

2.4. What places are these? Why do they go to these places, and not others?

2.5. When did people start going to these places? Is it a recent development, or did people start going to rural Teso/Lango or urban centres such as Busia and Namatala some decades ago? Which places did they initially go to? Are the current destination areas different? If so, why is this the case?

2.6. What categories of community members go to these new places?

2.7. If they are different to the people who would traditionally leave the community, why is this the case?

2.8. Do people require the permission of elders or the LC1 to leave the community?

3.

3.1. Is child migration widely practiced in this community?

3.2. Why do children leave this community?

3.3. Why do children leave this community in such numbers, while other similar Bokora/Karimojong communities have many more/fewer child migrants?

3.4. We know that people leave Napak District more often than other parts of Karamoja. Why is it so?

4.

4.1. When did children start leaving the community? How did this practice start?

4.2. Did first child migrants from this community copy what children from others did?

4.3. How was information about child migration and its benefits distributed between different communities?

5.

5.1. Where do the children go?

5.2. Do more children go to rural areas or urban centres? Why is this the case?

5.3. Which rural areas/urban centres do children go to?

6.

6.1. Do more adults or children leave the community? Why is this the case?

6.2. Do adults go to different places than children? If so, why is this the case?

7. Do more boys or girls leave the community? Why is this the case?

8.

8.1. What households within the community tend to be involved in child outmigration? Are they richer/poorer, better/worse educated, male/female-headed, have a history of outmigration?

9.

9.1. What forms of child outmigration are practiced in this community?

9.2. Do people usually leave with their children, do they send a child unaccompanied, do many children run away or do they leave out of their own volition but ask permission from parents? Why is this the case?

9.3. What proportion of migrants fall under each category?

10.

10.1. If children go unaccompanied, are there usually family members, friends or other known people awaiting the children at the destination?

10.2. If not, how do children find accommodation and work there?

10.3. Are there some people in or outside the community who facilitate child outmigration (arrange transport, pay for transport, promise to arrange jobs and accommodation at destination)? If so, who are those people? Have you ever heard of such people operating in Karamoja? If so, what do you know about them?

11.

11.1. When children leave, do they usually stay in the places to which they go, or do they come back? If they come back, how often do they do so? Why do they come back? Do more children stay in destination areas permanently, or return to the community on a regular basis?

11.2. When children come back, do they bring food and/or money with them? How much food/money do children usually bring? Do these contributions from children form an important component of their families' budgets?

12.

12.1. What do you think about child outmigration?

12.2. Do you think it is a violation of children's rights, survival strategy for the child/his or her household, a tradition grounded in cultural practices and traditional livelihood strategies (such as movement between *ɲireria* and *ɲawuyoi* or to grazing areas)?

Appendix III: Informed Consent Script for Adult Research Participants

Introduction

Hello, my name is Lokiru Denis and I am working with the International Organization for Migration on a research project intended to help us to understand better why some children leave Karamoja for urban centres in other parts of Uganda. If you agree to take part in this research project, we will be asking you questions about traditions of movement in your household and community, the reasons why children are sent to or decide to leave for urban centres and the ways in which they do it.

Voluntary Participation

Participation in the survey is completely voluntary. You are under no obligation to participate, but your responses will help us to understand the issue of child outmigration in Karamoja.

If you have any questions later, you can contact me on 0777754363. In addition, if you have any issues with the research project or the way in which it was conducted, you can contact the researcher responsible for the project, Karol Czuba, on 0781057444, or the officer in charge of the Moroto office of the International Organization for Migration, Muwonge Maxie, on 0772707857.

Confidentiality

Participation in the study is anonymous. Your name is collected for administrative purposes only and will not be linked in any way to the information which you provide. You will not be identified in any report or publication of this study or its results. Yours personal details will not be shared with any individual or organization. This consent form will be the only form with your name. The interview information, which will only have a study

number on it, will be stored separately from your consent form. In addition, you may refuse to answer any questions or ask that the interview be stopped at any time.

Duration

The expected duration of the interview or focus group discussion is between 1.5-2 hours. This time will vary according to respondent and may be adjusted.

Benefits

There are no direct benefits to you (the person taking part in the survey). However, the knowledge you share with us will help us better understand the reasons as to why children are sent or decide to move to places outside Karamoja.

Appendix IV: Assent Script for Child Research Participants

Hello, my name is Lokiru Denis and I am working with the International Organization for Migration (IOM). We are asking you to be in a research study. Research is a way to ask questions and test new ideas. Research helps us to learn new things. We are working on a research project to learn about the reasons why children like you move to cities and towns in other parts of Uganda. Being in research is your choice. You can say yes or no. Whatever you decide is OK.

If you want to participate, we will ask you to answer some questions about you and your experiences. You will only be asked to participate one time, and it should not take more than one hour. In addition, you may refuse to answer any questions or ask that the interview be stopped at any time.

What we learn in this project will not help you now. When we finish the research, we hope to know more about children who leave Karamoja. We may use this information in the future to make programs to help children in your community or in other communities.

None of the answers that you tell us will have your name on them, so they will be kept secret. We might share the answers that you give us with other people, but no one will know that they were your answers.

Take the time you need to make your choice. Ask us any questions you have. You can ask questions at any time during the interview.

Appendix V: Consent/Assent Form

Interview Number: _____

Participant's Name: _____

Parent or Guardian's Name (if applicable): _____

Community: _____

I (the interviewer) have read the above information to the interviewee (and, if applicable, his or her parent or guardian) who has agreed to be interviewed for the purposes of this study, and to allow the research team to use data gathered in this study for research publication and for future organization of programmes in Karamoja.

Interviewer's name: _____

Interviewer's signature: _____ Date: _____

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