

Ton Dietz

University of Leiden, African Studies Centre Leiden

META KNOWLEDGE ABOUT AREAS. THE EXAMPLE OF POKOT

Paper for the Africa Knows! Conference, panel 16: “Country/Region-specific Knowledge Development Histories in Africa”

Abstract

Area studies have a long history, and so have academic centres dealing with specific areas (like the African Studies Centres) or the specific journals dealing with certain areas (like the Journal of Eastern African Studies). However, very few area studies specialists use an approach to study the historical development of knowledge about a specific area, as a kind of meta knowledge study. In this paper I will try to show what the knowledge development history is about the areas of the Pokot in Kenya and Uganda: what is the 'harvest' of specific knowledge about that area and its people? Who did influence whom? Where did the people come from who studied that area, and how did that change during a 150-year long period of written sources about the area? And what does it tell us about the 'knowledge hypes', the major topics studied in particular periods? With the assistance of google scholar it is possible to reconstruct the networks of references used in academic (and other) studies, next to doing a detailed analysis of the references used in scholarly work about an area. One of the interesting aspects in this paper will be the study of the types of sources used: academic/non-academic, languages used, disciplines used or neglected. This is work in progress. As an hypothesis we can already formulate the statement that the specific topic studied about an area often tells more about the (scientific/societal) questions relevant to the countries where scholars come from, than about the questions that are relevant for the situation in the particular area that is being studied. And also: for peripheral areas like the Pokot areas, 'formal' knowledge development has hardly been done by people from the area itself. Most knowledge has an external gaze. Local people mainly play a role as research subjects and as research assistants or language interpreters. Meta knowledge studies show the need to decolonize minds and practices, and to become far more inclusive and supportive in engaging and acknowledging local researchers, and local pools of knowledge.

Keywords: meta-knowledge, knowledge history, area studies, decolonization of the minds, Pokot, Kenya and Uganda

Brief Academic CV: Ton Dietz studied human geography in Nijmegen (the Netherlands) and defended his PhD about Northwest Pokot at the University of Amsterdam in 1987. There he became professor in human geography in 1995, and later also the director of the national research school CERES, based in Utrecht (2002-2007). Between 2010 and 2017 he was the director of the African Studies Centre in Leiden, and professor in the study of African Development at Leiden University. He was also a member of the Board of AEGIS. After his retirement he became the co-chair of the Leiden African Studies Assembly, and the scientific coordinator of the conference Africa Knows!.

See: <https://www.ascleiden.nl/organization/people/ton-dietz>



Dedication: to Rachel Andiema, Jacinta Chebet, Simon Lopeyok Lokomolian, Romanus Partany Chizupo, and the late Albinus Kotomei, and other local research partners in West Pokot.

A personal story: the quest for bottom-up knowledge development

When the Dutch Government was approached by the Government of Kenya to ‘adopt’ West Pokot District for the Kenya-wide Arid and Semi-Arid Lands development Programme (preceded by a similar request to work in Kapenguria Division of that District during the Special Rural Development Programme in the 1970s) the University of Amsterdam was asked to become the scientific partner of that ASAL programme in West Pokot (and elsewhere), linked to the Institute of Development Studies of the University of Nairobi. I was one of the researchers, and together with Annemieke van Haastrecht, Mirjam Schomaker, Dutch students, and a team of local research assistants, from 1982 onwards, we collected the existing knowledge, and brought all existing documentation together in the new District Information and Documentation Centre in Kapenguria. We also made ‘locational development profiles’, integrating all existing documentation about almost every Location (the District – now County - consisted of many Locations), and adding knowledge, based on questionnaire surveys and a lot of informal discussions with local inhabitants and civil servants (see: Dietz, 1987). The local research assistants proved to be crucial for this work, of whom the most important ones were Rachel Andiema, Jacinta Chebet, Simon Lopeyok Lokomolian, Romanus Partany Chizupo, and Albinus Kotomei.

Figure 1: The Pokot research team, with on the left Simon and Rachel, and on the right Jacinta.



De onderzoeksgroep in West-Pokot, Kenia.

Together with Dutch medical doctor Paul Mertens, and Dutch ASAL co-ordinators Huup Hendrix and later Wiegert de Leeuw (and others) we tried ‘to make knowledge work for development’, and to make that knowledge ‘public property’ (e.g. by supporting the production of a District Atlas and a School Atlas about West Pokot (Hendrix et al, 1986 and Ministry, 1992), and by doing a study about the ‘population-supporting capacity’ of the District, based on local (potential) crop and livestock production (Van Haastrecht & Schomaker, 1985). We also started to experiment with bottom-up knowledge development. In December 1982 we co-organised a ‘sondeo’, in West Pokot’s most remote area, Alale, in the far north (Dietz & Van Haastrecht, 1983), adopting the ideas developed by Peter Hildebrand in Latin America (Hildebrand, 1981 and nd), and Robert Chambers (Chambers, 1981, and many additional publications, e.g. 1994). When the Dutch Government had withdrawn its support for area development (decentralized regional development as a core activity of Dutch - and other - ‘development assistance’ had been replaced by sector support and budget support to the central government, after 2000) the local people involved in research activities for the ASAL programme organized a ‘people’s assessment’ of what had been accomplished and I was asked to participate as well. It resulted in three ‘participatory assessment’ focus group discussions of three days each, bringing together representatives of the local population to talk about development and change in their Location (Alale, Kodich and Chepareria; see Andiema et al. 2003, and 2008, and Dietz & Zanen, 2009). Later these experiences became the basis for PADev: a method for participatory assessment of development initiatives, with experiments in Ghana, Burkina Faso, and Benin (see www.padev.nl; and Dietz & PADev Team, 2013, Dietz c.s., 2013, Dietz, Van der Geest & Obeng, 2013, Pouw et al, 2017, and also: Kazimierczuk, 2009, and Altaf, 2010 and 2019). These ideas matured during a period of major controversies about ‘pro-poor development’ approaches, and about sound methods for evaluations and assessments (see Banerjee & Duflo, 1994, and Duflo & Kramer, 2015).

Countering hegemonic area studies in Africa

Regional studies, or ‘area studies’ as they are often perceived in Africa, have a history of ‘hegemonic mind-frames’. Most of the knowledge development in Africa about places and ‘their’ people, at the spatial level of districts (or ‘counties’, as they are currently known in Kenya), has come from elsewhere and was done by knowledge workers who did not

originate in those areas, and who often lived there for only brief periods of time (if at all). Hegemonic mind frames are ways of looking at other areas and people, by people coming from geo-politically 'more central/more powerful/more influential' areas. Often this comes with self-evident (and often not very explicit, and often not acknowledged) feelings of superiority, and a moral justification of 'doing good'. This can be 'ending slavery', as in the mid- and late 19th Century, or 'bringing the gospel to people elsewhere' (from the 19th Century onwards), or, broader, 'civilizing natives', as in the early 20th century, or 'educating people', (as from the 1930s onwards), or 'developing people' (as in the post-colonial era and particularly after the adoption of the Millennium Development Goals from 1990 onwards), or 'bringing peace and justice' (in various periods), or 'fighting poverty' (idem), or 'teaching people to live more sustainably, and counter climate change' (one of the goals of the Sustainable Development Goals adopted in 2015).

