

## **CEREAL FLOWS AND SOCIAL CAPACITY IN A PASTORAL REGION**



### **GLIMPSES FROM DOLLO ADO, SOMALI REGION, SOUTHERN ETHIOPIA**

## **ABSTRACT**

This thesis investigates how social relations influence cereal flows between pastoral households and between pastoralists and traders in Dollo Ado, Ethiopia. By examining this case through a narrative approach, I clarify how cereal exchanges are embedded in social capacity. Through interviews and focus groups with pastoral and agropastoral households and interviews with cereal traders, I present six narrative glimpses into the lives of people living in Dollo Ado that demonstrate bridging and bonding capacity, which are characterized by reciprocity and trust. This thesis challenges the assumption that households living in pastoral areas are victims of their environment and argues that development actors in the region need to acknowledge the agency and capacities of pastoralists, agropastoralists and traders.

Keywords: pastoralism, social capital, social capacity, cereal, trade, Ethiopia

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who have lived for generations in the arid lands through their innovative livelihood systems.*

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## **ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS**

|          |   |
|----------|---|
| CSB      | Corn Soy Blend                                      |
| DPPB     | Disaster Prevention and Preparedness Bureau         |
| EEA      | Ethiopian Economic Association                      |
| GDP      | Gross Domestic Product                              |
| MOFED    | Ministry of Finance and Economic Development        |
| NGO      | non-governmental organization                       |
| PSNP-PAP | Productive Safety Net Program – Pastoral Area Pilot |
| SNAP     | Safety Net Program for Pastoralists                 |
| SC/UK    | Save the Children UK                                |
| SC/US    | Save the Children USA                               |
| shoats   | sheep and/or goats                                  |
| SNRS     | Somali National Regional State, Ethiopia            |
| USAID    | United States Agency for International Development  |
| WFP      | World Food Program                                  |
| WISP     | World Initiative for Sustainable Pastoralism        |

## GLOSSARY

|                   |  |
|-------------------|--|
| <i>bagaash</i>    | a term for an assortment of non-food items commonly sold in shops (Somali)   |
| <i>bakaaro</i>    | elevated grain storage units (Somali)  |
| <i>birr</i>       | unit of currency in Ethiopia (Amharic)   |
| <i>burjuwaasi</i> | a farming system where inputs and harvests are split between two or more people (Somali)   |
| <i>canjeero</i>   | a fermented pancake made with wheat (Somali); similar to Ethiopian/Eritrean <i>injera</i> made with <i>teff</i> (Amharic)                                      |
| <i>ceyr</i>       | former pastoralists who have lost all their livestock due to drought or conflict (Somali)  |
| <i>dhakal</i>     | pastoral containers carved from wood for milking (Somali)  |
| <i>dhuubey</i>    | a 250g tin can measurement for bulk food items (Somali)  |
| <i>dugsi</i>      | a Quraanic school (Somali)   |
| <i>dugsiilow</i>  | pastoralists who are less mobile (Somali); derivative of the word <i>dugsi</i> , since <i>dugsiilow</i> usually stay near one                                  |
| <i>dhiil</i>      | small pastoral containers carved from wood for carrying milk (Somali)  |
| <i>galo</i>       | woven panels that cover the <i>hoori</i> frame of Somali pastoral houses (Somali)  |
| <i>geel</i>       | camel (Somali)   |
| <i>geelleey</i>   | a more mobile pastoralist (Somali); derivative from the word <i>geel</i> (Somali for camel), since the most mobile pastoralists usually herd them              |
| <i>haan</i>       | large pastoral containers carved from wood for fetching water and storing large quantities of milk (Somali)  |
| <i>hoori</i>      | a pastoral house made from wood and woven palm leaves (Somali)   |
| <i>irmaansi</i>   | animal on loan to a relative for milking for a certain period (Somali)   |
| <i>jabaati</i>    | a pancake made with wheat flour (Somali); similar to Kenyan <i>chapati</i> (Kiswahili)   |
| <i>kebele</i>     | administrative sub-district in Ethiopia (Amharic)  |
| <i>khat</i>       | a mild stimulant ( <i>Catha edulis</i> ) commonly chewed as a social activity in the Horn of Africa  |
| <i>madaal</i>     | a 750g tin can measurement for bulk food items (Somali); called a <i>galaas</i> on the Kenyan border   |
| <i>marti soor</i> | <i>soor</i> prepared when welcoming guests (Somali)  |
| <i>Quraan</i>     | the central religious text of Islam (Somali); Qu'ran (Arabic transliteration)  |
| <i>Sheekh</i>     | an older male Islamic scholar (Somali); Sheikh (Arabic transliteration)  |
| shilling          | unit of currency in Kenya (English)  |
| <i>shurbad</i>    | liquid porridge (Somali), also called <i>uji</i> (Kiswahili) on the Kenyan border  |
| <i>soocaadeey</i> | a small-scale trader or shop owner who takes items on loan and pays only after they are sold (Somali)  |
| <i>soor</i>       | stiff porridge (Somali), like polenta, similar to <i>ghaat</i> (Amharic), <i>ugali</i> (Kiswahili) or West and Central African grain <i>fufu</i>               |
| <i>suus</i>       | two <i>madaal</i> (Somali)   |
| <i>woreda</i>     | administrative district in Ethiopia (Amharic)  |
| <i>zakaat</i>     | Third Pillar of Islam, an obligatory redistribution system whereby the better-off provide support to the poor in cash or in kind (livestock or crops) (Arabic) |

### Note on Spelling

Places in the Somali Region often have several spellings, partly dependent on whether Somali or Amharic speakers are writing. Common differences are double (Somali) or single (Amharic) vowels and the letters 'q' (Somali) or 'k' (Amharic) and 'kh' (Somali) or 'ch' (Amharic). The *woreda* in which this study takes place can be written Dolo Odo (Amharic) or Dollo Ado (Somali). In this thesis, the Somali spellings are used.

## INTRODUCTION

The European Commission (2009) estimates that twelve million pastoralists and agropastoralists are at risk from three years of consecutive drought in the arid and semi-arid areas of the Greater Horn of Africa<sup>1</sup>. They report that these pastoralist populations are facing high rates of malnutrition, child morbidity and mortality and an increasing number of households have lost all of their livestock and settled around towns, thus making them dependent on outside assistance. According to the Commission: 'Response to a recurrent drought in the affected countries of the Horn of Africa is inadequate, and insufficient attention is paid to drought preparedness, promoting resilience and protecting livelihoods' (EC 2009:2).

Although the international community has recognized that food security is a critical issue for pastoralists and agropastoralists in the Horn of Africa, the focus is usually on *food insecurity* and little attention is paid to the ways households and traders *succeed in securing access to food* in pastoral regions. Despite the reported widespread malnutrition, households are able to secure food, despite minimal quantities in many cases, which suggests that functioning systems allowing them to do so exist. A deeper understanding of the strategies households use to access food and traders use to buy and sell food in pastoral regions would allow development and relief practitioners to respond to the current crisis in ways that build on local capacities.

Pastoral regions can be understood as a geographical space where the majority of households engage in or with livelihood strategies that are particular to pastoralism. Pastoralism is 'a complex livelihood system seeking to maintain an optimal balance between pastures, livestock and people in variable environments' (Nori et al 2008:3), where livelihoods are 'the activities, the assets, and the access that jointly determine the living gained by an individual or household' (Ellis 2000). Food insecurity is a consequence of when livelihood systems don't guarantee access to sufficient food at the household level (Devereux & Maxwell 2001).

While livestock production and trade are the predominant livelihood activities in pastoral regions, the image of pastoral households attempting food self-sufficiency is far from reality. Studies have shown that 88% of the reason that pastoralists sell their livestock is to buy other foods (McPeak 2006:52). Pastoral and agropastoral diets usually include cereals, sugar, tea, beans, pulses, cooking fats and, if they can afford it, fruits and vegetables, in addition to the meat and dairy products that they produce. In Somali pastoral regions – the empirical setting of this paper – previous studies have shown that over 60% of calorific intake comes from foods that have not been produced in pastoral households (Abdullahi 1990).

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<sup>1</sup> In this case, the Greater Horn of Africa includes Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia and Uganda.



A comprehensive study on vulnerable livelihoods in the Somali Region of Ethiopia noted that the pastoral economy is 'a complex, interconnected system of social networks and political negotiations, where the sustainability or vulnerability of each livelihood depends as much on the individual's interpersonal relationships, and on international geopolitics, as on his or her assets and income at any point in time' (Devereux 2006:11). Although many researchers have investigated livestock marketing in pastoral regions<sup>2</sup>, studies on cereals in pastoral regions have been limited and none have examined cereal flows in relation to the complex system of social networks.

### **Research questions and purpose**

Having established that access to cereals is an important aspect of food security in pastoral regions and that the pastoral economy in the Somali Region of Ethiopia is a complex, interconnected system of social networks, my research questions are:

*How do social relations influence cereal flows in the pastoral region of Dollo Ado Woreda?*

*- How do social relations characterize cereal exchanges between pastoral households?*

*- How do social relations characterize cereal exchanges between traders and pastoral households?*

The purpose of this case study is to describe how social relations influence cereal flows between pastoral households and between pastoralists and traders in Dollo Ado, Ethiopia. Methodologically, I address the first question through interviews and focus group discussions with pastoral and agropastoral households in Dollo Ado. In addressing the second question, I combine information acquired through this first set of interviews with a second set of interviews with traders in the region. The analysis is conducted using a narrative approach where, through the integration of interviews, with either pastoral households or cereal traders and field observations, I construct six descriptive glimpses into lives in Dollo Ado that seek to illustrate how social relationships influence cereal exchanges in this pastoral region. Each 'glimpse' centers on one person or household and is supplemented by information from additional interviews and field observations.

### **Disposition**

Following this introduction, I discuss the theoretical approaches of structuration theory, social capital and social capacity as they relate to understanding social relations. I conclude the section with relating the presented theoretical concepts to previous research on pastoral regions. Then, I contextualize the empirical setting of this case study by presenting an overview of pastoralism in the Somali Region of Ethiopia; pastoral livelihoods in Dollo Ado *Woreda*, particularly in the *kabeles* of concern in this study; and cereal markets in the *woreda*. The fourth section discusses methodological approaches, data collection processes and ethical

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<sup>2</sup> A brief literature review is presented in the next section, under 'pastoral social capacity'

considerations. The main part of the paper is the fifth section where I present data in the form of the six glimpses and analyze them in relation to the theoretical concepts. The chapter concludes with a summary of the findings and some concluding remarks.

## **THEORETICAL CONSIDERATIONS**

In this section, I present *structuration theory* as a conceptual framework for considering the seemingly static concept of *social capital* and discuss why *social capacity* is a more appropriate term for considering the ways that social relations influence cereal flows in pastoral regions.

### **Structuration theory**

Social theories often aim to grasp the relationship between human agency and social structures. Structuration theory articulates that agency and structure cannot be separated in social analysis because they are continuously characterized through interaction with each other (Giddens 1979, 1984). While social structures can constrain or empower individual actions, the repetition of specific acts also creates and recreates social structures. This is what Giddens calls ‘the duality of structure’ (Giddens 1984:25-6, 376). Human actions, therefore, need to be considered within their individual, evolving relationships with both agency and structure.

