

## THE SAMBURU LIVESTOCK MARKET IN NORTHCENTRAL KENYA

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**ABSTRACT** The first periodic livestock market in Samburu District was established in Suguta Marmar town in 1991. The aim of this study is to clarify how the local pastoralists whose culture can be characterized by so-called "Cattle Complex" reacted to the emergence of the livestock market.

I examined 362 cases of the trade at the livestock market, with special reference to the reasons why they sold and bought their livestock. The result shows, of all the reasons why they sold the livestock, the answer "to buy other livestock" accounts for the largest percentage. They convert the male livestock into cash. Some other day, they convert the cash into the fertile livestock again. Through this system, they artificially realize the amplification process of procreative power of the herd.

The emergence of a livestock market in the "Cattle Complex" does not mean that they rushed into the market economy. The livestock market is merely utilized as a new opportunity of the exchange of livestock with the mediation of cash. The Samburu are in the process of constructing a new pastoral system which is compatible with the market economy and maintain their own culture, taking advantage of the livestock market.

**Key Words:** Market economy; Cattle complex; Barter exchange; Metaphorical way of thinking; Samburu.

### INTRODUCTION

#### I. The Cattle Complex in Flux

The East African pastoralists are quite unique in their close relation to their livestock. Livestock plays a great role as a means of livelihood, as goods for exchange and as a symbolic vehicle to recreate society and culture. For example, a caught criminal has to pay livestock, instead of fine. Livestock is akin to money. The herders mostly have a barter system of livestock. Herskovits (1926) called this common culture of East African pastoralists, the "Cattle Complex."

In recent years, East African pastoralists have been recurrently devastated by the serious drought and cattle disease. Government of Kenya and foreign development agencies have taken measures to ameliorate this situation. They have adopted modernization policies and development programmes. Schooling became common, and graduates entered employment. People began selling their livestock to buyers from urban areas after local livestock markets were established. The pastoralists obtained Kenyan currency, with which they buy crops and industrial goods, and pay for schools and hospitals. As the Kenyan currency pervaded the society, livestock has

lost its significance as money. Nowadays, the Kenyan currency has replaced livestock in various aspects of their daily life.

## II. The Samburu and the Recent Studies

The Samburu (self-professed Iloikop) among whom I have carried out my field research are pastoralists. They speak the Maa-language and belong to the Eastern Nilotic peoples. They occupy the Samburu District in northcentral area of the Republic of Kenya. The total population of the Samburu is 106,879 (Republic of Kenya, 1994). Most of the Samburu rear cattle, sheep, and goats, and is typically a part of the "Cattle Complex." Although the Samburu still make their living through livestock-keeping, there are now many wage workers as night watchmen, policemen, soldiers, and teachers. The Samburu society is characterized by gerontocracy (Spencer, 1965).

Social anthropologists have studied the social structure of the Samburu through structural-functionalism. However, static analysis misses the latest dynamic changes of the Samburu society. Recent studies argue that stereotypical images of the pastoral tradition have been historically constructed within the ideology of colonialism (Knowles & Collect, 1989).

After frequent serious droughts, studies on the modernization of the Kenyan pastoral peoples sharply increased. Above all, studies on the Maasai have accumulated, with topics ranging from the introduction of the ranching system (Evangelou, 1984; Gills & Gefu, 1990), the involvement to the market economy (Kituyi, 1990), and post-colonial ideology (Knowles & Collect, 1989).

Studies on the modernization of the Samburu and Il-Chamus followed studies on the Maasai. On the Il-Chamus, to whom large-scale development project was introduced, stratification through modernization (Anderson, 1988) and emergence of the absentee herd owners (Little, 1992) were reported. Wage labor was said to have brought the Samburu economic stratification and privatization of economic interest (Sperling, 1987).

A tendency in all these recent studies is a common view that the pastoral society is not a closed system. Many neo-Marxist and dependency theory studies point out that communal systems of the pastoralist have collapsed and are being incorporated into the national system of market economy (Flatkin, *et al.*, 1994).

## III. The Aim of This Study

Few contemporary reports are found on the reaction of the East African pastoralists to their involvement to the external world. Neo-Marxists and dependency theorists pay attention only to the impact of modernization on the local community. Especially, investigation is lacking on how market economy has penetrated the local community with their own exchange system, except for Bohannan (1955) and Hutchinson (1992).

In Suguta Marmar, a town located in my research area, a periodic livestock market was established in 1991. I studied how the local pastoralists reacted to the emergence of the livestock market that provided them constant opportunity for trade. I

report and analyze here some cases of trades at this livestock market. Five years have passed since the livestock market was established. It offers many insights into how market economy penetrated into a “Cattle Complex” society.

## THE LIVESTOCK MARKET

My informants have reported serious droughts in 1974, 1984, and 1994. They also say that cattle epidemics were prevalent in 1978 and 1990. Above all, a drought damaged their cattle most severely in 1984, the cattle herd are reduced by half or completely destroyed.

The Kenyan government and development agencies responded by promoting agriculture, wage labor, and school education. Some Samburu emigrated to the large cities most likely Nairobi to find work as night watchmen. Other Samburu with formal education found work as public servants (e.g. soldiers, policemen, and teachers). As a result, the number of persons with income in Kenyan currency have increased.