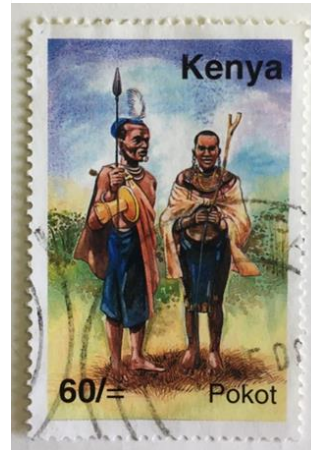
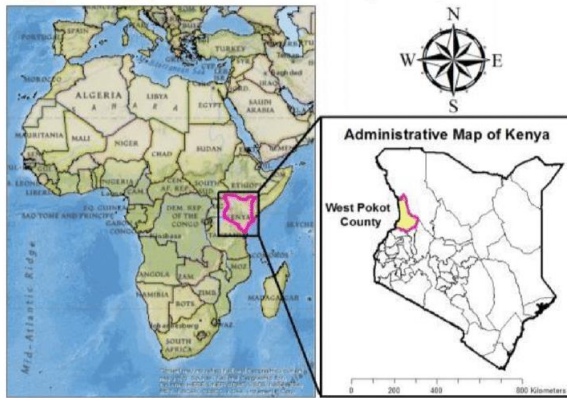
Hegemonic knowledge development replicates the power dimensions of existing geo-political relationships: outsiders, coming from elsewhere, dominate the research effort, and the gathering of data and opinions. And they are the ones who 'design' the text, and the relevant 'facts' about areas and people living there. Local people can be (and often are) important as interpreters, or as guides, or as research assistants, but often in a subordinate position, and dependent on money coming from the centres of power. Although many non-local scientists, and other 'knowledge workers' (in religious missions, governments, NGOs, and the private commercial sector), will uphold an image of 'neutrality', and 'replicability' of research methods and results, their ways of thinking and doing things (including research) is mostly embedded in dominant ways of thinking in their circles, a moral code of what is 'proper' research, and what is an acceptable way of framing and formulating results. And let me be clear: 'Non-local' does not only mean 'foreign'. 'Local intellectuals' have often also been 'drilled' in 'sound' and 'acceptable' ways of doing things, and 'ways of thinking' that can be far away from 'indigenous' pools of knowledge. Or to make things even more complicated: decades of education and 'governance' have intermingled originally indigenous and 'adapted' indigenous ways of thinking and doing, that make it impossible to talk about 'real indigeneity'.

Pokot as an example: part 1

Let me illustrate this with preliminary results of a meta-study about knowledge development in the area (and its people) where I did my PhD research in the 1980s, Pokot in Northwest Kenya (and Northeast Uganda), during the 1982-1987 period (Dietz, 1987), an area that has intrigued (and occupied) me ever since. This paper is a first attempt to present results about 'who did what when', and not yet with a focus on the contents of what they wrote. I hope to be able to do that in a future publication. And of course, 'proving hegemonic mind frames and practices' would deserve more in-depth contents analysis!

Figure 2: Pokot in Kenya/Uganda

Location of West Pokot County, Kenya, Africa

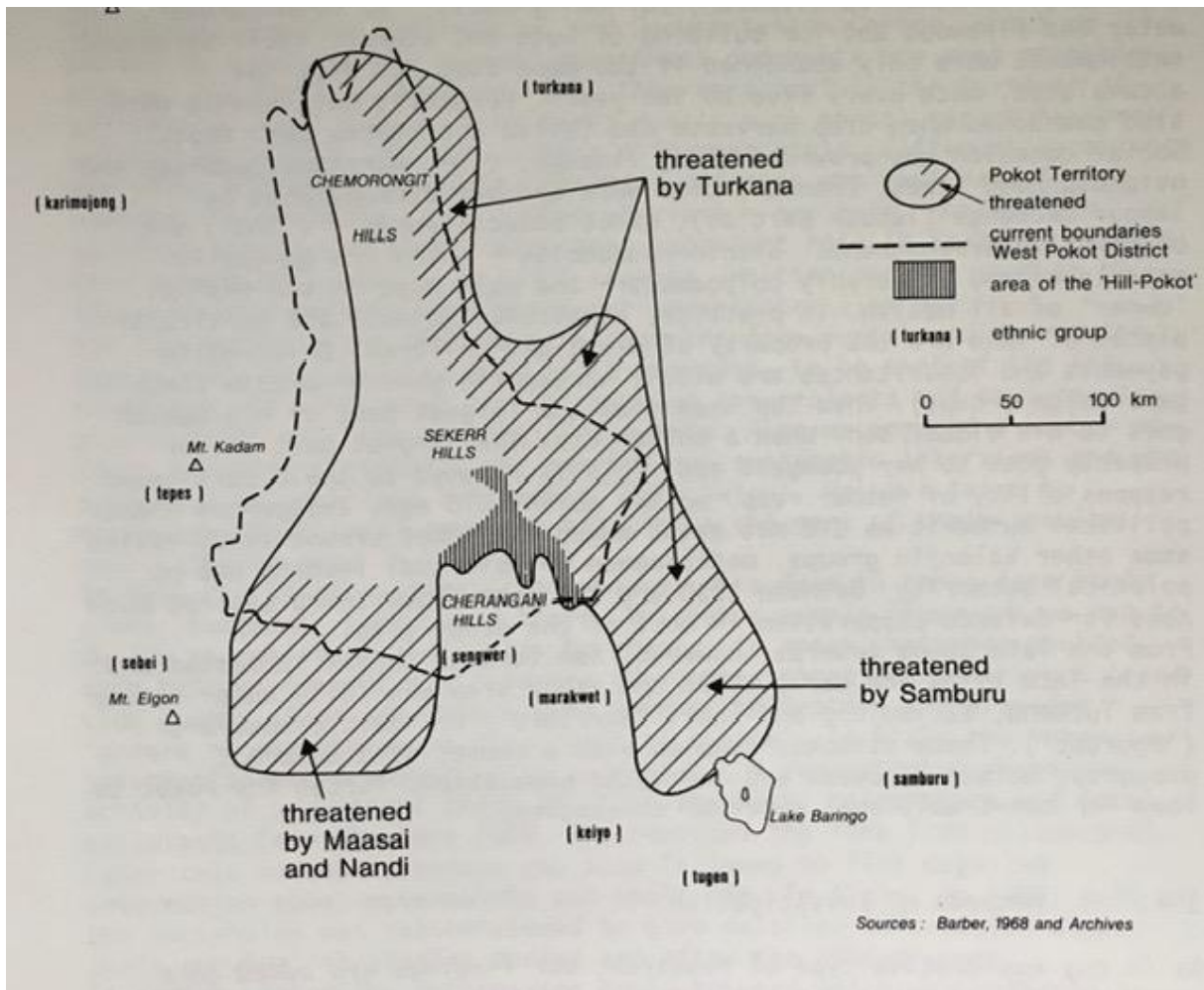


Map:

https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Ryan_Graydon2/publication/312547951/figure/fig1/AS:565564399263744@1511852468274/Location-of-West-Pokot-County-Kenya-Africa-This-map-represents-the-geographical.png