Structuration theory also stresses the importance of space and time in social analysis since social actions affect and are effected by the structures of their particular space and occur at a specific time (Giddens 1979, 1984). For Giddens, structuration is studying social relations in space and time, with regard to the duality of structure (1984). Structuration encourages an interpretivist approach to social research since it is based on ‘(1) the need to classify actions *vis-à-vis* intentions, reasons and motives; and (2) the joint analysis of individual actions and institutions’ (Silva 2007:172).

Structuration is a ‘grand theory’ that attempts to provide a comprehensive explanation of social life and, therefore, has limited possibilities for application in practical studies (Dessler 1989). However, it provides an illuminating conceptual framework for considering human action that is useful evaluating the concept of social capital. In the next section, I discuss social capital through a structuration lens in order to clarify its relation to structure and agency, and space and time.

### **Social capital and social capacity**

The concept of social capital has been discussed and applied within and across many disciplines. In the social sciences, there is a general agreement that ‘social capital stands for the ability of actors to secure benefits by virtue of membership in social networks or other social structures’ (Portes 1998:6). Social capital itself,

however, is not defined by 'the ability of actors', but as its 'function' in relation to structure and agency (Coleman 1994:302). Pennar describes social capital as 'the web of social relationships that influences individual behavior' (1997:154). Structuration theory deepens this understanding of social capital by emphasizing the duality of structure and its location within space and time.

In addition, the literature has differentiated between two different types of capital: bonding and bridging social capital (Gittell & Vidal 1998; Putnam 2000; Oh, Kilduff, & Brass 1999 on communal and linking capital; Adler & Kwon 2002 on internal and external; Durlauf 2008 on intra-group and inter-group). Putnam distinguishes between bonding social capital as 'inward looking', tending 'to reinforce exclusive identities and homogenous groups' and bridging social capital as 'outward looking', encompassing 'people across diverse social cleavages' (2000:22). In the case examined in this thesis, bonding social capital considers the social relations between pastoralists, while bridging social capital considers those between pastoralists and traders.

Adler and Kwon view these relationships as embedded in social structures and offer a typology for three types of social relations: '(1) market relations, in which products and services are exchanged for money or bartered, (2) hierarchical relations, in which obedience to authority is exchanged for material and spiritual security, and (3) social relations, in which favors and gifts are exchanged' (2002:18)<sup>3</sup>. For the purpose of this thesis, I will call the third type 'cultural' rather than 'social' relations to distinguish it from the overarching concept of social relations that includes all three types. This typology provides a point of departure for discussing the social relations that characterize cereal flows in Dollo Ado.

Within these three types of relations, 'social norms and values, particularly trust /.../ and expectations of reciprocity establish the cultural aspects of social capital', or the glue that holds relationships together (Van Deth 2008:155). Trust is grounded in expectations particular to the individual (Hardin 2002:13) that result from past experience (Offe 1999:56). Social capital exists where 'networks of reciprocity' or 'networks of social connection' produce norms of reciprocity and trustworthiness among individuals (Putnam 2000:171).

While it is clear that social relationships are at the center of the concept, there has been reasonable discussion on whether or not social capital should really be called capital<sup>4</sup>. These critiques often discuss 'the analytic and ideological consequences of the use of the word *capital* in reference to the structures and relations that the term *social capital* purports to comprehend and describe' (Smith & Kulynych 2002). A prominent concern is the

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<sup>3</sup> Portes also discusses a similar typology, distinguishing between three functions of social capital: '(a) as a source of social control; (b) as a source of family support; (c) as a source of benefits through extrafamilial networks' (1998:9).

<sup>4</sup> Baron & Hannan 1994; Goldberg 1996; Levi 1996; Edwards & Foley 1997, 1998; Portes 1998; Araujo & Easton 1999; Robinson et al 2002; Smith & Kulynych 2002

grouping of social capital in a category with 'a plethora of capitals', which diminishes the importance of the unique characteristics that makes it social (Baron & Hannan 1994).

Adler and Kwon profile four ways that social capital differs from other types of capital (2002:22). First, like physical and human capital, but unlike financial capital, it has to be maintained or it dissolves. Second, many forms of social capital are 'collective goods' unlike many other forms of capital that are private (Burt 1992<sup>5</sup>, Coleman 1998). The third differentiation builds on the understanding of social capital as a 'web of social relationships' (Pennar 1997:154) and argues that, unlike other forms, social capital is 'located' in the relationships of actors rather than the actors themselves (Coleman 1998). Lastly, investments in social capital cannot be quantified as they can in other types of capital (Solow 1997). Smith and Kulynych also note that social capital cannot be substituted, even with other forms of capital (2002: 179).

Smith and Kulynych argue for more appropriate terms to use when talking about what is now referred to as *social capital* that are less ideologically 'stained' and analytically 'blurred' (2002:151,181). They first suggest *social resources*, following the definition of social capital as a 'web of resources' (Pennar 1997:154), and building on Coleman's articulation of the 'function' of social capital as a 'resource', a 'function' of social structures and relations (1990:205). However, they also mention the concern that the word *resources* does not reflect the aspect of social capital that is a 'provision of the future' or a 'reserve' (Fisher 1965, in Smith and Kulynych 2002), which brings us back to a structuration understanding of social capital as it is located within space and time.

Ultimately, Smith and Kulynych suggest that '*social capacity* has the various advantages of *social resources* and few of the drawbacks of *social capital* /... / [and] view *social capacity* as a term that can be employed in all contexts where *social capital* is presently used' (Smith and Kulynych 2002:180). In the next section, I discuss why social capacity is an illuminating concept to use when discussing pastoral societies and how I will use it in this thesis to consider the ways social relations influence cereal flows in pastoral regions.

### **Pastoral social capacity**

The majority of studies on pastoralism address either human-environment relations or livestock marketing and trade. Very little has been investigated concerning the relationships between access to cereals and pastoral livelihood security outside of reports on household consumption patterns. In addition, while social relations have been documented to some extent in various pastoral societies, social capacity has not been evaluated in relationship to cereal flows. The purpose of this study is to begin illuminating these connections.

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<sup>5</sup> 'No one player has exclusive ownership rights to social capital. If you or your partner in a relationship withdraws, the connection dissolves with whatever social capital it contained' (Burt 1992: 58).

Understanding existing levels of social capacity is necessary in designing effective development strategies in any region (Woolcock 1998).

Previous studies examining the influence of social relations on trading relationships in pastoral regions include trader-trader relations (Mahmoud 2008), patron-client relations (Ensminger 1996), *onibara* (Trager 1981), 'clientelization' (Geertz 1967), and clientelism (Little 1992). The first study concentrates on the relations between traders, while the latter ones focus on relations between traders and households. This study departs from these studies by focusing on how the different types of relationships, of which market is one, are indicators of social capacity in pastoral areas. It also links this discussion to viewing pastoralists as agents in their environment rather than victims of the structures in which they are embedded.

## **CONTEXTUALIZATION**

In this section, I provide an overview of the pastoral regions of Ethiopia including livestock production and marketing systems, with particular attention to the Somali National Regional State (SNRS). This overview is followed by a more in depth presentation of livelihoods and markets in Dollo Ado *Woreda* of Liban Zone based on my own research in the region, as well as secondary data from recent reports on livelihoods and marketing in the region.

### **Pastoralism in the Somali Region of Ethiopia**

SNRS is one of the largest regions in Ethiopia. It borders on Kenya to the south, Somalia to the east and northeast and Djibouti to the north. Somali-speaking people form the largest ethnic block on the African continent, residing throughout the Horn of Africa: the former French colony of Djibouti; SNRS and parts of its bordering states in Ethiopia; the Republic of Somalia, including Somaliland and Puntland; and North Eastern Province and some adjacent districts in Kenya (Lewis 1980). This research takes place in the Ethiopian *woreda* of Dollo Ado in Liban Zone of SNRS and borders on the Gedo Region of Somalia to the east and the district of Mandera, Kenya to the south (Figure 1).

The Ethiopian economy is based on agriculture, in which pastoral livelihood production plays a significant role<sup>6</sup>. The agricultural sector contributes about 45% of GDP, supports over 80% of the rural population and supplies nearly 90% of national exports (MOFED 2006). In the Fiscal Year 2005/2006, livestock contributed to 9% of the GDP and 21% of agricultural GDP (MOFED 2006). The pastoral regions of Ethiopia cover almost a million square kilometers and support about 9.8 million people, about 12% of the national population (EEA

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<sup>6</sup> Ethiopia has the largest number and widest diversity of livestock of any African country with approximately 48 million shoats (sheep and goats); 41 million cattle; 5.7 million donkeys, horses and mules; and 2.3 million camels (EEA 2005).

Figure 1: Research Area (courtesy of UNOCHA)