Livestock trade was irregular until the opening of livestock markets in northern Kenya including the Samburu territory. In 1991, a periodic market of livestock was opened in Suguta Marmar Town in Lorroki Division located on the southern edge of the Samburu District. This was the first periodic livestock market in all of northern Kenya, including the Samburu District.

This livestock market is under the auspices of the government of Kenya and the Samburu Country Council. Since the establishment, the market is held every two weeks on Thursday. Some years later, auction facilities were added.

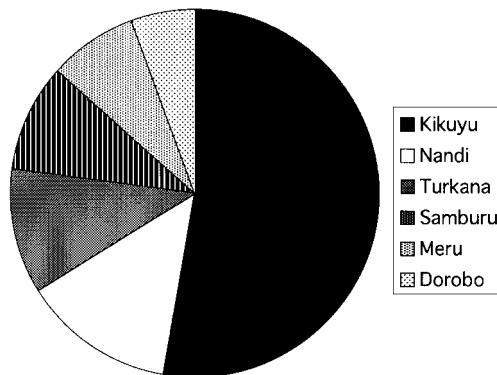
Livestock are transported from all over the Samburu District. It is not uncommon to find livestock travelling 100 km from the market. Sometimes more than 2,000 livestock and 1,000 persons concentrate at the livestock market. The livestock buyers from the large cities transport the livestock on lorries. Most of the buyers are Kikuyu. The number of the lorries sometimes count more than 30.

Table 1. Main commodities traded at the bazaar (date: August 29, 1996).

Food	Maize, sugar cane, tomato, cabbage, potato, onion, <i>sukuma wiki</i> , beans, orange, banana, mango, pineapple, salt
Luxury grocery items	Chewing tobacco, sniffing tobacco, cigarette, <i>meraa</i>
Clothes	Shirt, trousers, jacket, skirt, socks, shoes, sandals (made of old tires), sheet, blanket, bangle, chain, beads
Sundries	Soap, detergent, saucepan, glass, dish, vessel, washtub, ointment, veterinary medicine, cowbell, spear, knife, watch, battery for the watch, key ring, wire, electric torch, padlock, comb, glassware, album, battery, scissors, spectacles, tobacco pouch

## I. The Bazaar

On the same day the livestock market opens, a bazaar also opens nearby. Table 1 shows a list of the commodities traded on a particular day of the bazaar. Agricultural produce and industrial goods are sold at the bazaar. The livestock sellers who gained cash rush to the bazaar, because the prices at the bazaar are relatively cheaper than at shops.



**Fig. 1.** The percentage of ethnic groups of the traders at the bazaar (N=53, date: August 29, 1996).

Figure 1 shows the percentage of the ethnic groups among the traders on a particular day of the bazaar. Most of the traders were Kikuyu or Nandi, and the percentage of the Samburu were only 9%. It means that the Samburu buy various commodities from the traders of other ethnic groups with the price of their livestock. The livestock which used to be transferred within the Samburu community now is integrated into market economy. In turn, agricultural produce and industrial goods are introduced into Samburu community. The livestock market made the Samburu community a part of the large market economy.

Samburu incorporation into market economy, however, does not automatically mean that the Samburu have discarded all the aspects of the cattle complex.

## II. Methodology of the Research

I visited the livestock market six times, from August 29th to October 24th, 1996, and collected 362 examples of the trade. This paper presents the result of the analysis with special emphasis on the reasons why the Samburu sell, buy, and exchange their livestock.

I carried out simple questionnaires and asked five Samburu youths to conduct the questionnaire and record the response from the traders. The method was indirect, because the Samburu were very cautious about being questioned by strangers about their livestock and I wanted to collect many cases as possible. I have to add that I could not cover all the trade at the livestock market. I excluded the trade by other ethnic buyers, most of which were Kikuyu from urban areas from my analysis shown below.

Among the 362 cases I collected, there were 275 sales of livestock, 81 purchases, and 6 barterers.

## THE TRADES AT THE LIVESTOCK MARKET

### I. The Sales

First of all, I examine the sales of livestock by sex and species, focusing on the reason why livestock was sold. In this paper, each of the multiple reasons provided by the interviewee, I regarded as independent reason.

#### 1. The reasons why the Samburu sold oxen and bulls

Figure 2 shows the percentages of the reasons for the sales of oxen and bulls. “To buy other livestock,” accounted for 22%, was the most major reason. It was followed by the second major reason “to buy food (17%),” and also, “to buy veterinary medicine (13%).”

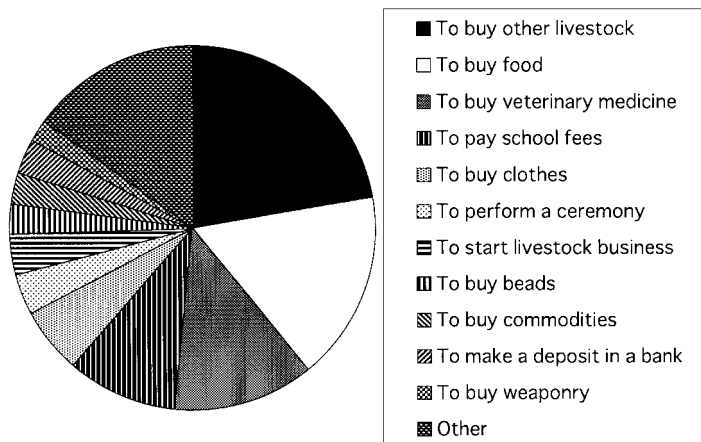


Fig. 2. The percentage of reasons for sales of oxen and bulls (N=208).