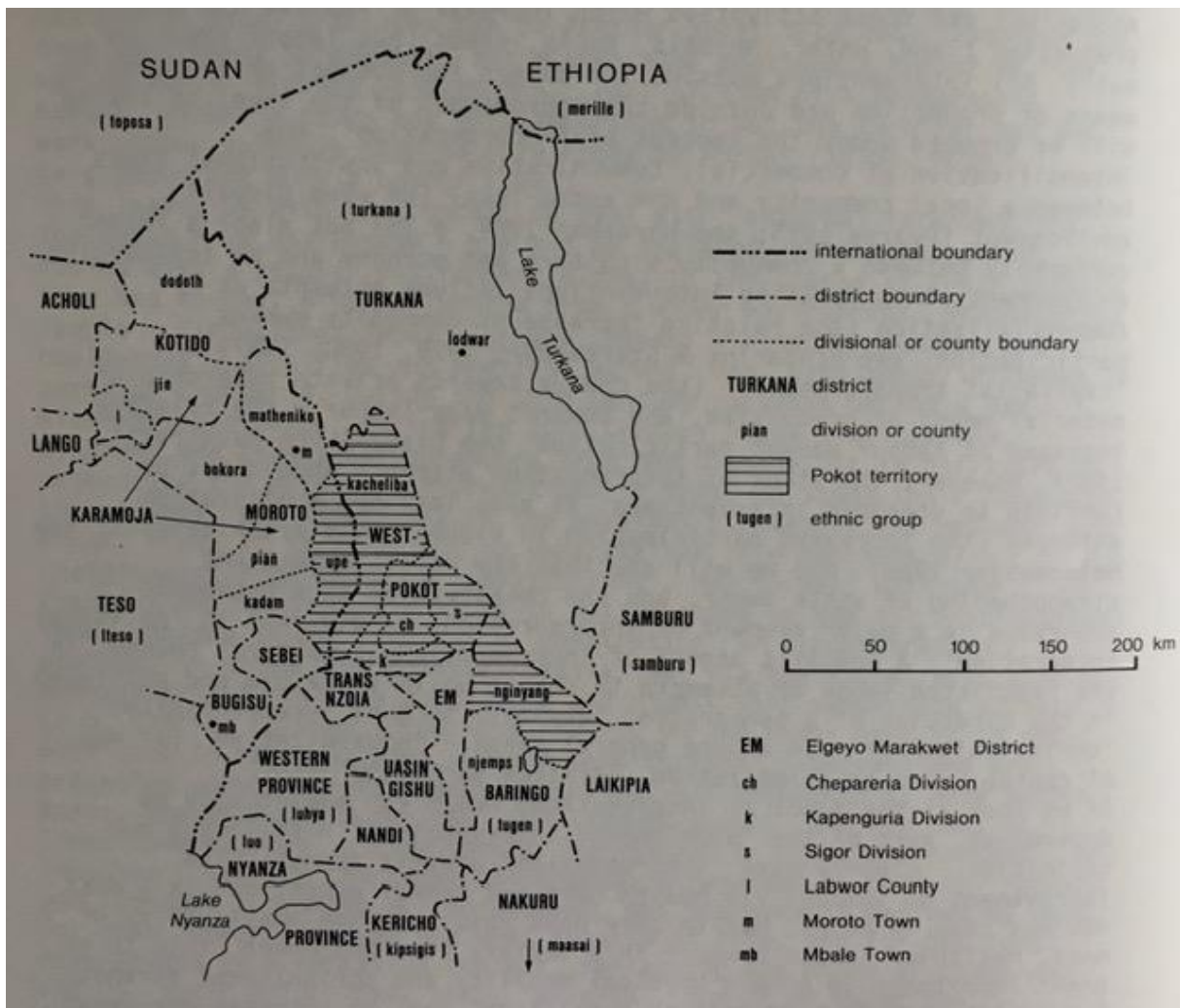
Stamp: own collection (Kenya 2006)

Figure 3: The Pokot area in 1880



Dietz 1987: 29

Figure 4: Administrative and Ethnic Regions NW Kenya and NE Uganda, 1986



Dietz 1987: 20

Meta-area studies about 'an area' and 'its people' are confronted from the start by questions about names and about boundaries: geographic ones and cultural-political ones, and there is a continuous tension between boundary rigidity ("this area, or these people 'do not belong' to the study") and boundary fluidity (both the 'definitions' about what the relevant area is, and what the relevant people(s) are that are to be studied change over time, and there is always a grey zone of overlap, and mutual influencing with neighboring areas and people. If we start with 'the people', the Pokot as a cultural unit with more or less one language, and a shared self-defined identity, have lots of sub-units: clans, 'occupational' subgroups like 'herders', 'irrigators', and 'upland farmers', and geographical subgroups like 'plains people', and 'mountain dwellers'. On the other hand, the Pokot cultural unit regards itself (and is being regarded by others) as part of a larger cultural identity group, the Kalenjin, but as its most northern group (with two isolated exceptions in South Sudan and South Ethiopia, probably remnants of a historical migration route from the North), and also the group closest to non-Kalenjin neighbors Karimojong, Turkana, and Samburu (Maa-speakers), with which they have a complex relationship of adopting/interchanging cultural elements, and - until today - ethnic warfare. The northwestern group of the Pokot has been

called 'Karasuk', or 'Karapokot' in the past, to suggest an intermediate position between Kalenjin and Karimojong. And the fact that throughout the colonial era the Pokot have been called 'Suk', a 'foreign' name used by Maasai, and through them by the Swahili-speaking slave-raiders from the Indian Ocean Coast, is telling: they always despised that name, but it took ages before 'authorities' decided to use 'their own' name: Pokot (sing.: Pochon), and some authors even use Pökot or Pökoot to come closer to the sound of the Pokot language.

The geographical 'identification' of the Pokot with an area has also always been complex. Before 1902 they have been administered as part of the British Uganda territory (the area west of the Suam River as part of Uganda's Central Province, and the area east of the Suam River as part of Uganda's Eastern Province. But after 1902 they were separated by a colonial boundary (between Kenya and Uganda, when Uganda's Eastern Province had been transferred to Kenya), leaving the northwestern Pokot (living west of the Suam River) as part of Uganda. This partly changed in 1926 when the 'Karasuk' area was formally transferred to Kenya as well, as part of Turkana District. Hence, the Pokot found themselves in four different administrative units: 'West Suk' as the core area, (North) Baringo in the east, Turkana in the North (all three in Kenya), and Karamoja in the Northwest, in Uganda, in what was later to be called Upe County, and currently Amudat District. On top of that, they regarded the northern area of the Kenyan Trans Nzoia District (which the British had made part of the 'White Highlands', for British and other 'settlers') as their herding, raiding, and hunting fall-back area, particularly during droughts and other periods of disaster. And it took a long time after decolonization before the 'Karapokot' area changed hands from Turkana District to West Pokot District, and even longer before that was acknowledged on administrative maps. On top of that, between 1932 and 1970 (so AFTER Uganda's and Kenya's independence in resp. 1962 and 1963) the Karapokot area was administered by Uganda, and was a 'training ground' for Idi Amin, the infamous later military President of Uganda, when he was a general in the Ugandan Army (Dietz 1987).