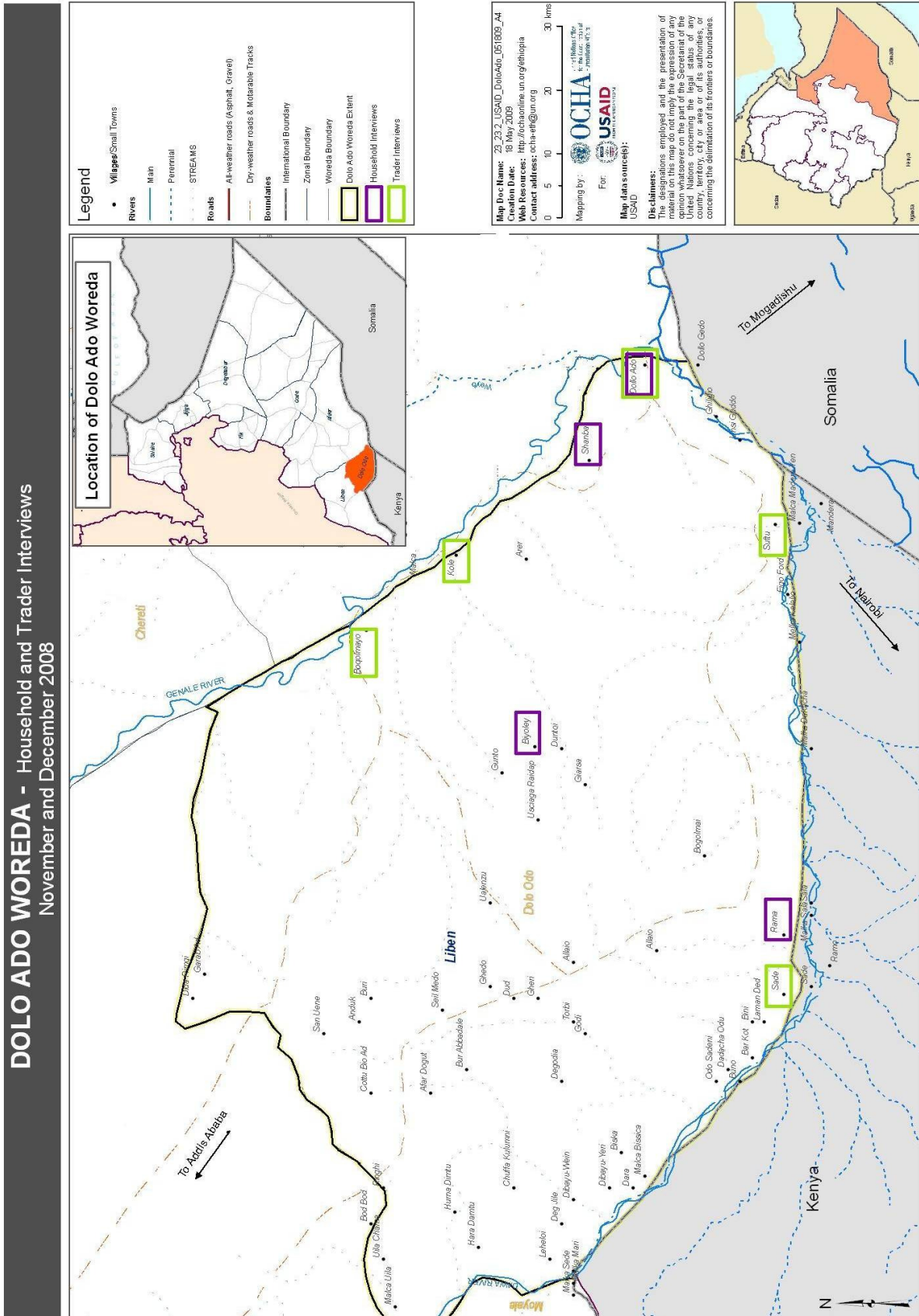
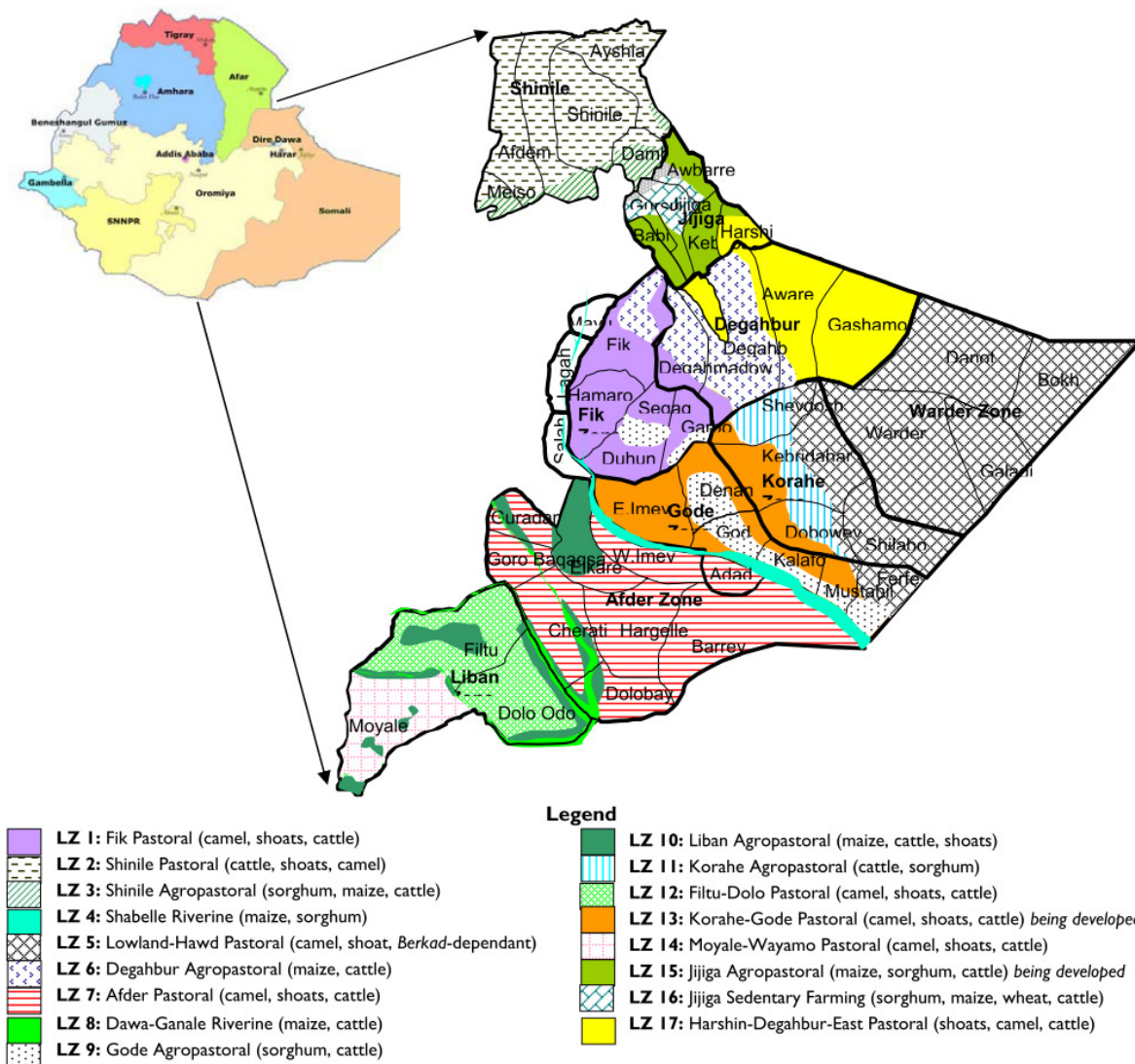


Figure 2: SNRS Livelihood Zones (SC/UK & DPPC 2003:1)



2005). The majority of livestock are reared in the predominantly pastoral Afar and Somali National Regional States (MOFED 2006). Pastoral households in these regions own all the camels, 67% of the goats, 27% of the cattle and 26% of the sheep (EEA 2005).

Four generic livelihood types across seventeen livelihood zones exist in the SNRS: pastoralism, agropastoralism, farming (sedentary and riverine) and urban (Figure 2). The majority of the rural population engages in pastoral livelihood activities with over 60% pastoralists and 25% agropastoralists who engage in a mixture of extensive livestock rearing and rain-fed or riverine farming (SC/UK & DPPB 2003). Liban Zone, where this study takes place, has a diverse livelihood system with about 50% pastoralists, 40% agropastoralists engaging in opportunistic rain-fed or riverine farming, with the remaining population engaged in urban livelihood activities (SC/US & DPPB 2002). The livelihood groups addressed in this study are elaborated in the next section.

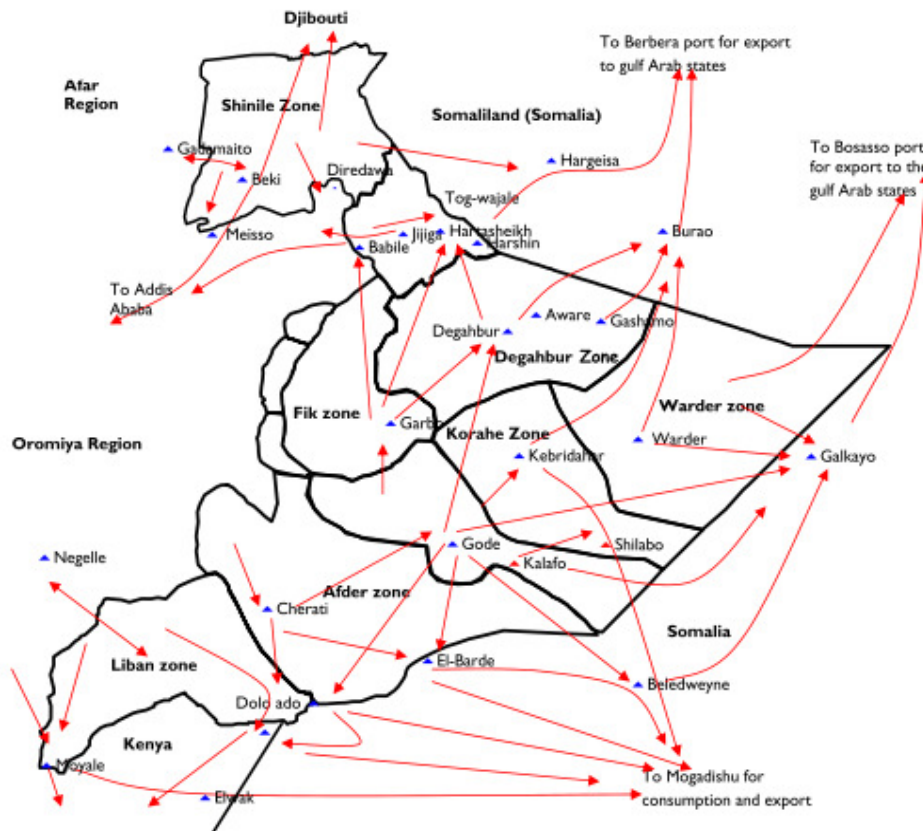


Markets are a critical part of the pastoral economy since livestock are raised primarily for sale and diets consist largely of purchased items. Figure 3 shows the major livestock markets and marketing corridors in SNRS; food, including rice, wheat, flour, pasta, sugar and tea; clothing, both new and second-hand; and *bagaash*, or assorted household items, generally flow in the opposite direction of livestock (SC/UK & DPPB 2003). Agropastoralists also sell cereals, mainly maize and sorghum, and farmers in the riverine areas produce sesame, onions, fodder, fruits and vegetables that can be found in local markets (ibid).

### Pastoral livelihoods in Dollo Ado

Dollo Ado *Woreda* is classified into four rural livelihood economy zones: Filtu-Dolow Pastoral, where the dominant assets are camels, shoats and cattle; Liban Agropastoral, where livelihood strategies include a combination of rearing cattle and shoats and engaging in opportunistic rain-fed farming; and Dawa/Ganale Riverine, where strategies emphasize more farming and relatively sedentary rearing of shoats or cattle (Figure 2). The focus of this study is on pastoral and agropastoral households in the *woreda* illustrated through case studies of Rama, an agropastoralist *kabele*, and Biyoley in the pastoral livelihood zone (Figure 1)<sup>7</sup>.

Figure 3: SNRS Livestock Markets and Marketing Corridors (Source: SC/UK & DPPC 2003:4)



<sup>7</sup> During this fieldwork period, I actually conducted household interviews with six households in four different *kabeles*. However, for the purpose of this thesis, only data from two of the *kabeles* is analyzed in order to focus on pastoral and agropastoral livelihoods. The riverine and urban *kabeles* in the *woreda* are not discussed.



The main source of income for both pastoralists and agropastoralists in Dollo Ado is livestock sales, although poorer households also collect and sell construction materials, firewood, charcoal, gums and resins, or engage in work as hired laborers in farming or livestock herding. Payment for labor is often provided in kind. Agropastoralists also sell crops, if their farms do well, or fodder if plants do not reach maturity. During my research period, drought and flooding had rendered the majority of farms unproductive and households could not produce enough for subsistence, let alone for sale. Occasionally, milk and ghee are sold when pastoralists or agropastoralists are near settlements or permanent water points, but most households consume their dairy products (SC/UK 2003). Some households in the region also benefit from remittances sent from relatives outside the country or in urban parts of Ethiopia (Devereux 2006).

Wealth is principally determined by livestock holdings, particularly shoats for both types of households and camels for pastoral households. Since pastoralists depend on cereals as a staple food, they have a higher need to sell livestock than agropastoralists, therefore their incomes and expenditures are usually larger (SC/UK 2003). Agropastoral land is generally marginal and there is little competition so farms are often large. Production is mainly restricted by the capacity of individual households in cultivation and environmental risk (SC/UK 2003, Devereux 2006). Poorer households often depend on richer households for either paid labor or informal transfers. These transfers come in three types, which are elaborated in Figure 4: redistribution of food, redistribution of cash and redistribution of productive resources (Devereux 2006).