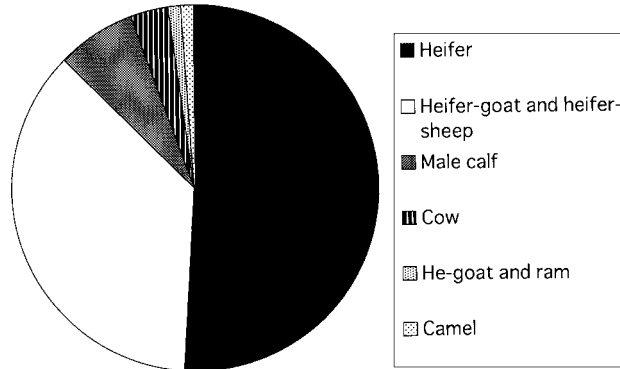
The percentage of those who intended to buy other livestock accounted for more than those who intended to buy commodities of food and veterinary medicine.

Figure 3 shows the percentage of “other livestock” to be bought with the price of oxen and bulls. The percentage of heifer accounted for 53%, and the heifer-goat and heifer-ewe 35%, adding to 88%. This indicates that in most cases, the Samburu hoped to buy heifer-livestock after selling their oxen and bulls.

I give some cases of such sales below.

#### Case No. 1

A Samburu sold one ox for 26,000 shillings, and intended to buy two heifers for 18,000 from the sale of the ox. He planned to spend the balance on 67 kg of sugar (4,000 shillings), 200 kg of maize flour (3,000 shillings), and 4 kg of chewing



**Fig. 3.** The percentage of “other livestock” to be bought with the price of oxen and bulls (N=88).

tobacco (200 shillings).

If an ox is fattened, it sells at a good price. A man who sells an ox can buy some heads of heifers to multiply his herd, because a young small heifer is cheaper than an old ox. If a man buys a large stock of food with the sale of his ox, he can save his livestock from slaughter in case of drought.

#### Case No. 2

A Samburu had an unruly bull and decided to sell for 12,000 shillings. Furthermore, he planned to go to Rumuruti town to sell his two wethers for 2,000 shillings. With both sales, he hoped to buy two heifers for 14,000 shillings.

A manageable herd is important to the Samburu. In short, the man sought to take advantage of the livestock market to regulate his herd.

#### Case No. 3

A man sold his ten oxen for 100,000 shillings for fear of a raid by the Turkana. He deposited all the shillings in a bank in Maralal.

Some days before this research on the livestock market, Turkana men in conspiracy with the Bursi from Ethiopia plundered some villages of the Samburu and the Rendille of their livestock in the Baragoi Division, Samburu District. After this incident, there were small conflicts between the Turkana and the Samburu intermittently. The man who lived in the Baragoi Division wanted to convert his ten oxen into savings, because he feared losing his livestock in case of any more raid by the Turkana.

## 2. The reasons why the Samburu sold cows and heifers

Figure 4 shows the percentage of reasons for sales of cows and heifers. “To buy other livestock,” accounted for 28%, was the most major reason. It was followed by the second major reason, “the livestock is menopausal or infertile (17%),” and the third, “to buy food (13%).” As for sales of oxen and bulls, the percentage of those

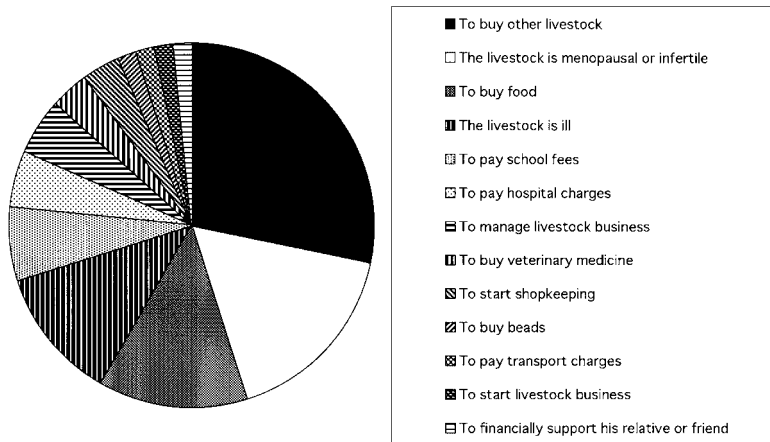


Fig. 4. The percentage of reasons for sales of cows and heifers (N=60).

who intended to buy livestock accounted for a larger percentage than those who intended to buy commodities.

The types of “other livestock” to be bought after selling cows and heifers were (N=27): Heifer-goat and heifer-sheep=67%; heifer=26%; male calf=7%. This indicates that in most cases, the Samburu hoped to buy heifer-livestock after selling their cows and heifers.

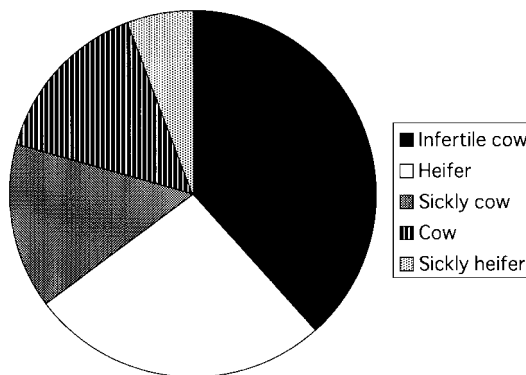


Fig. 5. The percentage of sold cows and heifers by their health status (N=34).