In the meantime, backed by the Kenyan British authorities (and after the late 19th century's rinderpest epidemic that decimated herds everywhere, but not so much in the Pokot area, with its very inaccessible and isolated mountain ranges) the Pokot had gained a much stronger position, and had expanded their herding and living areas towards former Karimojong and Turkana areas, but on the other hand they had effectively lost access to Trans Nzoia, where after 1919 many 'soldier settlers' from Great Britain had acquired big land holdings; these were high-class British veterans from the First World War (later to be replaced by military and police leaders after Kenya's Independence, and particularly after 'the coup that failed', in 1982).

So: the administrative situation was and still is complex, and contested. Everywhere in the border areas with Karamoja, Turkana and Samburu there are 'in-between' situations, with herders coming and going, either peacefully, or as part of violent 'ngoroko' cattle thieves, and also demographically there are many in-between situations, with marriages to and fro, and also with related clans and families on both sides of the administrative borders. Towards the south the situation is complex as well: the relationships with the Marakwet and the Sebei (both also belonging to the Kalenjin macro group) have soured in recent decades.

Looking at the ethnic composition of the Pokot administrative areas, Pokot are the dominant cultural group. However, there have always been small groups of 'different people' in the mountains, although partly intermarried with Pokot (and others), and mostly taking over parts of its language and customs: the Cherangani (Sengwer) people, the Kwop, the Oropom, and the Tepes (Sor or Sorat). Probably, their genetic origins predate the (gradual, and intermittent) proto-Pokot arrival, mostly between 500 and 1000 AD, like other 'mountain people' in a larger area. And finally there are various groups of more recent immigrants in the administrative areas of the Pokot: non-Pokot government employees, and church/missionary workers, workers and self-employed entrepreneurs (some with workers) for private businesses, and teachers, pupils and students coming from elsewhere. Particularly in and around the 'capital' of West Pokot County, Kapenguria-Makutano, these immigrants are a big minority, or even a majority now. Many are Kikuyus, Luos and Luhyas, the most populous groups of Kenya. And more inland there used to be a small, but influential community of Somali traders. In the past (around elections mainly, and after the fall of Idi Amin in Uganda in 1979) there have been violent clashes between Pokot and 'outsiders', particularly Kikuyus, whose properties were occasionally looted. On the other hand, there are examples of intermarriage as well, and quite a lot of immigrants regard themselves as 'locals', although they do not speak the Pokot language (or not beyond the basics). Finally, since the early 20th Century there has always been a handful of 'foreigners', and particularly the religious missionaries (and during some periods, development workers, and people working for building companies) came from a great variety of international backgrounds.

The (ongoing) study

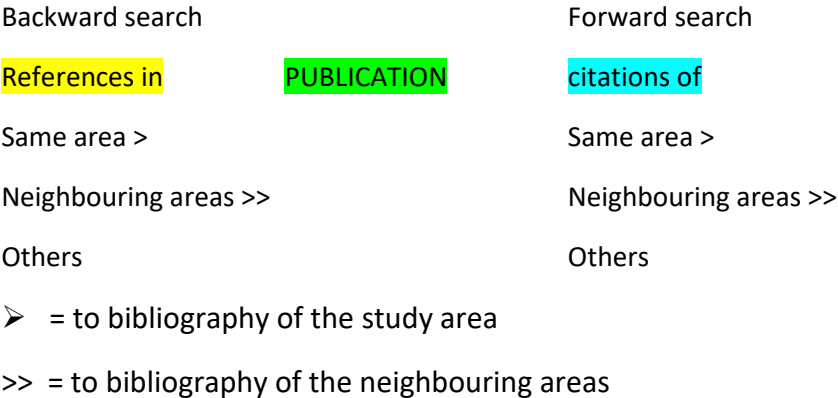
The methods I used for this (ongoing) meta study are as follows: I collected as many publications about the Pokot area and people I could find, and for each publication I did four things:

- a) Indicating what type of author(s) has/ve been involved: information about the national identity of the author(s), their gender, and their professional background (in case of scientists: their scientific discipline).
- b) Information about the language used, and the type (and 'identity') of the publication outlet.
- c) Looking at the references used in that study, and adding those about the same area to the bibliography, and indicating in that bibliography the linkages with past studies (I also made lists of references to neighboring areas/peoples); this I called the backward search;
- d) Using google scholar, finding out who referred to that study, and who among those people also wrote about Pokot (adding those to the bibliography), about neighboring areas/people (*idem*), and indicating in the bibliography the linkages to 'future studies' as citations; this I called the forward search.

For each ten-year period I am making an assessment of the publications during that period, and about the most important/most influential authors and their backgrounds. I also want to indicate what the major area, and 'sector' interest was in these publications, and how the

authors of that decade made use of ‘accumulated wisdom/knowledge’, and also what later authors used the publications published during that decade.

A simplified picture looks like this:



So far, I have found 763 different authors, who, alone or as a group, published new knowledge about the Pokot people and/or area. In total they produced 714 individual publications. Some authors published (many) more publications. Many publications have multiple authors, often from different country backgrounds, and especially in the medical sciences it is normal to find a whole list of authors (who have all been included, as far as that could be traced).

Of course the ‘country background’ is an issue. As far as possible I used the criterium where the author spent his or her youth, or where they were born. Many authors who were born and raised in Africa migrated to foreign destinations, where they studied, and/or from where they produce their publications. But that is not the way I positioned them. A Kenyan, who has studied for her Master’s degree in the Netherlands, did her PhD in Great Britain, and now works in the USA will still be labelled as ‘Kenyan’.

These 763 authors came from 32 different countries of origin. Table 1 gives these countries in order of appearance.

Table 1: Countries of origin of authors about Pokot: the country pioneers and the first year of their publication about Pokot

1854-1961		1962-1989		1990-2020	
Germany	1854	Uganda	1962	France	1990
Great Britain	1870	South Africa	1962	Nigeria	1990
Austria	1892	Kenya	1963	Australia	1992
Italy	1908	Netherlands	1971	Iceland	1992
USA	1953	Sweden	1972	Tanzania	1999
		Canada	1973	Ghana	2009
		Denmark	1976	Hong Kong	2009
		(Pokot)	(1980)	Belgium	2010
		Norway	1981	Chile	2013
		Ireland	1982	Switzerland	2014

		Spain	1982	India	2015
		Israel	1982	Bangla Desh	2015
		Japan	1982	PR China	2018
		Ethiopia	1984	Nepal	2019

The sequence of ‘pioneers’ reads like a world history of the last 170 years: Germany first, but overpowered by Great Britain, with some minor attempts to join the club of imperialists from Austria (-Hungary) and Italy and then it took decades before the dominance of Great Britain was challenged: by the USA. It lasted until 1962 for Uganda, and 1963 for Kenya, years in which they became politically independent, before the first authors from these countries became visible as authors about Pokot, while also an author from South Africa joined. And then, from the 1970s onwards, the ‘development era’ started, with the Netherlands as a prominent player in the Pokot area, but followed by Scandinavian countries, Canada, Ireland, and Spain. And we see the first Asian newcomers: an occasional Israeli author, and a few Japanese, while an Ethiopian author also joined, as the first ‘other African’ after South Africa. After 1989 globalization, and the development of a more multi-polar world becomes very visible; with authors from France, Belgium, Switzerland, and even Iceland joining the crowd, more authors from Asia (first Hong Kong, followed by India, and Bangla Desh, and finally China, and even Nepal), and more authors from other countries in Africa (Nigeria, Tanzania, Ghana). And finally there is an occasional Australian and Chilean.