Staple foods – maize, sorghum, wheat, and rice – are the biggest expenditure for both pastoral and agropastoral households. Sugar is also frequently purchased for tea and porridge. Cereal purchases are higher when milk and ghee are scarce, such as during the dry seasons or, as when this study took place, during drought. Other common expenditures include tea, cooking oil, occasional fruits and vegetables, clothing and shoes, household items such as soap, school fees, and informal transfers. Wealthier households also buy luxury items, including *khat*<sup>8</sup>, and may restock their herds or make agricultural inputs when they have financial flexibility.

Figure 4: Informal Transfer Mechanisms (Adapted from Devereux 2006:133)

| Redistribution of food or grain   | Redistribution of cash   | Redistribution of resources  |
|---|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Ciyi</i> – distribution of meat to neighbors after a slaughter</li> <li>• <i>Allah bari</i> or <i>sab</i> – sacrifice made to feed the poor</li> <li>• <i>Awino</i> – cooking food for the hungry</li> <li>• <i>Qharan</i> – contribution of food or animals to relatives</li> <li>• Zero-interest grain loans</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Remittances – from relatives living temporarily or permanently abroad, especially the Middle East, Europe and North America</li> <li>• <i>Dhibaad</i> – cash gifts to married daughters</li> <li>• Other cash gifts – e.g. <i>sadaqa</i></li> <li>• Zero-interest cash loans</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Free use of pack animals</li> <li>• <i>Irmaansi</i> or <i>maal</i> – donation or loan of milk animals</li> <li>• <i>Xoola goyn</i> – restocking of poorer relatives</li> <li>• <i>Kaalo</i> – gift of livestock to newly-weds</li> <li>• <i>Goob</i> – watering livestock or tilling a farm for a day's food</li> <li>• Free labor</li> </ul> |

<sup>8</sup> *Khat* is a stimulant derived from *Catha edulis*, an evergreen shrub that is mainly grown in the Horn of Africa and Arabian Peninsula. The young leaves are chewed as a stimulant that predates the use of coffee in a similar social context. Today, it is estimated that ten million people chew *khat* around the world (*Khat* 2005).

### *Pastoralism in and around Biyoley*

Biyoley is located in the Filtu-Dolow Pastoral Zone of Dollo Ado. Although it is one *kabele*, it is sub-divided into seven settlements. When I visited in November and December, most of the households had migrated to better rangelands and people were only living in two of the settlements. I talked to households in Biyoley town, where the *dugsi* (Quraanic school) is built; Dhagaxtuur, the place where people once threw stones at one another; and some people temporarily living near Ceeldhere, the place with a deep well. Each of the families in and around Biyoley lives in a *hoori* – a Somali house covered in *galo*, panels woven from palm leaves, uniquely designed for mobility and shelter from the arid environment – and primarily rear livestock.

It is difficult to categorize pastoral mobility since households often engage in many different activities and are interconnected with one another. Generally, people who are less mobile are often called *dugsiilow* since they usually live near an established *dugsi*. These households are usually large and have relatives living nearby to assist with herding shoats and donkeys. The term *geeleey* is often used for more mobile households, especially those with *geel*, camels. Most families own at least one donkey for fetching water and transportation of cereals and other purchased items.

Like all pastoralists in the Somali region, households in Biyoley primarily rear livestock to sell for income. They will slaughter a shoat for their own consumption only in a handful of specific situations: during special cultural occasions, such as a wedding; for religious purposes, while reading the Quraan for someone who is sick, or during religious months; when there are visitors and the family is in a good enough condition to welcome them properly; or when there is a shortage of milk, to supplement a diet consisting of only cereals. The staple foods are maize and sorghum, although rice and pasta are also consumed by wealthier households or for special occasions.

Biyoley doesn't have permanent shops or grain or livestock markets. *Bakaaro*, elevated grain storage units, have been built out of town on the small hill past Dhagaxtuur. Their location makes them easy to monitor for theft and flood from all directions. When rains come to the region, some pastoral households engage in opportunistic farming, where they plant seeds and wait to see if maize or sorghum will grow. If the plants reach maturity, the grains are eaten. If they don't mature, the stalks are used for fodder to feed the livestock. Today, most people can't remember when grain last filled the *bakaaro*, but it has happened a few times in most adult lifetimes.

When I visited, the region had missed the last three rainy seasons, the farms had not produced, milk production and herd sizes were low, and households were largely dependent on cereals in their diet. In addition to raising livestock, some households carve containers out of wood and sell them to supplement their

income. They make *haan*, large containers for fetching water and storing large quantities of milk; *dhiil*, a smaller container used for carrying milk; and *dhakal*, a container used when milking. They leave the weaving of *galo* to women who live near the river and have easier access to palm leaves. Pastoral families in Biyoley never collect firewood for sale because, as one woman said, 'Livestock will die if green trees are cut'.

### *Agropastoralism in Rama*

Rama is located on the border of the Liban Agropastoral and Dawa/Ganale Riverine Zones, which is across the Dawa River from the town of Rhamo in Kenya. All households engage in some combination of farming, either with a pump along the river or rain-fed farther away, and herding. Many have relatives in the pastoral areas, particularly around Sandaar, the rangelands on the hillsides to the north. Shoats and cattle are the most commonly reared livestock. Households also own donkeys for transportation, or chickens, primarily to consume or to sell the eggs.

A majority of farming households engage in the *burjuwaasi* system where inputs and harvests are split between two or more households. The most common division is between a pump and a land owner where both households share the labor or laborers are hired and paid in kind. The harvest could be split in even more directions if a different person pays for the pump fuel. Land ownership is not always guaranteed and both local authorities and NGOs have encouraged the division of land in the past. These changes are done diplomatically and without resistance.

Due to the long drought and a recent flood from the river, none of the farms were producing and there were no cereals for sale in Rama. There actually hadn't been cereals produced in Rama for about five years. A large number of households had also lost most if not all of their livestock during the drought. These conditions reflect the finding that, 'Overall, agropastoralism appears to generate the lowest returns of all livelihood systems in the Somali Region. Pursuing livestock rearing and crop farming simultaneously does not spread risk, as both activities are susceptible to erratic rainfall, and appear to generate lower returns than specializing in one or the other' (Devereux 2006:13).

All but one of the households I interviewed depended largely on the gathering of natural products – construction materials, firewood, charcoal or riverbank grasses and leaves – or weaving of *galo*, mats and fans for their income. In December 2008, flood waters covered many of the farms along the banks of the river and, in the words of one woman, people were required to 'cross back and forth the ocean' just to sell items and buy grain. A young boy had recently disappeared on a trip to the market, and the whole town was busy speculating whether or not it was due to a crocodile.

It is unclear why Rama, with its relatively large population and location across the river from Rhamo, has not developed any cereal markets. It seems logical that someone could profit from bringing grain across the river, alleviating the need for households to individually send people across 'the ocean'. However, when I asked around the town, no one seemed to have an answer as to why businesses haven't developed. A trader in a neighboring town, offered, 'It is the people who live in a town that can uplift it or be the cause of its downfall. It requires that people living in the town understand their own needs in order for them to develop their environment.'

### **Cereal markets in Dollo Ado**

The primary cereal markets in Dollo Ado are located in Dollo town (on the Somali border) and Suftu (on the Kenyan border). These two towns have the largest urban populations in the *woreda* and are transit points in the trade routes across the borders. Cereal traders in these towns can be classified into three broad groups: triangle traders, regional traders and local traders based on their capital and type of business.

*Triangle traders* take advantage of their geographical location and maximize profits by trading goods between the three countries. Their trading corridors usually run from the borders toward the capital cities, and, with the exception of Ethiopia, to coastal ports. The majority of triangle traders span a wide-spectrum of commodity and food sales, but some specialize on certain products. When doing business with cereals, they usually only buy and sell in full truckloads.

*Regional traders* specialize in trading activities from the border into specific countries by buying cheaply in one country and selling for higher prices in another. For example, when there is a blanket food aid distribution in Somalia and the price of cereals is high in Ethiopia, a regional trader will buy sacks inexpensively in Dollo, Somalia, and sell them in Nagelle, Ethiopia. If Ethiopian farmers begin harvesting, this trader will buy the grain in Nagelle and sell it over the border to Somalia. In this way, this trader specializes in a particular regional corridor. When doing trade in cereals, they usually bring an entire truckload to a trading town and sell by the sack (or occasionally half sack).

*Local traders* do business by selling grain within the *woreda*. They have two business strategies: (1) *soocaadeey*, a trust-based system where they take grain from regional or triangle traders on credit and sell it before paying the larger trader, or (2) food aid exchange, where they accept food aid from beneficiaries who want to gain credit for it and offer other goods in exchange. As far as I could tell through interviews with households and traders, informal discussions with local authorities and NGOs and my own observations, the majority of food aid distributed in Ethiopia is consumed by the households who receive it. The majority of food

aid that could be purchased in the cereal markets of Dollo Ado had been distributed in Kenya or Somalia and traded across the border.

Cereals on the market in Dollo Ado include maize, sorghum, wheat and Corn Soy Blend<sup>9</sup>. Rice and pasta are also staple foods in the Somali region but are generally only consumed by the wealthiest households or during celebrations. Sacks of grain are the standard fifty kilogram size. The official currency is Ethiopian *birr*, although along the Kenyan border, shillings are commonly used.

## **METHODOLOGY**

This thesis is a case study with a qualitative research design and a narrative approach to analysis. In this section, I discuss the rationale behind using these approaches to social research in relation to the purpose of the thesis. Then I present my data collection process, including interviews and observations. This section concludes with ethical considerations.

### **Approaches to qualitative research**

Social research is 'a scientific way of telling about society', where the telling involves 'studying how and why people do things together' (Ragin 1994:6,10). The 'telling' is scientific if it addresses a socially significant phenomenon, is relevant to social theory, and is evidence-based and systematically analyzed (*ibid*:23-29). In this thesis, I take a qualitative approach to telling the story of cereal flows in a pastoral region by building a complex, holistic picture, reporting detailed views of informants, and conducting the study in a natural setting where I, as the researcher, was an active learner rather than an expert (Creswell 2007:15). I focus on a small number of cases with the primary goals of interpreting significance, giving voice to respondents and advancing theory (Ragin 1994).

I chose a case study strategy to investigate the way social relations influence cereal flows because I am asking 'how' with the purpose of explaining contemporary events (Yin 2003). A case study 'tries to illuminate a decision or set of decisions: why they were taken, how they were implemented and with what result' (Schramm 1971, in Yin 2003:12). In this thesis, the case is cereal flows in Dollo Ado where I illuminate what decisions are made by traders and households as they regard the exchange of cereals.

This thesis is a 'collective case study' since several cases are examined in the investigation of the research question (Stake 2000:437). This information shows differing perspectives on the issue between households engaging in different livelihood strategies and between traders operating their businesses differently (Creswell

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<sup>9</sup> CSB is a food aid cereal blend that includes about 70% cornmeal, 27% soy flour and oil and an assortment minerals and vitamins.

2007:74). However, I engage in constant comparison, seeking commonalities across these differences in order to fully characterize the case (Silverman 2005:213).