In many cases, sold cows and heifers were sickly. Figure 5 shows the percentage of the sold cows and heifers by their health status. The percentage for infertile and sickly livestock accounted for 59% of the whole. Thus the market was used to sell disordered cows and heifers.

I give some cases of sales of cows and heifers below.

Case No. 4

A man sold an old cow for 8,800 shillings and intended to buy a young heifer for

8,000. He planned to spend the balance on 50 kg of maize flour (600 shillings), 2 kg of sugar (120 shillings), some amount of tea leaves (60 shillings) and some chewing tobacco (20 shillings).

This was an example of how a Samburu expected to rejuvenate his herd by acquiring a young fertile cow.

#### Case No. 5

A man sold a cow for 7,800 shillings, because the cow's udder was damaged by ticks. He planned to buy another heifer for 7,800 shillings.

The Samburu prize female livestock for their milk as much as their ability to bread.

#### 3. The reasons why the Samburu sold he-goats and rams

Figure 6 shows the percentage of reasons for sales of he-goats and rams. The largest percentage of the reason was for "to buy food (26%)," and the second was "to buy veterinary medicine (25%)." For sales of he-goats and rams, the reason "to buy other livestock," which was a major reason for sales of cows accounted for only 15%, ranking the third.

I give some cases of sales of he-goats and rams below.

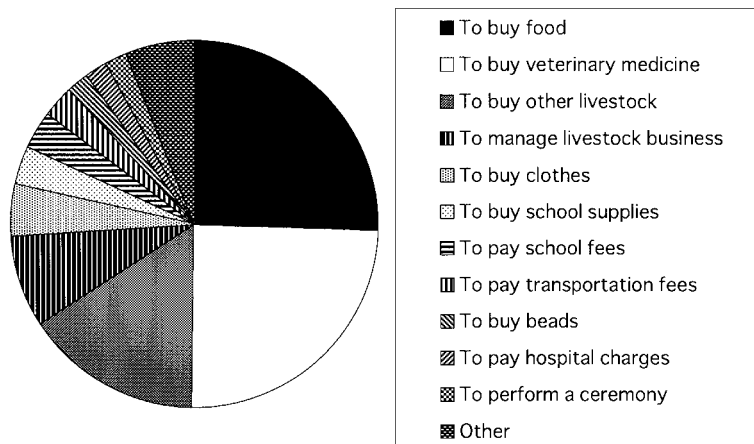


Fig. 6. The percentage of reasons for sales of he-goats and rams (N=149).

#### Case No. 6

A man sold two wethers for 1,600 shillings and planned to buy 100 kg of maize flour (1,500 shillings), 1 kg of sugar (60 shillings), some amount of tea leaves (24 shillings) and some chewing tobacco (15 shillings).

While supply of food from outside of the society was limited, the Samburu had no choice but to slaughter their precious livestock to survive the drought which robs their cows of milk. But after food became available at the grocery, they buy maize



flour with the price of their livestock. At present, most of the Samburu realize that it is better to save livestock than slaughter them for food.

Case No. 7

A man sold a wether for 1,200 shillings, and planned to buy a castrated he-goat and some food, because goat meat tasted better than mutton.

Most of the Samburu say that goat meat tastes best of all animals.

4. The reasons why the Samburu sold she-goats and ewes

Figure 7 shows the percentage of the reasons for the sales of she-goats and ewes. The reason, “to buy other livestock,” accounted for 40%, the largest percentage. It was followed by the second major reason “to buy food (20%).” For sales of she-goats and ewes, the percentage of sellers who intended to buy livestock accounted for more than those who intended to buy commodities.

The percentage of “other livestock” to be bought with the price of she-goats and ewes is as follows (N=6): Heifer-goat and heifer-sheep=50%; male lamb and male kid=33%; heifer=17%. The total of heifer-livestock amounted to 67% of the whole.

I give some cases of sales of she-goats and ewes below.

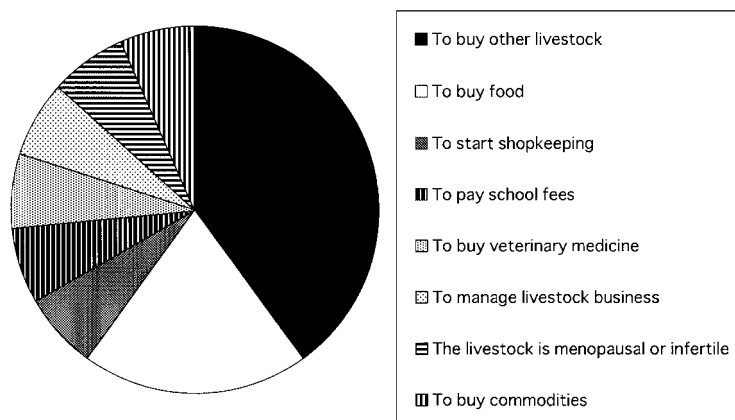


Fig. 7. The percentage of reasons for sales of she-goats and ewes (N=15).