If one looks at the backgrounds of the pioneers, the missionary history of the Pokot area is visible as well: with a growing diversity of backgrounds of Christian missionaries, they or in their wake people coming from their countries, started writing about their experiences. That is particularly true for authors from Italy, Spain, Ireland, and Iceland (also the earliest authors were missionaries: from Germany and Great Britain). Pioneer authors from the Netherlands, Germany and Scandinavia often had a ‘development assistance’ background. Many authors originating from Asia and other countries in Africa (and also partly from Kenya and Uganda) actually worked from the USA, Great Britain or Germany, particularly if they came from a medical, or biological discipline. So: many of these authors from ‘new countries’ are diaspora scientists, working elsewhere, and being part of scientific institutions in ‘The North’. But certainly not all, and ever more one can see more autonomous scientific developments, where Kenyan authors work from Kenyan institutes.

One can also see that by looking at the sequence of publication outlets: for a long time this was very much dominated by journals and book publishers based in Great Britain, the USA and the Netherlands, but gradually one can see more ‘African-owned’ publication outlets, and ever more authors publish their articles online. This issue of publication outlets deserves its own publication, so we will not deal with it here.

The following table gives a more quantitative overview of the background of authors, and of the harvest of publications, per decade, and indicating the country of origin of the author(s).

Table 2: National background of authors about (the) Pokot

	Pokot	Other Kenyans	Other Africans	British (and Irish + Australians)	USA (+ Canada Chile, Israel)	Netherl. + Belgium	German/ Austria/ Switzerl/ Scandin.	Italy, Spain, France	E+S Asia	Total*
<1895				2			4			6
'95-'04				3						3
'05-'14				3				1		4
'15-'24				1						1
'25-'34				5						5
'35-'44				8						8
'45-'54				10	1					11
'55-'64		1	2	20	3					26
'65-'74		8	-	12	8	1	1			30
'75-'84	4	33	3	26	14	23	4	7	3	117
'85-'94	7	36	4	12	9	14	11	8	-	101
'95-'04	4	41	3	4	19	5	4	4	-	84
'05-'14	11	85	7	4	27	7	20	1	1	163
'14-'20	8	117	28	7	7	4	23	-	10	204
Total*	34	321	47	117	88	54	67	21	14	763
% Female	21	12	9	5	22	31	28	19	0	15

*These are unique names. Some authors have published in different periods, but that has been excluded here.

Source: publications in Pokot database Ton Dietz (preliminary results). For Kenyans I made a special category if authors originate from the Pokot area, and can be regarded as 'local'.

Notes on choices made for this overview:

- These are all publications that we could find so far with new information about Pokot areas (Upe/Amudat in Uganda, West Pokot and Northern Baringo in Kenya) and about the people living there (mainly Pokot, but also [ancient?] groups like the Tepes/Sor, Cherangani/Sengwer, and others, as well as recent immigrants. Publications can be about (the) Pokot only, or can be broader or more comparative, as long as it contains new information about (the) Pokot.
- We focus on publications by scientists, development workers/administrators, and missionaries, and we exclude the publications by government agencies without names of authors (like the many annual district/county reports) and we exclude newspaper articles and articles in popular magazines (in English or Kiswahili); see the final thoughts at the end of this paper.

Table 3: National background of authors about (the) Pokot: total publications per decade

	Pokot	Other Kenyans	Other Africans	British (and Irish + Austrians)	USA (+ Canada Chile, Israel)	Netherl + Belgium	Germ./ Austria/ Switz./ Scandin.	Italy, Spain, France	E+S Asia	Total *	Real total
<1895				2			6			8	8
'95-'04				4						4	4
'05-'14				4				1		5	5
'15-'24				2						2	4
'25-'34				6						6	6
'35-'44				10						10	9
'45-'54				14	1					15	14
'55-'64		1	2	20	9					32	31
'65-'74		12	-	18	18	2	2			52	48
'75-'84	4	35	2	30	32	42	4	8	7	164	139
'85-'94	7	32	5	17	12	36	16	5	-	130	105

'95- '04	6	31	2	6	12	11	13	4	-	85	63
'05- '14	11	71	5	20	22	14	38	5	1	187	161
'14- '20	7	86	10	9	7	6	37	1	4	167	119
Total	35	268	26	162	113	111	116	24	12	867	716

*Total = total of rows; because some publications have been written by authors with different national backgrounds there is double counting here (the total number of publications is 716, see the last column). Particularly many of the Kenyan authors can be found as co-authors of publications with other nationalities involved.

Although these are preliminary conclusions (the research is in progress) it already gives an interesting overview of the shifting dominance of outsiders' knowledge about this marginal area and people in Kenya (and a bit in Uganda). For a long time it was clear that Great Britain was the colonial power in charge of Kenya and Uganda: almost all publications about Pokot during the 1895-1954 period have been written by writers with a British background. Exceptions were the earliest years, when also Germany, Austria-Hungary and Italy competed for colonial (and missionary) influence in the region. From the mid-1950s onwards the new global geopolitical arrangements became visible in scholarly attention for Pokot as well: the Americans became very important, and during the early Independence years (Uganda in 1962, Kenya in 1963) in terms of number of publications, they became as important as the British. From the mid-1970s until the mid-1990s the Netherlands had been asked by the Government of Kenya to 'adopt' the then West Pokot District as a project area for the Arid and Semi-Arid Lands (ASAL) development Programme, and that was implemented with a lot of knowledge-related activities and publications: in numbers of publications Dutch authors from an academic, development practice and missionary background became the dominant group. But one can already see a new trend emerging: in terms of the number of unique authors Kenyans started to dominate from 1975 onwards, and in terms of the number of publications from 1995 onwards.

In the meantime, 'globalisation' became visible as well from the 1970s onwards, with a much wider scholarly attention for the area: next to Dutch, and continued American, and British interest in the area, scholars now also came from Germany, Scandinavia, Italy, Spain, France, and Japan. In West Pokot knowledge production was strongly linked to 'development activities' between 1980 and 2000. East Pokot (in Baringo County) became dominated by German scholars, with less linkages to the development sector, while Italian and Spanish authors (and some Dutch and British authors, as well as non-Pokot Kenyans) were linked to religious missions and churches in the West Pokot area.