The analysis is conducted using a narrative approach where, through the integration of interviews with either pastoral households or cereal traders, and field observations, I construct descriptive glimpses into lives in Dollo Ado that seek to illustrate how social relationships influence cereal exchanges in this pastoral region. Each 'glimpse' centers on one person or household and is supplemented by information from additional interviews and field observations. The narrative approach is 'best for capturing the detailed stories or life experiences of a single life or the lives of a small number of individuals' (Creswell 2007:53). Pseudonyms are used in the glimpses to assure anonymity.

I collected data through interviews and observations and then constructed narratives based on a synthesis of the data (Connelly & Clandinin 1990). In using this approach, the analysis became a collaborative document between the people described in the 'glimpses' and me (ibid). This strategy makes this thesis a piece of interpretive qualitative research since I am self-reflective and recognize myself as someone representing the information presented as data (Creswell 2007:248). This is also part of the reason why I call the narratives presented here 'glimpses', which gives the sense of an outside set of eyes interpreting a snippet of the stories of others.

This research was primarily inductive, with a deductive point of departure. The research is deductive because I started with the assumption that social relations have a significant influence on cereal flows in pastoral regions. This assumption focused my interview questions and guided my observations, an important part of filtering data for case studies (Yin 2003:29). I also used livelihood economy zones (see next section) in guiding my initial sampling process. The bulk of the research was inductive since my data is the focus of the analysis and is discussed in relation to building theory (Bryman 2004:504). Case studies, although specific to a particular space and time, can be generalized analytically when the data analysis is discussed in relation to theory (Yin 2003:33).

### **Data collection**

I conducted semi-structured interviews with households and traders, the former followed by focus group discussions, and recorded field observations. In this thesis, I use data from twelve households split evenly between two *kabeles* and fifteen traders across five *kabeles*, which was collected in November and December 2008 (Appendix 3). Observations were noted throughout my stay in the field and integrated into the research during the narrative analysis. This section presents how I entered the field, approached interviews with

households and traders and recorded observations and the limitations of these approaches. It concludes with ethical considerations.

### *Entering the field*

During the research period, I was based in the Save the Children USA (SC/US) Dollo Sub-Office, which has been implementing relief and development projects in the district for over ten years. Their staff facilitated my transportation, hiring of a capable research assistant, and the research approval process with the *Woreda* Administration. While there could be limitations or issues of honesty during interviews that arise due to my affiliation with a development organization, I believe they are minor in this case due to the good reputation of the Sub-Office in the region.

While official government permission and affiliation with an organization were two formal ways that I entered the field, 'informal' consent from respondents is the most critical aspect of conducting case studies (Creswell 2007:120). Scheyvens and Storey suggest that this informal consent can be 'indicated by their degree of participation and enthusiasm for you and your work' (2003:83). With this in mind, I decided to hire a research assistant with significant knowledge of the study area. Since my language skills and understanding of Somali society are limited, I worked with two assistants who offered cultural translation and language assistance during the research period<sup>10</sup>. The first had experience working with food aid programming and was familiar with all the *kebele* administrations and potential political issues that could arise when discussing cereal flows in specific places. The second had extensive knowledge on pastoral livelihoods and a deep dedication to the project.

### *Household interviews*

The first set of interviews was conducted with households with the intention of building an understanding of livelihood activities in relation to cereal consumption and access. I conducted interviews in one *kabele* in both the agropastoral and pastoral livelihood economy zones and interviewed six households in each. This stratified purposeful sampling had the goal of illustrating sub-groups and facilitating comparisons (Creswell 2007:127), which is a form of triangulation (Ragin 1994:98). The particular *kabeles* were chosen in collaboration with Dollo Sub-Office staff who gave insight on which locations could provide the most representative sample, a chain strategy of sampling since 'people who know' assisted in identifying cases (ibid). Rama and Biyoley were chosen as samples of agropastoral and pastoral livelihoods, respectively (Figure 1).

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<sup>10</sup> The original intention was to work with one assistant for the entire period; however this was not possible due to assistant availability. The first assistant worked with me for the duration of the household interviews while the second joined me for trader interviews and a few additional household interviews.

The six households were selected randomly in each of the selected *kabeles* to add credibility (ibid). First, with the help of local officials, each *kabele* was divided into three sub-sections. Then, two households were selected from each sub-section by standing in two different places and spinning a pen which would point to a residence. In some cases, a bit of guided selection embodied in the location of our standing position was used to ensure that different economic sections of the *kabele* were represented in the sample. The interviews were conducted with the woman of whichever house the pen cap pointed toward.

Women have a particular knowledge on cereals in the household since they are the primary cooks and caretakers for the children. Somali men also often have more than one wife and more than one household and may spend their evenings in different places. For this reason, they are often unaware of how many meals were consumed in one particular household. Interviews were conducted with women in or around their homes. I had originally intended to work with a female research assistant from the district during the household interviews to create a more comfortable environment for respondents (Scheyvens & Leslie 2000); however, this was not possible due to availability.

The interviews were semi-structured to target the topic specifically, an important part of case studies (Yin 2003), and still allow for the respondents to speak freely on the topic in order to allow for a narrative analysis. The household economy approach (presented in the contextualization section) was used as a model (Silverman 2005:98) for the interview guide, targeting issues of food security, accessibility and affordability in pastoral and agropastoral households (Appendix 1). I followed the interview guide by sections but only used the individual questions to check and make sure everything was covered (Kvale 1996:130).

#### *Household focus groups*

After completing six interviews within a *kabele*, I invited the respondents for a focus group discussion, which always began with my presentation of a summary of my impressions from the individual interviews. The discussion that followed provided a forum for clarification and elaboration, where households could confirm that they all were asked similar questions, could ask additional questions of the researchers, and were able to build on each others previous responses. This process gave the respondents decision-making power on which data ultimately constructed the findings of the study, contributing to reducing unbalanced power dynamics between 'researcher' and 'respondents' during the research process (Scheyvens & Leslie 2000).

In the focus group discussions with households, some women from wealthier or more prominent households dominated the discussion. I did my best to encourage other voices to be heard, to bring up alternative perspectives for discussion, and to consider different opinions in my analysis.



Interviews and focus group discussions were not audio recorded to allow respondents full confidence in their anonymity. Although the lack of transcription limited my analysis since I could not return to 'original data' (Silverman 2005:173), I took extensive notes, including quotes, during the interviews, and discussed my interpretations with my research assistants and occasionally during informal chats with local leaders.

### *Trader interviews*

The second set of interviews were conducted with traders with the intention of building an understanding of cereal flows from the traders' perspectives so as to contextualize household cereal availability and accessibility. I conducted interviews in five *kabeles* selected with the assistance of SC/US staff who are familiar with the cereal trading hubs in the *woreda*, a chain approach to sampling (Creswell 2007:127). The *kabeles* selected were either major trading towns – four in both Dollo and Suftu – or along trading routes – three in Seday and two in both Kole and Bokolmayo (Figure 1). The approach to interviewing traders parallels that of the households. A few differences are noted.

Traders within each town were also selected using a chain approach. My research assistant surveyed the *kabele* and identified major traders and shop owners. In a few instances I also conducted interviews with traders who had been named by households as persons they bought or borrowed cereals from regularly. This approach allowed me to follow particular cereal movements in the *woreda* between particular households and markets. I did not conduct focus group discussions with traders since they are relatively busy and not likely to feel comfortable sharing their business details with competitors. Male and female traders were interviewed. The interviews were semi-structured (Appendix 2) and the interview guide followed loosely to assure possibilities for comparison between different traders and different *kabeles* (Kvale 1996:130).

### *Observations*

I recorded observations throughout my stay in Dollo Ado. I spent a few days living in each of the *kabeles* where I conducted interviews and returned to many of them a second time, thus allowing me to deepen my understanding of cereal flows in each particular place. Observations can address issues such as deception by respondents, impression management and potential weaknesses of the researcher in an unfamiliar setting (Hammersly & Atkinson 1995, in Creswell 2007:134). This strategy is a form of triangulation that strengthens credibility of the data (Bryman 2004:274-275). During the data analysis, I classified my observations as analytical thoughts, description and quotes to heighten the quality of the analysis (Bryman 2004:308).

### **Ethical considerations**

In order to conduct ethically-informed interviews, I always explained the purpose of the study to potential informants and gave them choice whether or not to participate. I also maintained their anonymity throughout

the research process. I was also conscientious about the way I shared information with local government and international organizations during my stay in the field.

In using the narrative approach, it was important for me to separate the opinions of the individuals I present in the glimpses from my own interpretation of the issue and their responses. I did this by maintaining the integrity of the thoughts of a specific individual within the glimpses themselves, and adding my own voice during the introductions and conclusions to each glimpse. In this way, the reader can easily assess the credibility of my interpretation.

## **ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION**

In this section, I will present six glimpses into how social relations influence cereal flows in the pastoral region of Dollo Ado, Ethiopia. The first three demonstrate bonding capacity among pastoral households in agropastoral and pastoral communities, and the latter three describe characteristics of bridging capacity between households and traders. Instances of bonding capacity between traders and characteristics of cereal flows that are not related to social capacity are also integrated, but are less the focus of discussion. Each glimpse is briefly introduced in terms of how it was chosen and its main distinctive characteristics and followed by a discussion of its contents in relation to social capacity.

### **Bonding capacity**

The glimpses in this section focus on describing interactions between pastoral households that are connected to cereal flows in the region. Occasionally, social relationships that are demonstrated outside of cereals are discussed to contextualize the cereal interactions within a wider culture of trust and reciprocity throughout cultural, hierarchical and market relations.

#### *Hibo in Biyoley*

The first glimpse is about Hibo and her husband Sheekh Sharmaarke, who are the eldest members in an extended pastoral family. Hibo is a respected midwife and has received 'traditional birth attendant' training from NGOs in the past. Sheekh was a religious teacher at the local *dugsi* – Quraanic School – during his younger years, but retired due to a recent illness. Although the Quraan allows him to take up to four wives, as long as he treats them all equally, he takes this clause seriously and has only married Hibo.

Just before I visited Hibo and Sheekh, children were playing with coals around their *hoori* and an accident caused it, with all their belongings, to burn to the ground. The neighbors made the typical response: everyone donated one *galo* – a woven panel used to cover the frame of a *hoori* – and they had a temporary home

constructed within a few days. This new house was smaller than the usual size and Hibo and some female neighbors had begun to construct the larger, more permanent home. When it is completed, the temporary one will be deconstructed and its' *galo* will be returned to the neighbors who lent them.

I chose to present a glimpse into the lives of Hibo and Sheekh because, having lived long lives in Biyoley, they had a deep understanding of social relations in this pastoral region. They were also the first who explained, in detail, the relationship between *dugsiilow* and *geeleey* – pastoralists with different ranges of mobility – regarding cereal flows. On the day that I spoke with them at length they had just finished constructing their temporary *hoori* and were content to sit and tell me stories about life in and around Biyoley.

For most of the year, Hibo and Sheekh herded livestock with their children, grandchildren and a number of other relatives in the pastoral rangelands around Biyoley. However, at their age, they have decided to rest for a while from their mobile life. They left a cow and fifty goats with their relatives to herd while they stay in this pastoral town. Hibo misses the pastoral life and goes to check on the animals at least once a month for a few days. Whenever she goes to visit, she takes some food, water, clothes, a sleeping mat and a mosquito net with her. When I spoke with Hibo, her relatives were living a two-day walk away.