Case No. 8

A man sold three ewes for 1,800 shillings, and planned to buy three she-goats, because he did not have enough goats in his flock.

Between the livestock the man sold and the livestock he planned to buy, the difference in the desirability in the species of the livestock emerges. The purpose of his sale proves to be only an exchange of the species of the livestock.

Case No. 9

A man sold four ewes for 3,000 shillings, and was going to collect 3,000 shillings from an old man. He planned to buy a heifer for 6,000 shillings with the total.

The man wanted to buy a heifer. When he did not have enough cash to buy it, he planned to complement his cash by collecting a debt. Traditionally, the Samburu obtains the livestock of need through barter exchange, I will discuss later. But this person tried to get the livestock he needed through a combination of the sale of his livestock and collected debt.

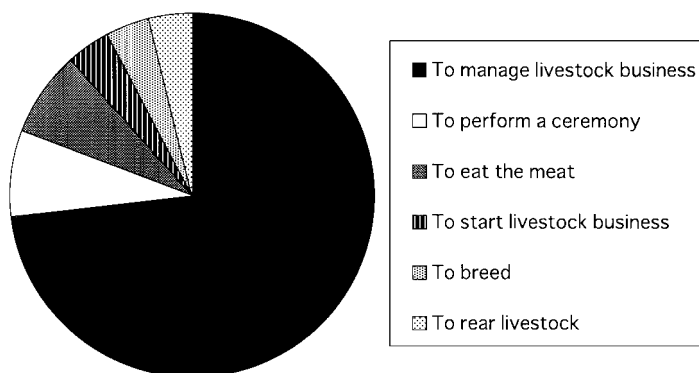
## II. The Purchases

Here, I examine the purchases of the livestock by sex and species, focusing on the reasons why the Samburu bought livestock. At the livestock market, the Samburu not only sell livestock, but also purchase them with cash. As in the sales, for multiple answers, I regarded each one of the reason as independent.

### 1. The reasons why the Samburu purchased oxen and bulls

Figure 8 shows the percentage of the reasons for the purchases of oxen and bulls. The reason, “to manage livestock business,” accounted for 73%. It is followed by the second major reason “to slaughter on ceremonial occasions (17%),” and the third “to eat the meat (13%).” The Samburu manage livestock to profit in two ways. One is to transport livestock to larger cities where the price of livestock is expected to be higher. Another is to fatten livestock in their enclosure for some period and sell at a higher price at another livestock market.

I give some cases of the purchases of oxen and bulls below.



**Fig. 8.** The percentage of reasons for purchases of oxen and bulls (N=26).

### Case No. 10

A man bought fifteen oxen for 225,000 shillings with funds financed by a bank in Maralal town. He planned to transport those oxen to a larger city by lorry and sell them at a higher price.

This is an example of a trader who has access to financial support from a bank and a lorry. Most such traders are Kikuyu. Few Samburu can afford to manage such a large scale business.

## Case No. 11

The man bought five oxen for 50,000 shillings with his salary from the Kenyan Army. He planned to fatten those oxen in his enclosure and sell them at a higher price.

The scale of this man's livestock business was far smaller than the man in Case No. 10. Most of the livestock business of the Samburu is within the range of this small scale. Small-scale livestock traders rear young male livestock from the market in his enclosure for some period. Then, at the right time, they try to sell them at a higher price.

## Case No. 12

The man did not have any appropriate livestock to slaughter for his son's *Lbuutan* ceremony. He bought a male calf for 5,600 shillings with the assistance of his friend.

The Samburu normally hold the *Lbuutan* ceremony some time after the birth of their children, when they have to slaughter a bull or an ox. However the father may not have appropriate livestock to slaughter just for the ceremony. Formerly the Samburu tried to acquire the livestock through exchange with their neighbors. But today they can use the livestock market.

## 2. The reasons why the Samburu purchased cows and heifers

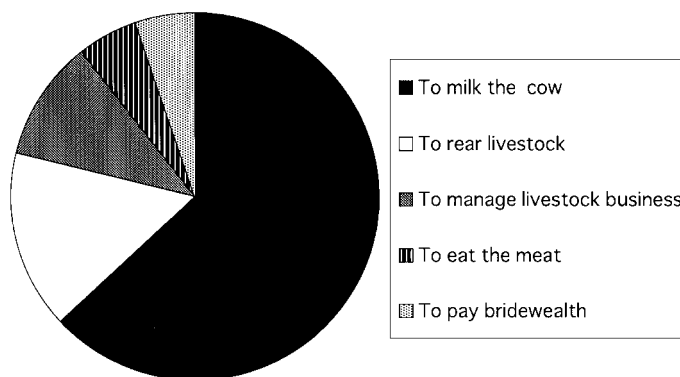


Fig. 9. The percentage of reasons for purchases of cows and heifers (N=19).

Figure 9 shows the percentage of the reasons for purchases of cows and heifers. The reason, "to milk the cow," accounted for 63%, the largest percentage. It was followed by the second major answer, "to rear the livestock (16%)," and the third, "to manage livestock business (11%)." This indicates that, the Samburu buy cows and heifers for their milk. But there is an implication of "keeping livestock at home" to the phrase, "to milk the cow."

I give some cases of the purchases of cows and heifers below.

## Case No. 13

A man bought a heifer for 9,000 shillings with his salary from the Kenyan Police, because he needed milk.