But at the same time, as we have seen, there was a clear trend of 'Kenyanisation' of knowledge production, although mostly by Kenyans who did not originate in the Pokot areas. From the mid-1970s onwards Kenyan knowledge workers started to contribute to the growing knowledge pool about the area, in the early decades often as co-author, but later also without foreign presence in the research activity. From around 1980 onwards Kenyan

authors became the dominant group of knowledge producers. Many of them had a medical background (and often worked from abroad, particularly the USA), but there are also many Kenyan authors with a religious studies background. On top of that, there have also been a few non-Kenyan Africans as (co-)authors of publications: from Uganda, Ethiopia, Tanzania, South Africa, Ghana, and Nigeria.

In total we found 763 different authors of publications about (the) Pokot, with, together, 716 different publications. Altogether, for the period as a whole, Kenyan authors are leading, also in number of publications. Authors from Great Britain are in second position if we look at the number of different people, and in terms of the number of publications. For the number of different authors the combined group of Germans, and Scandinavians are in third position, but in number of publications the Americans are in third position. For the fourth position it is the other way around. The Dutch (and Belgians) are in fifth position for both authors and publications. Authors coming from the Pokot community itself are few, and they started late, but their numbers are increasing, and growing numbers of Pokot (and other Kenyan) students in Kenyan universities now publish their Master's and PhD theses online.

The large majority of the publications are in English, but there are a few exceptions: Italian (connected to the need for Italian missionaries to communicate 'back home') but also Dutch, German, Hungarian, and Japanese; but none in Kiswahili as far as we know, and a few using the Pokot language.

Of course there are also other ways to look at the 'identity' of authors and their publications about (the) Pokot. One obvious way is their gender. In table 2 the last row shows the percentage of female authors among all authors who have written about (the) Pokot. This is a relatively small percentage: 15%. Only among the Dutch/Belgian and German/Scandinavian authors it is more than 25 percent. The pioneer was writer and artist Joy Adamson (British) but that was only in 1967, more than a century after the first publication appeared about Pokot. She was followed by anthropologists Jean Brown and Elizabeth Laughlin/Algeier (both from the USA) and historian Audrey Wipper (from Canada). Particularly among the Kenyans the number of female researchers/authors is negligible during the period before 1995, although it increased afterwards, and that is even more true, relatively speaking, for authors with a local Pokot background, as there are relatively many recent publications by Pokot authors about education, and that discipline is very much a discipline dominated by female scholars.

We can also look at the professional/disciplinary background of authors. For that purpose we differentiate between all Africans and all non-Africans, and again present the findings per decade (and we restrict this analysis to the period before 1995). Looking at the professional and disciplinary background of authors about (the) Pokot, and looking at the period until 1995, three groups dominate: anthropologists and cultural studies scholars lead for the period as a whole, followed by geographers and by medical researchers. The last group is the only one with more African researchers than non-African ones. There is balanced attention (African/non-African) for religious studies, and in all other fields non-African authors dominate. Following the three leading fields are colonial administrators, archaeologists,

missionaries and religious leaders, linguists, sociologists, and biologists. Area studies indeed is a very mixed combination of disciplinary backgrounds and approaches.

Table 4: Professional/disciplinary background of African and non-African authors about Pokot, and indication of the decades in which they have been active (until 1995).

	Non-Africans	Kenyans and other Africans	Total
Non-scientists			
Missionaries/religious leaders	<1895 (2), 1945-54 (1); 1965-94 (9)	1975-84 (2)	12 + 2 = 14
Explorers	<1895 (3), 1895-1914 (3); 1965-74 (1)		7 + 0 = 7
Army officer	1895-1904 (1); 1945-54 (1)		2 + 0 = 2
Colonial administrators	1895-1964 (15)		15 + 0 = 15
Government of Kenya administrator		1965-74 (10)	0 + 10 = 10
Surveyor / range officer	1935-44 (1)	1965-74 (1)	1 + 1 = 2
Medical practitioners	1965-94 (6)	1975-84 (2)	6 + 2 = 8
Development volunteers	1965-94 (5)		5 + 0 = 5
Evaluators/Development planners	1985-94 (3)	1975-94 (8)	3 + 8 = 11
Diplomats	1975-84 (1)		1 + 0 = 1
Writers/Artists/Photographers	1945-84 (4)	1975-84 (3)	4 + 3 = 7
Subtotal non-scientists			56 + 26 = 82
Scientists			
Geographers	<1895-1914(3); 1945-94 (29)	1965-74 (1)	32 + 1 = 33
Geologists	1925-94 (24)	1985-94 (3)	24 + 3 = 27
Linguists	1905-14 (1) and 1955-94 (11)	1985-94 (2)	12 + 2 = 14
Education specialists	1925-34 (1)	1974-85 (2)	1 + 2 = 3
Anthropologists & Cultural studies	1925-94 (36)	1975-94 (4)	36 + 4 = 40
Religious studies	1975-84 (7)	1975-84 (7)	7 + 7 = 14
Sociologists	1975-94 (11)	1975-84 (3)	11 + 3 = 14
Historians	1955-94 (8)	1965-84 (4)	8 + 4 = 12
Archaeologists	1965-84 (14)	1975-84 (1)	14 + 1 = 15
Psychologists	1955-64 (1)		1 + 0 = 1
Economists	1955-94 (9)	1965-74 (2)	9 + 2 = 11
Biologists	1935-44 (2); 1955-94 (10)	1965-74 (1); 1985-94 (1)	12 + 2 = 14
Hydrologists/Water experts	1955-64 (1); 1975-84 (2)	1975-94 (4)	3 + 4 = 7
Agricultural scientists	1975-84 (1)	1975-84 (1)	1 + 1 = 2
Veterinary scientists	1955-64 (1)		1 + 0 = 1

Medical researchers	1974-94 (13)	1975-94 (16)	13+16 = 29
Entomologists	1985-94 (2)	1985-94 (3)	2 + 3 = 5
Civil engineers / Architects	1975-84 (4)	1975-84 (1)	4 + 1 = 5
Subtotal scientists			190 + 65 = 255
Total			246 + 91 = 337

The total is somewhat higher than the number of individual authors because some authors have more than one professional/disciplinary background, e.g. missionary and linguist, or development volunteer and water expert.

Pokot as an example: Part 2

An example of a meta-knowledge analysis: Pokot studies written during the period before 1915, and their use in later Pokot-oriented studies

So far, the database consists of 17 publications written by 13 different authors between 1854 and 1915, with knowledge about Pokot (or 'Suk' as it was often called; see annex 1). In the early years German and Austrian/Hungarian authors dominated, both missionaries and colonial explorers, next to a British missionary, and a German scientist/explorer, who had become British. From 1895 onwards British writers completely dominated, with one Italian exception. All originally German-language books with references to the area were very soon translated into English (and one book also into Hungarian). From 1911 onwards annual district reports started to appear, as part of the colonial British administration, but for this analysis we ignore those sources of knowledge.