She had recently returned from visiting her livestock and relatives, with a request from them for sacks of cereal. Her relatives occasionally have the opportunity to tell a visitor, or someone passing by, to send a grain request to Sheikh and Hibo, or other relatives living in Biyoley. At other times, they send a young boy with the message and either some livestock to sell or some cash for the payment. The main sources of grain are the cereal markets along the Kenyan border and in Dollo, which are a two to three day walk in the opposite direction from the hillside rangelands.

Before Hibo will leave or send someone to market, she will discuss the trip with whoever is currently living in town to determine if anyone else is in need of a trip. Current information on markets will be shared. Someone recently returning from Suftu may share that shoats are selling well in the Mandera livestock market. Another may share that they heard while collecting water that there was a recent food distribution in Somalia, so the price of sorghum in Dollo will have dropped. A third person might comment that on a recent visit to relatives in the rangelands, a group of passing pastoralists mentioned that the maize harvest had started in Negelle, so prices have probably gone down in Sadey. The information is gathered and decisions are made about where to sell livestock and buy grain.

The trip to buy cereals could take anywhere between one and two weeks. The urgency of needed items will be discussed and more people may be added to the group heading to market to allow for flexibility as to when people head back with different items from the market. Payment will also be collected, mainly in the form of cash, livestock or a request for a loan. If many loans are needed, someone with strong relationships with the cereal traders may also join the group. People who may want to visit relatives or pick up a money transfer might also request to go.

The group could include a combination of men, women and boys from the same or a variety of families. It could be two people or many. Once formed, the group will take at least one donkey to carry their necessities, forms of payment and verbal market requests along with some livestock to carry the cereal back, if they are available. This time, Hibo will be staying in Biyoley.

This glimpse demonstrates a number of situations where social capacity is strong in this pastoral region. Outside of cereal flows, trust is embedded in the cultural relations displayed in herding agreements, and trust and reciprocity characterized the neighbors' response to the loss of the *hoori* through both the lending of *galo* and the cooperative construction processes. Part of this capacity exists through the bonds of kinship (herding arrangements), but part of it also comes from living in close proximity (rebuilding the *hoori*).

In making arrangements to purchase cereals, social capacity characterized the entire planning process. It is evident starting with the constant cultural pattern of sharing information on livestock and cereal marketing in the region. Not only was this information shared once discussions had started regarding the upcoming trip to market, but it was also exchanged during regular activities – gathering water, when returning from a trip or just walking from one place to another. Strong levels of social capacity built on cultural relations are indicated by this constant exchange of information.

Trust and reciprocity were also evident in the way pastoral households in Biyoley assemble a group of people to go to market. Families would not think twice about sending their livestock to sell or money to buy cereals with members of another household. They also did not show concern for who would do the best job of selling high or buying low; it is assumed that people will make the most reasonable choices for their own business as well as the business of others.

#### *Ayaanle in Rama*

The next glimpse is into the lives of a young couple. Ayaanle, who is twenty years old, and her new husband Musse moved to the agropastoral town of Rama five months ago after they lost their ten cattle during the drought. Two months after they moved, Ayaanle gave birth to her first child. I chose to present this glimpse

because it tells the story of a young couple who are starting out their lives raising children. Their story also illuminates some of the challenges of building a livelihood after becoming *ceyr* – former pastoralists who recently lost all their livestock due to drought or conflict.

Ayaanle and Musse are fortunate because unlike some *ceyr*, Musse's uncle gave their family part of his farm along the river, rented a water pump and paid for its fuel for them in Rama. When I talked to Ayaanle, her husband was planting their first crop of maize. If the crop makes it to harvest, they will share half with his uncle. In order to make some cash and learn something about farming along the way, Musse also works as a day laborer on a neighbor's farm.

Musse usually buys the grains they eat from the cereal market across the river in Rhamo, Kenya. He usually pays with the money he earns as a farm worker, but occasionally he takes food on credit. He always pays the store owner back within a few days. He can never afford large quantities, like whole or half sacks, so he buys grains by the *suus*. This week, her family ate a total of four meals, all in the evening, and each consisting of one *mathaal* of maize cooked as *soor* with some sugar. Ayaanle's neighbor gives her goat milk for their infant on occasion; otherwise she feeds him warm sugar water. "We were better off when we were pastoralists. Then we had milk. Milk gives you more energy than *soor*," Ayaanle commented.

Since the family had livestock when the region was targeted for the government safety net program<sup>11</sup>, they do not receive food aid directly or food-for-work transfers. During a recent emergency intervention<sup>12</sup>, all three family members were targeted as beneficiaries and the household received a one time transfer of thirty kilograms of maize. When I asked Ayaanle about whether they ate all the maize or sold some to buy other necessities, she said, "Forget about selling it!" Her family needed the food for consumption over the next few weeks. Ayaanle insists that life without food aid would be impossible.

The grain Ayaanle cooked the week I was visiting was maize which was distributed as food aid somewhere in Kenya and ended up in the market in Rhamo. When Musse brings it home, it's in its original bag as whole corn kernels. Like most rural women in the Somali region, Ayaanle grinds it through a manual two-stage process. First, she gets together with a neighbor to grind the kernels using a human-height mortar and pestle. Each woman has one pestle and they stand across from each

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<sup>11</sup> The government-led, USAID-funded Productive Safety Net Program-Pastoral Area Pilot (PSNP-PAP) is implemented by Save the Children USA.

<sup>12</sup> The food for this government-led emergency food distribution came from the national reserves and was implemented by the World Food Program.

other, exchanging blows at the maize in the mortar. When the kernels have been broken into fairly small pieces, each woman takes her portion back to her house to grind into powder. Using a tool made from two rocks that are built to use hand-powered friction and pressure to grind the broken kernels, Ayaanle slowly grinds the maize into a fine powder. She looks forward to the day when she can use a mechanized grinding mill<sup>13</sup>.

Cultural relations are evident in many parts of this glimpse into Ayaanle's life. She and her husband are fortunate to have been provided land and resources to farm by a relative after losing their livestock. This kinship tie was a critical part of preventing them from becoming destitute. If Musse were only a day laborer on the farms of others, it would be much more difficult for the family in the long run. Their farming arrangements are also better than *burjuwaasi* laborers who may have been farming longer, but they only receive a third of the crop. Even though Musse's uncle is providing the land, pump and fuel, he has made arrangements for the young couple to take half of the crop. This cultural relationship, based on kinship ties, demonstrates strong social capacity for those with this support system in place.

Cultural relationships based on neighborly relations are also present for Ayaanle. Outside of cereal flows, her neighbor occasionally gives her milk to feed her infant since her body cannot produce enough and she cannot afford to purchase it from town. Regarding maize, Ayaanle and her neighbors assist each other in grinding cereals on a regular basis, with a sense of reciprocity. Both of these instances demonstrate interactions characterized by cultural relations, but not based on kinship ties.

Musse also engages in market relations in Rhamo that demonstrate social capacity. At times, he is able to take cereals without paying for a few days. He does this through trust, where traders have positive expectations of his ability to repay. These relationships don't seem to be especially strong, since he is sure to pay back within a few days, but they exist. Market relations will be discussed more in detail following glimpses into bridging capacity, however it is good to note the importance of these relations to household food access in relation to this agropastoral household.

Ayaanle also stresses the importance of food aid for her household. Although she does not receive regular transfers herself, the majority of food she and her family consume had been distributed as food aid to someone at some time. Food aid, distributed via direct or food-for-work transfers by government or international organizations, is a hierarchical relationship in which obedience to authority is exchanged for material security. In the case of food-for-work programs, this obedience is demonstrated through participation

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<sup>13</sup> There is a mechanized grinding mill in Rama, but the fuel costs make it too expensive for many women to use. Ayaanle also mentioned that there is often a long line to use it since there are many families and only one mill.

in government work projects. Waiting in line to register and receive food is also an act of obedience embodied during both types of transfers.

Despite being a social relationship, food aid transfers do not indicate social capacity because trust and reciprocity are not evident. Ayaanle cannot trust that food aid will be distributed at any specific time or place since safety net and relief distributions are not always predictable<sup>14</sup> or coordinated. Although there could be a sense of reciprocity in food-for-work programs, direct transfers are purely hierarchical with no sense of reciprocity or foundation in a 'network of social connection' (Putnam 2000:171).

### *Suuban in Ceeldhere*

Suuban is around seventy years old and is currently living in the rangeland outside of Biyoley in a place called Ceeldhere – the place with a deep well. She has eight children and lives with one of her sons, his wife, their four children and her two youngest children. They have four camels, seventy shoats, two cows and three donkeys. Before the drought, Suuban estimates they had closer to 200 shoats, but around 100 died and about 30 were sold or slaughtered since there were not enough resources to rear them.

I chose the following glimpse into Suuban's life because, although her family lost a large number of livestock during the drought, they are doing relatively fine and are capable of paying *zakaat*. Her narrative contextualizes life outside of town in a smaller, temporary pastoral settlement and describes typical interactions with pastoralists who happen to pass by where she lives.

Suuban's household, like most pastoralists, primarily rears livestock for their milk consumption and sales, in order to buy foods, mostly cereals, and other needed items. Their two cows are not milking since they are young and haven't yet given birth. Since there was recent rain and grass for grazing, Suuban hopes that they will start growing the herd soon. As she says, "To have a herd of livestock, you begin with a very small number. Two cattle are enough to soon have a big herd." The goats are milking, although not very much. Suuban jokes that even though they survived the long drought, she's thankful they haven't produced a drought themselves. She hasn't counted recently, but she has noticed that some of them are already pregnant.

Their camels aren't milking yet – their pregnancy period is thirteen to fifteen months – and she has divided them between two people to herd for her far from Ceeldhere. Half of her camels are with relatives and half are with the relatives of a neighbor. She doesn't pay the herders to care for them,

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<sup>14</sup> There has been considerable effort by implementing organizations to assure predictable transfers of food aid as part of the PSNP-PAP and its predecessor SNAP, however this has not always been achieved. Furthermore, it is often difficult for households to differentiate between food transfers from different programs, e.g. safety net and relief distributions.

but they do it in exchange for using the camels for transport and for the milk they will produce after giving birth.

Following the Third Pillar of Islam, her family paid *zakaat* three months after Ramadan. According to a local Sheekh, households with forty shoats must pay a shoat of two years, thirty cows must pay a cow of three years, five camels must pay a shoat of two years, and ten sacks of grain harvested must pay one sack to a household with less. Suuban paid some shoats to her first cousin, the son of her maternal uncle.

Their household eats relatively well, generally two meals a day. For seven people, one *suus* of *soor* is prepared for breakfast and two *suus* for dinner. If there are visitors, they will add extra *suus*. On the day I shared a goat for lunch, her son was away buying grain from one of the markets a few days walk toward Kenya – Suuban wasn't sure which one. They had run out of cereals while waiting for him to return, so they had borrowed three *suus* from the neighbors the night before. Suuban said there were currently eight families around Ceeldhere and you could easily borrow four to five *suus* from each if your own cereals are on the way. When her son returns, she will repay the grains in kind.