There are more than a few young Samburu wage workers who are educated and work in night watch, the police, the armed forces, and education. Many invest their salary in cows and heifers.

## Case No. 14

A man bought an infertile cow for 17,500 shillings with the price of his ox for the purpose of eating the fat.

The Samburu understand that an infertile cow is rich in fat, because it never lost energy to giving birth. The man bought the infertile cow, because he wanted to eat as much fat as he could.

## Case No. 15

A man bought a heifer for 7,550 shillings with the profit from his livestock business for the purpose of preparation for bridewealth.

It is necessary for any Samburu man who marries to pay some bridewealth to their future affines.

## 3. The reasons why the Samburu purchased he-goats and rams

Figure 10 shows the percentage of the reasons for purchases of he-goats and rams. The reason, “to manage livestock business,” accounted for 50%. It is followed by the second major reason, “to treat illness (15%),” and the third, “to eat the meat (15%).” For the purchases of oxen and bulls, the percentage of the reason, “to manage livestock business,” occupied almost three quarters of the total. By contrast, for he-goats and rams, the reason, “to treat illness,” and, “to eat the meat,” were more prominent. The reason, “to eat the meat,” accounted for 8% in case of oxen and bulls, 15% in case of he-goats and rams. Thus, meat of he-goats and rams are more

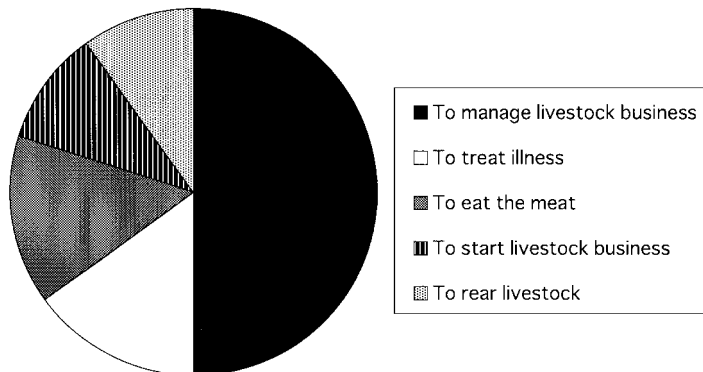


Fig. 10. The percentage of reasons for purchases of he-goats and rams (N=20).

commonly eaten than that of oxen and bulls. Especially, the Samburu use goat soup or mutton soup as medicine for patients during and after illness, women during and after childbirth, and the old. This custom is one of the reasons why he-goats and rams are more commonly slaughtered than oxen and bulls.

I give some cases of purchases of he-goats and rams below.

#### Case No. 16

A man had chest trouble. He bought two wethers for 4,000 shillings with the assistance of his brother and planned to slaughter them and eat the soup for a month.

For a sick Samburu, goat soup or mutton soup is the treatment. Today, if they do not have appropriate livestock to slaughter in their enclosure, they obtain it from the livestock market.

#### 4. The reasons why the Samburu purchased she-goats and ewes

The percentage of the reasons for purchases of she-goats and ewes were as follows (N=5). The reason, "to breed," accounted for 60%. It was followed by the second major answer, "to manage livestock business (20%)," and "to rear livestock (20%)." Cows and heifers were bought for their milk. For she-goats and ewes, the same reason accounted for few percentage. This is not because the Samburu never milk she-goats and ewes, but because the amount of milk they produce is quite small. In contrast, the reason, "to breed," is conspicuous. It takes almost one year for cows to grow to the stage of reproduction. But it does not takes more than half a year for goats and sheep. As the reproductive efficiency of goats and sheep are higher than cattle, the Samburu are keen to multiply the herd more efficiently.

I give a case of purchases of ewes below.

#### Case No. 17

A man sold an ox at the preceding livestock market (September 26th), and bought five ewes for 4,000, because he expected the ewes to give birth.

If a man does not sell an ox, there is no other use but eating the meat. But if he sells the ox at the livestock market, he can buy five ewes. Moreover, if the ewes continue to give birth, they multiply the herd far more efficiently.

## ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

### I. Characteristics of the Livestock Trade by the Samburu

#### 1. Trading to buy other livestock

In the following pages, I summarize and analyze the characteristics of the livestock trade by the Samburu.

Today, the Samburu actively trade livestock at the Suguta Marmar livestock market. It is true that many Samburu sell livestock for cash. The livestock which had been a measure of subsistence has become a measure of conversion into cash. The

Samburu seem to have discarded their place in the "Cattle Complex" and assimilated into cash market economy. However, the reasons of sales and purchases above of livestock indicate that it may only be a one-sided view.

Of all the reasons why oxen and bulls were sold, the most major reason was not "to buy commodities" nor "to pay for service" but "to buy other livestock." Of all the reasons why cows and heifers were sold, the most major reason was "to buy other livestock." The same applied for sales of she-goats and ewes. Of all the reasons why she-goats and ewes were sold, the most major reason was "to buy other livestock." Of all the reasons why livestock were sold of all sex and species, the reason, "to buy other livestock," accounted for the most percentage, except in the case of he-goats and rams.

The Samburu sell livestock at the livestock market, to temporarily convert their livestock into cash. The Samburu mostly seem to plan to buy more livestock with the sale of livestock. Thus, cash is converted soon back to livestock again.