Classical maps about Africa show relatively correct continental borderlines, but are often completely wrong about the interior areas, and they did not have any correct information about the Pokot areas (see Krogt, 2002). The first-ever publication mentioning the Pokot (as 'Sukku') was by the German missionary explorer Krapf in the service of the British Anglican Church Missionary Society, who relied on oral sources from Swahili traders on (slave) caravan parties to the west: "Writing in 1854 [and 1867], and recording information he had collected over the previous decade, Ludwig Krapf described the Suk (Pokot) people living to the north of Lake Baringo, stating them to be well known to the ivory traders from the East coast. Krapf was told that the Suk were hostile and ferocious" (Anderson 2004: 33). In 1870 another (British) missionary, Wakefield, published a map about the area unknown to world map makers before, and included whatever information he could gather, without ever visiting Pokot (or as he called it 'Súku') areas. But details are scarce, and Lake Baringo (the southeastern fringe of the Pokot area) was much too big..

Figure 6: Wakefield's map



Only from 1885 onwards the first European ‘explorers’ (Germans, Austrians, and British) dared to visit the area, and started to produce ‘facts’ about the people they visited, often intermediated by ‘guides’. In 1899 this was followed by a (British) military expedition to the Turkana, also visiting (and describing) Pokot encounters. And from 1906 onwards British administrators-cum-anthropologists, or -linguists started to write about their experiences, partly driven by a necessity to better understand the ‘people to be governed’. Some of these books became classics, particularly Johnston 1902, and Beech 1911. Of these two books Johnston’s book only touched on Pokot in a few pages, but Beech’s “The Suk, Their Language and Folklore” was the first serious attempt to study the people and their area. By the way: another early author who devoted some words to the ‘Suk’ was Ernest George Ravenstein, a German-turned-British, who would later be regarded as the archfather of migration studies.

For all 17 sources the current google-scholar citations were detected, and Johnston and Beech had by far the most, resp. 326, and 101. But more relevant is how many of these citations come from other sources of information about Pokot. This gives information about a network of background-specific references as given in table 3 for Beech 1911, and for the total of the 17 publications published about Pokot before 1915. Here we will highlight the background of writers looking at their ‘work base’, not necessarily nationality or places of origin, with the exception of Kenyans and Pokot (as a special, ‘local’, category of Kenyans).

Table 5: Authors citing Pokot publications published before 1915, and their background; the numbers refer to the publications in the Pokot bibliographic database.

1) Beech 1911

Background	<1915	1916-1955	1956-1975	1976-1995	1996-2015	>2015	Total people (and

							papers)
British	1911-3 Johnston	1940-3 Evans- Pritchard 1951-1 1951-2 Peristiany 2x Huntingford 1953-4	1958-1 1963-7 1972-1 1973-10 Brasnett Low Cox Sutton	1981-1 1988-5 1988-6 Meyerhoff O'Dempsey 2x	2009-6 2010-5 2012-2 Davies3x		9 (12)
USA		1953-1	1964-5 1964-6 1965-2 1966-3 1971-1 Edgerton 3x Conant 3x	1982-4 1985-15 1991-3 Daystar Tully Bianca		2020-4 Dingley	6 (9)
Swedish				1985-17 Yadeta		2016-6 Håkansson & Widgren	3 (2)
German				1992-2 Reckers	1997-4 1999-6 2013-6 Reckers Bollig 2x Lang Österle	2016-4 2017-2 Bollig Vehrs Heller	6 (6)
Dutch				1987-1 1989-2 Dietz vHaastrecht	2007-4 2012-5 DeVries 2x		3 (4)
French					2001-5 2004-1 Maisonhau e Huchon		2
South African					2005-5 DuPlessis		1
Kenyan				1982-28 Nyamwaya	2005-4 2007-2 Mkutu Ndegwah 2001-2/ 2009-4 Nangulu	2020-5 Ndegwah Mutsotso 2018-2 Melil	7
Pokot				1985-24 Kapello 1993-4			2

				Angele			
Authors	1	4	6	12	12	9	43*
Papers	1	5	9	12	15	7	48

*some authors are in more than one column; 43 is the sum of all different authors writing about Pokot, who have referred to Beech's classic book, in 48 different papers.

- 2) All Pokot publications written after 2015 referring to one or more of the 17 publications about Pokot < 1915: number of authors (and number of references to any of the 17 papers about Pokot written < 1915)

Background	<1915	1916-1955	1956-1975	1976-1995	1996-2015	>2015	Total people (and papers)
British	1 (2)	4 (7)	4 (16)	2 (3)	2 (7)	1 (1)	14 (36)
USA		1 (6)	4 (14)	3 (10)	2 (1)	1 (1)	11 (32)
German				1 (1)	4 (13)	3 (10)	8 (24)
Swedish				1 (1)	1 (1)	4 (10)	6 (12)
Dutch				2 (18)	1 (4)		3 (22)
French					2 (3)		2 (3)
South African					1 (1)		1 (1)
Kenyan				1 (1)	3 (4)	2 (3)	6 (7)
Pokot				2 (2)		1 (1)	3 (3)
Authors	1 (2)	5 (13)	8 (30)	12 (36)	16 (34)	12 (26)	54 (141)

In total 54 authors from 1915 onwards referred to the earliest 17 written knowledge products about Pokot. In total the authors who referred to these classical Pokot texts did so in 141 publications, of which many referred to the most important (or: most influential) text from the pre-1915 period: Beech's book 'The Suk, Their Language and Folklore', published in 1911 in Oxford, a book that can be regarded as THE classical text about (the) Pokot, although a leading anthropologist of a later period, Huntingford (1953: 140) wrote: "rather brief and not always accurate account of ethnography; fuller on language, with good vocabulary", while Huntingford himself would later be heavily criticized for being 'colonial and stereotypical' (Sutton, 2006, see later).

Looking at the bibliographical networks, it is obvious that the colonial period itself saw very little referencing to any of the publications written about Pokot before 1915. The only exceptions are a few early British authors, and the (later) famous anthropologist Edward Evans-Pritchard (Evans-Pritchard 1940), who had already published his book about the Azande, and would publish his book about the Nuer during the same year, both in the Sudan. The first serious studies about the Pokot, based on fieldwork in 1947, were Peristiany's journal articles about the age-set structure and ceremonies among the Pokot (1951a and b). Peristiany had earlier written about the Kipsigis (another Kalenjin ethnic group, more to the south), and he was working as an anthropologist at the University College of London.