The household rarely misses meals, but Suuban says it can happen sometimes during drought when neighbors may not have enough to lend or when moving with livestock from one location to another. Whenever other pastoral families are migrating and happen to pass where Suuban is living, she is sure to cook them *marti soor*, extra grains cooked especially for pastoralists who are migrating.

Similar to the cultural relationships in the glimpse of Hibo, Suuban benefits from being able to give her camels to other people for rearing while she lives a less mobile lifestyle. However, the scope of these relations extends past her relatives to her neighbors as well. Trust and reciprocity are evident as Suuban feels confident sending her livestock away with other pastoralists, and they are content caring for them in exchange for their transportation services and milk production.

In terms of cereals, bonding capacity is clearly evident in the lending and sharing of grains that occurs between pastoral households regardless of kinship ties. If a household has plenty of grain at a particular point in time, they are more than willing to lend some to a neighbor while they wait for a sack of cereal to arrive home. Since pastoralists know the challenges of traveling long distances with little to eat, they do not hesitate to offer food to others who pass by where they live. The act of sharing a few *suus* of cereals with neighbors and passersby is built, fundamentally, on norms of reciprocity and trustworthiness within pastoral groups.



As Suuban points out, the danger of this system occurs when there are not many resources to be shared. In this case, households are not able to lend cereals to one another because they are dedicated primarily to providing food to their own family members. However, she suggests that this does not diminish established social capacity. Pastoral households are aware of these times of hardship and do not expect this kind of assistance from others who are unable to help at a particular time.

Hierarchical relations are also evident in Suuban's story when she pays *zakaat*, an obligatory religious redistribution system whereby the better-off provide support to the poor. *Zakaat* is paid annually, always three months after the close of Ramadan. Although Suuban paid *zakaat* in the form of livestock, agropastoral households or pastoralist households engaging in opportunistic farming who had harvested over ten sacks of grain during the proceeding year would also pay. Social capacity based on hierarchical relations supports some cereals flowing through pastoral regions in the form of *zakaat*.

### **Bridging capacity**

The glimpses in this section focus on describing how traders influence and are affected by cereal flows in the region. While the glimpses include information on the business activities of each trader, including interactions with other traders, the focus of the discussions following each glimpse is on the relationships between these traders and households in the region. This set of glimpses builds an understanding of bridging capacity related to the efforts of households to secure reliable access to cereals in the region, as told from the perspectives of cereal traders.

#### *Cibaado in Dollo*

Cibaado doesn't make very much money from her business, but she is happy to have an income no matter how small. She has been in business for twenty years, since the birth of her first child, and uses the money she makes to buy clothes, medicines and the security of being able to feed her family on a daily basis. Over the twenty years, she was able to buy a small piece of land for farming near the river and to build an additional room for her home. The work is hard, especially when it requires traveling, and Cibaado is ready to retire. Her first born recently finished secondary school, and she plans to hand over the business soon.

I chose this glimpse into Cibaado's life because, although she is a relatively small-scale trader, she feels successful in her business. She provides cereals primarily to pastoralists and agropastoralists who come into town to buy and sell in the markets, and she interacts with them in a handful of ways. Although her business is small, she also has international networks to obtain cereals at the lowest price, which draws people from the rural areas to her shop.

The cereals Cibaado trades are from food aid distributions or local harvests, shifting between these due to relative availability. She has built relationships with people who buy food aid from households in Baidoa<sup>15</sup> and Dollo, Somalia who send it her way shortly after distributions. She formed her trading relationships through meeting other traders in different markets and they agreed to share information on food distributions and local harvests. These relationships are always formed to serve business interests and are not based on kinship bonds.

The recent conflict in southern Somalia has brought new challenges, but they have not prevented Cibaado and many other traders from continuing their businesses. 'Even if there is conflict in Somalia, it will not prevent us from traveling there for trade. Our current situation obliges us to travel through conflict, even when we know there are risks. We don't want to experience hunger,' she explains. Her ears are always open, listening for news of a food distribution across the border.

She also opens her shop to local households who would like to sell their recently received food to buy other items. She will buy any amount – a few *suus*, half a bag, a whole bag. Sometimes she doesn't have money to pay them right away, so she allows for an exchange of other items in the store or agrees to pay a debt they may have with other shop owners. Sometimes her regular customers also agree to drop off cereals for sale and pick up payment later. Cibaado always pays the current market price. After combining small amounts to make a whole bag to resell, she usually makes three to five *birr* profit.

In addition, Cibaado buys small amounts of grain that have been produced locally to sell, usually maize or sorghum. She has a small farm of her own that provides her with some grain and she also buys from the neighboring farms. The harvests haven't been very substantial in the *woreda* for the past few years due to flooding and drought.

Most of her customers are pastoralists or agropastoralists who come into Dollo town from more rural parts of the *woreda*. Her grains are always in the lowest price range. She is surprised when she sells to people in town since they prefer to eat pasta and rice versus the grain from food aid distribution. However, when people in town were impacted during the last flood, she received more customers. She usually makes about thirty *birr* a day in sales, but, during these busy times, she can make up to 200 *birr* in a day.

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<sup>15</sup> Baidoa, Somalia is a one day journey from Dollo, Ethiopia by local transportation.

Cibaado's business operates within a number of 'networks of reciprocity' or 'networks of social connection', characterized by norms of reciprocity and trustworthiness among individuals (Putnam 2000:171). While all of her interactions are primarily market relationships, where goods are exchanged for money, they are embedded in cultural norms where favors are exchanged. In the case of her cereal purchases, her relationships with traders in Somalia are strong enough that she trusts them to provide her with accurate information on regional cereal markets and she, in turn, provides them with information on markets on her side of the border.

Similar characteristics are evident in the arrangements Cibaado negotiates when buying cereals from households who have received food aid they prefer to sell. These households feel confident leaving their items with Cibaado, even though they primarily brought it to her for cash exchange, because they are confident that they will get the full value of the item sometime in the future. They are also willing to agree to bartering rates when exchanging, for example, part of a sack of cereal for a container of oil. Social capacity is evidently strong in the markets of Dollo since households accept payment for some food aid sales in the form of debt repayment to other traders.

#### *Hanad in Suftu*

Four years ago, Hanad took over his sister's trading business when she decided to dedicate her time to raising her children. He rents space from his brother in Suftu and trades two types of maize, beans and wheat. He also makes some money from renting out part of his space to other traders who need space to store grain by charging them five shillings per sack of grain per month. He buys wheat and beans from Nagelle, Ethiopia, and maize from Mandera, Kenya. He sells primarily to pastoralists who come into Suftu to buy cereals after selling livestock in the market across the border in Mandera.

This glimpse into the way Hanad operates his business is of particular interest because of his strong connections with the pastoral community in and around Biyoley. While he has market relationships with pastoralists and agropastoralists all along the Kenyan border and north into the rangelands, his familial and personal ties to one particular area are demonstrated by his commitment to provide a reliable and affordable source of cereals to households in that region.

Hanad usually brings wheat from farmers around Nagelle to sell in Suftu. He has friends living in Suftu, and when they hear that farmers are about to harvest, he finds a vehicle headed to Nagelle, hops in and makes the trip. When he arrives, he buys empty bags and heads to the cereal market where farmers have gathered to sell their wheat. Recently, he's been buying the wheat for five birr per kilogram and slowly fills the sacks. Last time, he only filled seven sacks because of a poor

harvest and joined other traders who had bought a few sacks to rent a vehicle and drive them back to Suftu. He buys beans in Nagelle in the same manner.

He usually gives these sacks to small traders in town on loan so they can grind and sell it. When they have made back the cost of the commodity, they repay him and he profits a birr for every two kilograms. Once everyone has paid him back, he will have made 175 *birr*, about fifteen US dollars for the nine sacks. The *soocaadeey* sell this wheat to people in Suftu to make *canjeero* or *jabaati*, Ethiopian-inspired and Kenyan-style of pancakes respectively.

Hanad also buys maize from traders in Mandera who have collected it from farmers in Kenya. He usually sells it to pastoralists who come into town, most often from Biyoley, Wadlahube and Haaji Cali. He has about fifteen regular households who take grain on loan until market livestock prices go up. His cereal prices are among the cheapest in Suftu, so he has a steady flow of new buyers who pay cash.

Hanad grew up in a pastoral household around Biyoley and understands the pastoral life well. When his regular households come to buy more cereal than they can carry back to Biyoley, he collects the sacks to send them with the next available donkey or camel. If he has collected thirty sacks, he rents a small pickup truck and sends the cereals to Biyoley. His regular households pay 100-150 shillings per bag in advance for these transportation services or pay the truck driver upon delivery. Sometimes Hanad transports the grain at his own expense, for it is a service he can offer his regular customers that contributes to building his business.

Hanad demonstrated the depth of his awareness on markets and trade in his stories on operating a business in a pastoral region. He could easily explain why it is perfectly rational to allow pastoral families to take cereals as loans, since they are sure to pay back when their herds are strong. Often when he shares information with his regular households about market prices in the *woreda*, they already know the information and can tell him more. Since pastoralists are always moving, it is easy to pass messages between one another and information spreads quickly.

The more time spent with Hanad, the more evident it becomes that trading isn't just his business – it's his vocation. He is acutely aware of the lives and needs of pastoralists and gears his business toward serving them. I contacted Hanad because his name was mentioned by a number of the pastoralists in Biyoley as a person they trust and from whom they regularly purchase grain. Once, during the drought, Hanad loaded a truck with thirty-five sacks of grain on his own instinct and sent it

to Biyoley with a message that they could pay whenever their livelihoods were more secure. He still hasn't collected in full from that load, but he isn't worried. He knows that when the rain comes and the herds grow, he will be paid as soon as they are able.

Hanad said, 'If I have committed myself to taking maize to Biyoley for no sale, imagine if I could get an external loan to increase my business. I could make everything simpler for pastoralists.' He described extending his business to deliver grains to pastoral towns so they wouldn't have to travel as far. Cereals would be cheaper since larger trucks are economical. His excitement was evident as he thought about and described the possibilities. Then, someone walked up to him where we were sitting in his store. It was a boy coming from outside Biyoley requesting two sacks of grain as a loan and explaining their situation. I overheard Hanad making arrangements to send five sacks back to Biyoley with him. When I told him I admired the way he ran his business, he said, 'Mercy doesn't come from yourself – it's something Allah puts inside you.'

The interactions between Hanad and pastoral households described in this glimpse are embedded in a combination of interwoven cultural and market relations that characterize social capacity in the region. His ability to buy grains from local farmers when prices are lowest is possible due to his cultural relations with friends living in towns where farmers regularly sell. He supports smaller *soocaadeey* traders by lending them maize to grind and sell and allowing them to make a profit and repay him after the sacks have been sold. These arrangements are mutually beneficial because they also allow Hanad more time to focus on buying cereals from a variety of sources and enable the *soocaadeey* traders to operate small businesses.

Hanad also has built regular market relations with households that are rooted in a culture of trust and reciprocity. He has at least fifteen households who regularly take grain on loan and even more that do occasionally. He trusts these households to pay him when they are able. They trust him to have a regular supply of the most affordable cereals and he, in turn, trusts that these households will return on a regular basis. These reciprocal relationships indicate strong social capacity. The transportation arrangements regularly made between Hanad and his customers are also evidence of the strong bridging capacity between traders and households.