I found that the average price of a goat or sheep was 947 shillings. It is far cheaper than the average price of a cow at 11,799 shillings. The price of a goat or sheep is less than a tenth of a cow. To buy commodities, the Samburu usually sell goats or sheep, because a unit price of goat or sheep is relatively cheap. In Samburu community, cows are rarely sold, and goats and sheep are sold at frequent intervals. From the viewpoint of property management, cows play a major role in savings and goats and sheep play a role in daily expenses, as if they were a sort of pocket money.

## 2. Trading to buy female-livestock

Almost all the men who sold oxen and bulls intended to buy heifer-livestock. It was also the case for men who sold cows and heifers. Still same stood for men who sold she-goats and ewes.

Why is buying heifer-livestock so popular? The clue is in the health status of sold cows and heifers. Infertile and sickly livestock accounted for a large proportion. Infertile cows and heifers are sold away because they are no longer able to breed.

The castrated male livestock does not give birth nor multiply the herd, but can be sold at a high price for meat. In other words, the castrated male livestock is not so valuable for Samburu seller, but it is valuable for the buyer. Adversely, the heifer livestock is valuable for the Samburu, but not so valuable for the traders who come from large cities. The Samburu sell fat but worthless oxen at a high price, and buy small but valuable heifers at a low price. They take advantage of the difference between the value system of the local community and the value system of the livestock market. Depending on the circumstances, it is sometimes possible to buy several heifers with the price of an ox. In this case, they can amplify the procreativity of their herd.

Likewise, the menopausal livestock is useless except as meat, if kept in the enclosure. But, sold at the livestock market, it is converted into cash. Some other day, another heifer can be bought with the cash. This can be seen as an exchange process of the old livestock into young livestock through the market. Consequently, the herd can be rejuvenated and fertile.

The homestead, where I have been carrying out my field research, was located 13 km away from Suguta Marmar town. The people actively traded livestock at the

livestock market. In a cattle herd of the homestead, all the individuals were female except for a bull. The proportion of female livestock was extraordinarily high (cow: bull=29: 1). From my observation on transition of this herd, when a male calf was grown, it was sold away and another heifer was bought at the market. Taking advantage of the livestock market, the owner replaced almost all the male calves in the herd with young heifers for breeding.

## II. The Livestock Market in the “Cattle Complex”

### 1. Samburu’s view of life associated with livestock

In modern economic terms, the Samburu may seem to multiply their herd in pursuit of maximization of profit in cash. It is true that they take advantage of the livestock market, but what the Samburu aim for is not maximization of cash, but maximization of their livestock.

The Samburu interest in the procreative power of livestock is closely related to their view of life associated with livestock rather than to economic utilitarianism. To become mature, it is necessary for any Samburu to perform many rites of passage. But in many cases, to perform the rites, they need livestock and its products. Therefore, without livestock, parents cannot make a man or woman out of their son or daughter. The common aim of all the Samburu men is to take as many wives as possible and to have as many children as possible, and to make his family as large as possible. However, in Samburu society, men cannot marry without paying livestock as bride wealth to their affines. For the Samburu, to make their family large is to have as many number of livestock as possible.

The livestock, especially cattle, is a Samburu symbol of value. For example, the Samburu use an epithet, “like a cow (*kotwana nketen*),” to laud a beautiful woman or a handsome man. Especially, a cow with a fine horn, with beautiful color, and with obedient behavior is called “holy cow (*nketen namnyak*).” The holy cow is regarded as effective in the reproduction of the herd. Therefore, in the hamlet where I stayed, a skull of the holy cow was placed in the enclosure in expectation of the effect. Among the Samburu, the daily behavior of the people admiring the cattle and its procreative power reinforces their motivation to acquire more cattle.

The value of cash is different from the value placed on livestock. Today, the Samburu recognize that they need cash for use in today’s social life. However, they do not recognize the pursuit of cash as the aim of their life. The Samburu who went shopping in town commonly ridiculed the Kikuyu shopkeepers as greedy misers. They describe the man preoccupied with cash as “Money got inside of his brain (*Pesa ingia ndani ya kichwa*: Swahili).” They say that however much cash a man may earn, his life would be in vain without children.

### 2. Trading as conversion of goods

As is described above, the Samburu buy livestock with the cash in hand. Thus, the Samburu trading of livestock can be characterized by a two-way flow of livestock and cash. Since the establishment of the livestock market, it has become possible to choose whether the Samburu hold property in livestock or cash.

The most typical example is the case of a man who sold his oxen for fear of raid

and deposited the cash in a bank (Case No. 3). If he continues to hold his property as livestock, it is imperiled, but, if he sells the livestock at the market, he can convert his property into cash. After public security is recovered, it is possible for him to withdraw his deposit from the bank and buy livestock again. Then, he can convert his cash into livestock. In this sense, as the need arises, the Samburu seem to utilize the livestock market for a system of conversion based on two-way flow of circulation between livestock and cash.

### 3. The concept of exchange among the Samburu

As shown above, the Samburu trading of livestock is quite deliberate. What caused the present Samburu utilization of the livestock market? To understand the reason, the original exchange systems of livestock before the emergence of cash economy need to be examined.