From 1953 onwards there was a sudden rediscovery of the early sources of information about Pokot by four American authors: Schneider 1953, and 1959, Edgerton & Conant 1964,

Edgerton 1964, and 1971, Conant 1965, and 1966, and Patterson 1969. The first American one, Harold Schneider, was the pioneer, doing his PhD study about Pokot, based on fieldwork in 1951-1952. He would become one of the leading economic anthropologists in the world, and a strong proponent of the so-called formalist approach. The next two Americans were part of a group effort of multidisciplinary scholars studying psychology and its cultural-ecological context among non-western peoples, and the fourth one was a master's student, studying written historical and archival sources in a university library in the US (Syracuse), soon after that library had acquired a copy of the microfilms of the Kenyan colonial archives. During this period around Kenya's Independence there were still some British authors interested in the Pokot areas and people as well: In 1958 J. Brasnett had published a political analysis of what he called 'the Karasuk problem'. In 1963 this was followed by a more general historical analysis of Kenya's northern areas, including the Kenyan Pokot areas (Low, 1963). And in 1972 a British medical doctor, who had worked for the Anglican missionary hospital in Amudat, in the Ugandan Pokot area, wrote a PhD dissertation about health patterns among the 'Karapokot', but it is also an interpretation of the people and the landscape in that most western part of the Pokot area (and with a remarkably extensive bibliography). In 1973, a British archaeologist (Sutton, 1973) did a thorough study about the existing evidence of archaeological, historical and anthropological data about the Kalenjin area, also including Pokot, and he included the most important classical texts about the Pokot. Sutton would later write a very critical analysis of colonial and stereotypical approach visible in the work of the 'famous' anthropologist Huntingford, and the even more famous archaeologist Leakey (Sutton, 2006), an article worth reading as an element in re-assessing 'hegemonial science'.

Between 1973 and 1981 there was not much scientific activity, until a variety of authors, from different backgrounds, started to dig into the early written sources about Pokot again. The first one was an anthropologist-cum-women's studies PhD author from the United States, but with strong Kenyan roots (Meyerhoff 1981), followed by an American Christian organization, with an office in Nairobi, which included a Pokot study in their series about the so-called 'Unreached People of Kenya' (Daystar 1982). There was also a Kenyan PhD study (defended in the UK) about health care (Nyamwaya 1982), an Ethiopian-Swedish Master's student (Yadeta 1985), and another American PhD student, a geographer (Tully 1985). In the early 1980s the Dutch government started to support the Arid and Semi-Arid Development Programme in West Pokot, and the supporting Dutch researchers published a PhD dissertation (Dietz 1987) and a bibliography (Van Haastrecht 1989). A British scholar (O'Dempsey 1988a and b) published two papers about the relationship between the environment and mother and child health in the Pokot area. A bit later also a German researcher, a human ecologist, followed suit (Reckers 1992), and there was an American women's studies PhD student (Bianco 1991). Finally, two Pokot authors wrote about the language (Kapello, 1985) and Pokot Proverbs, Sayings and Idiomatic Expressions (Angele 1993). This was initiated and published by the Dutch-sponsored ASAL Programme. So, during this period between 1981 and 1995 the backgrounds of authors referring to the classical Pokot texts became much more diverse than in the period before 1981: three Americans, two British, two Dutch, one Swedish, one German, one Kenyan non-Pokot and two Pokot

authors, and some of these backgrounds were mixed ones. The rediscovery of classical Pokot texts was made easy by the start of the District Information and Documentation Centre in Kapenguria, where most of these texts could be found as copies of the original texts, a project supported by the ASAL Programme. Almost all of it, though, was based on the studies of authors who dealt with West Pokot. The attention for Upe in Uganda and for East Pokot in Northern Baringo was still very limited.

In the next twenty years that would change. A strong German research presence in East Pokot (in North Baringo) meant a shift to a dominance by German authors referring to classical Pokot texts: Germans Reckers 1997, Bollig 2000, and 2010, Bollig & Osterle 2007, 2008, and 2013, Bollig & Lang 1999. There are also some additional authors from Great Britain (Anderson 2004, Davies 2009, 2010, 2012), the USA (Kiage & Kambiu Liu 2009, the last one originating from Hong Kong), France (Maisonhaute 2004, and Huchon 2004 and 2005), one from the Netherlands (De Vries 2007 and 2012), one from Sweden (Petek 2014), and one from South Africa (Du Plessis 2006). There are also two Kenyan authors: Mkutu 2005 (conflict studies, a Dissertation defended in the UK), and Ndegwah 2007 (religious studies; a PhD study defended in the Netherlands). Most studies between 1996 and 2015 are by anthropologists, archaeologists, historians, and geographers/human ecologists (but often these are interdisciplinary studies combining the humanities and the social sciences).

During the most recent period (from 2016 onwards) there was a shift to Swedish dominance (Petek & Lane, 2018, Petek 2018, Håkansson & Widgren 2016, a combination of archaeology, history and anthropology), but also a stronger Kenyan presence of authors rediscovering Pokot early written heritage, and with more attention for West Pokot again: Mutsotso 2017, Ndegwah 2020, and Melil 2018. These Kenyan studies are either religious studies, or conflict studies, and often linked to foreign Christian and Peace agencies (or both). In addition there were also some German authors again (Bollig 2016, Vehrs & Heller 2017; historical ecology) and there was one American author (Dingley 2020). The last one did a historical religious study.

Finally, a 'meta-study' based on written sources has to make choices. For instance, I do possess numerous newspaper articles and informal stories in magazines about Pokot. But these are far from complete, and are not taken into account in this study. Also the many government sources (annual reports and the like, district development plans, etc.) have not been included. What is more problematic, though, is the fact that a lot of knowledge about Pokot is knowledge that is part of Pokot culture (its language, proverbs, songs, plays, drawings, pictures, and the material culture, that can, for instance be found in the Pokot Museum in Kitale, but of course also in the Pokot houses and landscape), and a lot of that knowledge has never been 'captured', or 'interpreted' by the academic community, writing about Pokot. Only occasionally, Pokot authors themselves have done so themselves, for instance encouraged by missionaries or the ASAL Programme in the past (like the studies by Kapello and Angele, mentioned before).

Conclusions so far

Knowledge development about Pokot, as indicated by publications about the area and its people, hardly acknowledged the knowledge people themselves had acquired. As has been mentioned before, Pokot authors have been very few. Indirectly, though, some of them DID play a role: as interpreters, informants and research assistants, and as subjects of questionnaire surveys and other scientific methods. However, the large majority of written attention for (the) Pokot has an 'etic' look at a 'different people' (and an environment that was often described as 'hostile').

In this draft paper I have shown that knowledge development strongly mirrors the political-economic hegemonies existing in the periods under review. It is obvious that the colonial era was almost completely dominated by British authors, both non-scientists and scientists. One can also see that there is a sequence of types of attention for (the) Pokot, with attention for geographical exploration first, followed by language-oriented cultural and anthropological studies later, and gradually shifting to geological studies (no doubt hoping for mineral wealth) and to early attempts at 'development' (e.g., education), but with very limited attention for the material conditions of the local economy and society, and for health aspects. After independence that would change. First American, and later Dutch and many other foreign influences started to become more important than the British knowledge attention for the area (although that continued as well), and it is also important to note that Kenyan scientists and non-scientists gradually started to 'take over', but so far with only limited really local (Pokot) involvement, other than in secondary roles. Also, the knowledge attention shifted to much more attention for medical and entomological issues, and for religious studies. But the attention for what the Pokot would regard as the backbone of their identity, livestock, was and is still very limited, and the attention for Pokot 'indigenous knowledge' is limited as well.

At the end of these conclusions it is good to quote, and to question, Lyn Johnstone's work about the positionality of empirical fieldwork : "who we are shapes what we research and the knowledge we produce" (Johnstone, 2018:3).

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