Although international organizations are often in the region delivering food during crises, Hanad enacted an alternative relief model built on local systems and supported by pastoral households. He provided food without request to families in need, based on 'networks of social connection' formed through both market and cultural relationships rooted in trust and reciprocity (Putnam 2000:171). It is clear that, even during times of drought, social capacity is evident between traders and households in Dollo Ado.

### *Kaahin in Suftu*

Kaahin has been trading for seventeen years and owns his own store in Suftu. He is a partner in a large business operation that spans three countries. He is responsible for the Ethiopian market; a partner in Mogadishu is responsible for Somalia; and a number of partners deal with business in Kenya, including one based in Mandera and one in Nairobi. Each partner is ethnically Somali and a national of their base country. They met while doing business individually and decided to work together. They trade a variety of food and non-food items including wheat flour, macaroni, rice, beans, sugar, milk powder and oil, as well as *bagaash*, an assortment of common non-food items like sandals and soap. The bulk of their business is wheat flour, sugar and rice.

This glimpse is of particular interest because Kaahin operates one of the largest trading businesses in Dollo Ado. He was also very interested in discussing what strategies he would use to improve access to cereals for pastoral and agropastoral households in Dollo Ado and commented that he was never aware that an outsider like me may be interested in talking to the traders in town about their operations. 'International people usually only want to talk to the local administration and the poorest households,' he said. 'We [people with businesses] have a lot of knowledge on the town and have good ideas for things that could be done.'

Kaahin purchases goods from different parts of Ethiopia and is primarily responsible for wheat flour, macaroni and beans. He sells small amounts around Suftu, but most of the items he trades go across the borders. Over the years, Kaahin has formed relationships with people who work in wheat flour and macaroni factories in other regions of Ethiopia. They provide information about how to set up a steady account and keep him up to date on when is best to buy. He has business relationships with high authorities in the factories and can call them directly to make orders. He wires the payment within a few days of making the order, and they send a truck full of the requested food items directly to him in Suftu. He always trades with cash, and never uses credit systems.

Kaahin's store is filled with almost everything. He even has some bags of food aid that people stopped by to sell, but he rarely buys them. His stock also fluctuates with harvests. Pastoralists and agropastoralists buy oil, sugar and sometimes rice from him, although their most commonly purchased item is food aid cereal as it is the most affordable food on the market. He is familiar with his regular customers and allows them to take items on credit as long as their payments are current. If they don't pay, "Let them have that one sack and leave me alone." He has ten customers who will never get a credit purchase again.

Kaahin gives credit to households from pastoral regions as far as east of Biyoley and north of Sadey. Some pastoralists and agropastoralists will come to him, even if other markets are closer, because he offers them food on credit. He suspects that others will come all the way from Rama because prices in Suftu are cheaper than Rhamo, Kenya since traders from both cities buy cereals from Mandera, and transportation to Rhamo is more expensive.

Kaahin believes he is one of the biggest traders in the *woreda*. He classifies business people into four categories. There are those with large capital, similar to him, who operate trade between the three countries, buying where goods are cheapest and selling where they can make the most profit. The second group is the fuel traders. The third group includes traders who run their businesses partly with their own capital and partly through a credit system. Kaahin will sell to traders in this group. The group with nearly no capital of their own are the *soocaadeey* who take goods on credit to sell.

Kaahin believes that supporting *soocaadeey* traders could solve the challenges of food insecurity in Dollo Ado. He thinks people living in the *woreda* have the best ideas and the strongest networks and are the best situated to make a difference. If he was given a large grant, he would give small grants to a number of new traders so they could go into the pastoral, agropastoral and riverine parts of the *woreda* and start small businesses bringing grain. He said the current food distributions are causing people to be inactive and dependent. If it were up to him, he would stop food aid and only give cash and training designed to get people involved in work. He says it would only take a year after people begin *soocaadeey* trading, and their households would be self-sufficient.

Networks of reciprocity are the foundation of both buying and selling cereals for Kaahin. He has built strong market relationships with trading partners across the borders and factory owners and workers in Ethiopia. While his initial links to factories were provided through cultural relations, the majority of his business networks were developed primarily from market relationships. Yet, although he does business relying only on cash, he has built up his trustworthiness with factory owners who don't mind if he pays for orders a few days after they are on their way to him.

The market relationships Kaahin has built through sales demonstrates the existent social capacity between him and households. By offering a reliable source of food and offering credit to a wide-range of households, Kaahin has become trustworthy and come to trust the majority of households. However, this trust is not universal and some are omitted from it by the denial of access to credit. It is clear that in this situation, trust is

grounded in expectations particular to the individual (Hardin 2002:13) and that result from past experience (Offe 1999:56).

### **Social capacity in Dollo Ado**

These glimpses into the lives of six people have illustrated instances where social relations have influenced cereal flows in the pastoral region of Dollo Ado. I have discussed each glimpse in terms of whether the described interactions emerge from market, hierarchical or cultural relations, and where trust and reciprocity exist within these relationships. The focus has been on the social capacity that exists between households (bonding capacity) and between households and traders (bridging capacity) with regard to cereals. Occasionally, examples of relations outside of cereal exchanges or relations between traders have been included to contextualize relationships around cereals within broader patterns of interaction within the region.

Returning to the question of how social relations characterize cereal exchanges between pastoral households, a number of distinct patterns have emerged that indicate strong bonding capacity. Starting from the identification of a household need for grain, pastoralists tap into social networks to ask if others are in the same situation. While gathering people with requests for cereal purchases, information is also exchanged on current market information, both in terms of selling livestock and purchasing cereals and other food items. Group formation for trips to the market also occurs collectively, choosing the individuals who are best suited to make the trip due to their needs or social networks in markets.

Although I have elaborated on the preparation process for market trips here, all of these stages occur quickly and continuously. The process is not as linear as it seems in description, but rather information is constantly collected, exchanged, distilled and updated communally through small conversations that occur during daily activities. This organic nature seems to be very effective, but could be weakness during times when certain people do not happen to be present when useful information needs to be or is being exchanged. For example, if there are no updates from a certain market since people have been traveling to another to purchase when cereal prices are low, a harvest or distribution may be missed. However, I did not observe any such discrepancy.

Cereal sharing and inter-household loans also emerged as a typical outcome of cultural relations related to bonding capacity. For example, when pastoralists are traveling, it is common to receive *marti soor* as a meal when passing another group of pastoralists who are more settled in that particular location. Women also share the work of grinding maize by breaking kernels in teams before grinding it into a finer powder individually. It is also common for households to lend one another a few *suus* of cereal if they have run out and are waiting on



the arrival of another sack. Each of these activities is indicative of the norms of reciprocity and trustworthiness among individuals that characterize this pastoral region.

Social capacity is also seen in cultural interactions during times of stress. For Ayaanle's family, when they lost their livestock due to drought, a relative was willing to support them to establish a life in agropastoralism since he could share some of his land. However, if the majority of families are facing stress, it becomes more difficult. Suuban shared, that during times of drought, it may be harder to borrow cereals from a neighbor since many people may be running low at the same times.

These cultural relations can be based on kinship ties, but many times are not. It is common to have 'networks of social connection' among neighbors or pastoralists temporarily sharing the same spaces (Putnam 2000:171). Outside of the cereal realm, this is also observed in herding arrangements where both relatives and neighbors can share rearing livestock with the owner, and in bonding capacity during hardship, such as sharing milk with a neighbor with an infant or helping a neighbor to build a temporary house when one is lost.

Social relations that build bonding capacity between pastoral households can also come in a hierarchical form where 'obedience to authority is exchanged for /.../ spiritual security' (Adler & Kwon 2002:18). The Third Pillar of Islam, an obligatory redistribution system whereby the better-off provide support to the poor in cash or in kind, is the impetus for cereal transfers from agropastoralists, or pastoralists who engage in opportunistic farming, who have had a bountiful crop to share with the less well-off. While this type of cereal transfer did not take place in any of the glimpses, nor in any of the interviews I conducted, it is present through *zakaat*.

Returning to the question how social relations characterize cereal exchanges between traders and pastoral households, it becomes clear from the glimpses that market relationships are deeply intertwined with cultural relationships in this pastoral region. Relationships between households and traders, as well as between traders themselves, are characterized by 'social norms and values, particularly trust /.../ and expectations of reciprocity' (Van Deth 2008:155). These values are embodied in a number of interactions.

For those pastoral households who have received food aid that they would like to sell or exchange for different items, they can find a place to do this in the market. However, these market relationships are not only the exchange of products for money but also are often combined with favors or gifts exchanged as well. For example, households are often likely to sell to a familiar trader in order to build their trustworthiness. This tendency is true even in cases when the particular trader may be unable to pay households for the items being sold. In some cases, the households are prepared to be paid another time. In other instances, the trader may absorb previously acquired debts or offer another item from the store in exchange.

The strongest cultural relationship within market exchanges is the credit system. All of the glimpses referred to the ability of households to secure access to cereals through the credit system. This is a strong indication of social capacity, which 'stands for the ability of actors to secure benefits by virtue of membership in social networks or other social structures' (Portes 1998:6). However, the glimpses also indicated that trustworthiness is ultimately individual, and strong ties can be broken without reciprocity (Putnam 2000:171).

The credit system works as a 'network of reciprocity' since households buy frequently from a particular trader to build trustworthiness, and traders offer credit for households to take cereals as loans when they are unable to make payments. While some of these credit relationships may have been initiated through kinship ties, reputation – or trustworthiness – is the most important factor for a household trying to get credit in the market.

In addition to being able to access a credit system, bridging capacity also supports other beneficial relationships between pastoralists and traders. The glimpse of Hanad, the trader who grew up in Biyoley, indicates that strong relationships could lead to assistance with other aspects of cereal flows, like transportation from the market to a pastoral *kabele* or during difficult times in the form of relief assistance. However, these examples result not only from a market relationship embedded in cultural norms but possibly also from hierarchical ones. Hanad was always clear that his actions were driven by his faith and religious commitment more than his business orientation.

The only major cereal flow noted that is not indicative of social capacity was food aid distribution. Despite being a hierarchical relationship and providing food to many pastoral and agropastoral households either directly or indirectly, food aid transfers do not indicate social capacity because trust and reciprocity are not evident. Households cannot predict, or trust, when or where food aid will be distributed since safety net and relief distributions are not always coordinated or reliable. Although there could be a sense of reciprocity in food-for-work programs, direct transfers are definitely not based on 'networks of social connection' or reciprocity (Putnam 2000:171).

## **CONCLUDING REMARKS**

With this discussion, it is possible to return to the original research question: *How do social relations influence cereal flows in the pastoral region of Dollo Ado?* Cereal flows, when viewed from the perspective of pastoral households, are influenced by both bonding and bridging social capacity, which consists of hierarchical, market and cultural relations that are characterized by networks of social connection that produce norms of reciprocity and trustworthiness among individuals.

By describing the actions presented in the glimpses in terms of intentions, reasons and motives (Silva 2007:172), it became clear that both households and traders are actors, not only subjected to challenging environments but also to making a life for themselves when the structures around them seem to render this impossible. This finding challenges the assumption that households living in pastoral areas are victims of their environment and supports the argument that development actors in the region need to acknowledge the agency and capacities of pastoralists, agropastoralists and traders and build on these in interventions aiming to promote resilience and protect livelihoods in the region.

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