Table 2. Samburu vocabulary of business terms and etymology in Swahili language.

business terms	Samburu language	etymology in Swahili
commerce	<i>piashara</i>	biashara
market	<i>soko</i>	soko
shop	<i>duka</i>	duka
cash	<i>shilingini</i>	shilingi
cash	<i>ropiani</i>	rupy
to trade	<i>sungulika</i>	ku-shughulikana
to exchange	<i>pandeliso</i>	ku-badilishana
to sell	<i>amir</i>	None
to buy	<i>ainyangu</i>	None

Table 2 shows the vocabulary of business terms in Samburu. Almost all are loan-words from Swahili, an official language of Kenya. For example, *piashara* is borrowed from Swahili “biashara,” which means “commerce” in English. However, the Samburu words which mean “to buy” and “to sell” are not borrowed from any language, indicating that the two concepts existed before cash economy.

To examine the Samburu concepts of buying and selling, I give two illustrative sentences below to show the usage *ainyangu* which means “to buy” in English.

#### Illustrative Sentence No. 1

*Kainyangua utauo nabo aitam shilingini galfni saal.*

I bought one heifer for 9,000 shilling.

#### Illustrative Sentence No. 2

*Kainyangua utauo nabo aitam sipeni tomono oare.*

I exchanged twelve heifer-goats or sheep for one heifer.

In the Illustrative Sentence No. 1, the Samburu verb which means “to buy” is *ainyangu*. Strange to say, in the Illustrative Sentence No. 2, the Samburu verb which means “to exchange” is also “*ainyangu*.” In other words, the Samburu verb *ainyangu* can be used both in the case of purchase and in the case of barter. Therefore, the proper English equivalent for the word *ainyangu* is “to acquire some-



thing necessary in exchange for property.” That is the reason why the word *ainyangu* can be translated into “to buy” in the context of cash, and “to exchange” in the context of livestock. The same thing can be said of *amir* which means “to sell.”

The Samburu basically trade to acquire “something necessary” in either cash or livestock. The concept of *ainyangu*, which means “to acquire something necessary in exchange for property,” exactly represents the basic way of trading at the livestock market. In other words, the Samburu engage in trade at the livestock market based on their own concept of exchange.

Table 3. Predetermined exchange rates between different sex and species of livestock.

Sex and status of cattle	The goats and sheep equivalent to the cattle
a pregnant cow	15 heifer-goats or sheep
a cow	12 heifer-goats or sheep
a heifer	12 heifer-goats or sheep
an ox	6 heifer-goats or sheep
a bull	6 heifer-goats or sheep
a calf	3 heifer-goats or sheep

On the other hand, barter of livestock is quite common among the Samburu. Table 3 shows the predetermined exchange rates to which they refer when they barter different sex and species of livestock. For example, one heifer is equivalent to twelve heifer-goats or sheep. I observed six barter cases at the livestock market.

I give an example of barter of livestock below.

#### Case No. 18

A man exchanged one heifer for twelve heifer-goats or sheep, because he did not have enough goats and sheep.

Table 4. Predetermined exchange rates between livestock and commodities.

Livestock	The commodities equivalent to the livestock
a heifer-goat or sheep	seven bundles of beads
a heifer-goat or sheep	one pair of earrings ( <i>urauri</i> ) which the father wears when he circumcises his children
a heifer-goat or sheep	one pair of lion skin ( <i>munken</i> ) which the father wears when he circumcises his children
a heifer-goat or sheep	one container ( <i>nkidong</i> ) of arrows
a heifer-goat or sheep	twelve arrows ( <i>bae</i> )
a heifer-goat or sheep	one house

It is possible to barter livestock for various commodities. The livestock play a similar role to money. Table 4 shows examples of the fixed exchange rates between livestock and commodities. For example, one heifer-goat or sheep is equivalent to seven bundles of beads.

I presume that the original style of exchange in Samburu community was barter of livestock. The market exchange introduced later to their community may have

been initially unfamiliar, but the Samburu accepted it as something similar to their original barter system.

#### 4. Metaphorical way of thinking

The Samburu are very good at using metaphor. The word *kotwana*, which means “it is like something,” can be commonly heard in daily life.

The Samburu name their livestock according to the metaphorical way of thinking. For example, a cow whose color is similar to the color of gazelle is named *nantaratwet*, a gazelle. A cow whose color is similar to the color of red clay is named *naiyareko*, red clay. The same thing can be said of the name of a place. A white hill whose ridge line is similar to the side view of instep is named *naibor nkeju*, which means “white foot.”

Moreover, in the Samburu expression, the world of livestock is likened to the world of human beings. The reverse is also true. They say that castrating a lamb is akin to circumcising a boy. Once they described the bumper of my car as a “horn” of the car. I suppose those skillful metaphors have a close relation to their life style with livestock, because the livestock can be quite desirable material for the metaphorical way of thinking.

One day, a Samburu old woman told me:

*Kesham shilingini XXXX, kotwana Iloikop o nketen.*

(As the XXXX [another ethnic group] love Kenyan Shillings, so the Samburu love cattle).

This utterance shows that the Samburu themselves see livestock as cash metaphorically. Their original barter exchange system worked as a model for today's livestock market, because they see nothing different.

The emergence of a livestock market in the “Cattle Complex” does not mean that people have discarded the principle of the “Cattle Complex” and rushed into the market economy. If anything, the livestock market is merely utilized for the new opportunity for livestock exchange with the mediation of cash. The Samburu are in the process of constructing a new pastoral system compatible with market economy, and taking advantage of the livestock market, and are able to maintain their own culture.

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