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## COURTING CATASTROPHE? HUMANITARIAN POLICY AND PRACTICE IN A CHANGING CLIMATE

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# The Power of ‘Know-Who’: Adaptation to Climate Change in a Changing Humanitarian Landscape in Isiolo, Kenya

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**Abstract** This article examines adaptation to climate change in view of changing humanitarian approaches in Isiolo County, Kenya. While humanitarian actors are increasingly integrating climate change in their international and national-level strategies, we know less about how this plays out at sub-national levels, which is key to tracking whether and how short-term assistance can support long-term adaptation. The article suggests that increasing attention to resilience and adaptation among humanitarian actors may not lead to reduced vulnerability because resources tend to be captured through existing power structures, directed by who you know and your place in the social hierarchy. In turn, this sustains rather than challenges the marginalisation processes that cause vulnerability to climate shocks and stressors. The article highlights the important role of power and politics both in channelling resources and determining outcomes.

**Keywords:** Kenya, drylands, climate change, climate change adaptation, power relations, humanitarian aid, contextual vulnerability, marginalisation, resilience, pastoralism.

## 1 Introduction

Concerns over human-induced climate change have led to a growing emphasis among humanitarian agencies on the need to adjust and change their approaches towards strengthening resilience and supporting adaptation. State and non-state actors at the international and national level increasingly demonstrate a focus on resilience and adaptation to climate change in their humanitarian policies and practices, in part reflecting broader changes within the humanitarian sector (Bennett and Pantuliano 2016; Eriksen *et al.*, this *IDS Bulletin*). However, little is known so far about the implications of these changes for vulnerability outcomes at sub-national and local levels.

To address this gap, this article documents changes in humanitarian actors' policies and practices in Isiolo County, Kenya, and discusses whether and how these changes affect patterns of vulnerability and potentials for transformational adaptation, with a specific emphasis on power relations and marginalisation processes. Isiolo County is an interesting case for several reasons. It is located in the Arid and Semi-Arid Lands (ASALs) of northern Kenya, and is one of the poorest and least developed parts of the country (Republic of Kenya 2012b). After decades of neglect, Isiolo has, however, in recent years received increasing attention and investment, as a site for a number of flagship projects<sup>4</sup> under the 'Vision 2030' development strategy of Kenya (Republic of Kenya 2013a). The new investments and flow of resources have led to significant optimism, as well as new avenues for power plays and political struggles.

Following recent studies (e.g. Denton *et al.* 2014; O'Brien *et al.* 2015), we consider that to adapt to climate change, transformative changes are needed alongside incremental improvements in livelihoods. This puts the focus on socio-political drivers of vulnerability to climate change and variability, including power relations and marginalisation processes (Eriksen, Nightingale and Eakin 2015; Tschakert *et al.* 2016).

Based on interviews and data collected in six sites in Isiolo County, this case study identifies significant emerging changes in the approaches of state and non-state humanitarian actors in Isiolo. There is a move away from sector- and project-based short-term interventions towards more holistic, integrated and longer-term approaches – at least on paper. Climate change concerns appear to be one of the drivers behind these changes, with concepts such as resilience, adaptation and disaster risk reduction increasingly gaining traction among humanitarian actors. The humanitarian–development divide seems to be eroding at the county level, and socio-political processes such as devolution, growing political attention and new funding opportunities are bringing about both opportunities and challenges for adaptation processes.

Although it is still too early to see how the emerging 'paradigm shift' in the humanitarian landscape in Isiolo will affect longer-term vulnerability to climate change, this study cautions that unless more emphasis is placed on addressing socio-political drivers of differential vulnerability in the 'new' humanitarian policies and practices, they run the risk of reinforcing processes that reduce the vulnerability of some at the expense of those who might need it the most. This is in large part because humanitarian assistance gets 'woven' into the sociocultural and political fabric of Isiolo. Rather than challenging existing asymmetric power relations and dynamics leading to differential vulnerability, they appear to, at best, sustain – or, at worst, exacerbate existing marginalisation processes. Access to resources to cope with and adapt to climate change are to a large extent dependent on your place in a social hierarchy, your authority to influence decision-making processes and your links to economically or politically powerful people

(your ‘know-who’), which in turn is shaped by your ethnicity, gender, age, livelihood and wealth. Thus, despite changes in humanitarian policies, this study saw few indications of changing practices or activities addressing root causes of differential vulnerability, nor promoting any systemic, transformative change.

The next section sets out the theory and methodology. This is followed by an assessment of vulnerability drivers in Isiolo and the role of power (Section 3), together with an account of changes in humanitarian approaches in Isiolo and the attention to climate change (Section 4). Section 5 reflects on the overlaps and tensions between humanitarian changes and vulnerability drivers. The article concludes (Section 6) by suggesting that support to adaptation among humanitarian actors will require more focus on the governance of resource access as root causes for vulnerability, and that this needs to be carried out alongside improved access to climate-related technology and resources.

## **2 Theory and methods**

To address the relationship between humanitarian approaches and vulnerability in Isiolo, we need to understand what factors shape vulnerability patterns. Vulnerability is here understood as a present inability to cope with and respond to climate variability and change, caused by multiple interacting contextual conditions and processes (O’Brien *et al.* 2007). This contextual understanding of vulnerability is a processual and multidimensional view of climate–society interactions whereby climate variability and change is seen to occur in the context of political, institutional, economic and social structures and changes (O’Brien *et al.* 2007). As demonstrated also by this case study, vulnerability is highly dynamic and uneven across and within groups, and may change if, for instance, power relations shift. Strategies people employ to respond to stressors and change processes (i.e. coping, adapting) are an inherent part of the vulnerability context, and reflect pre-existing structures of social vulnerability (Eriksen *et al.* 2014; Forsyth and Evans 2013). Such responses may entail negotiating with others to ensure access to and control over resources in the face of shocks and change. Adaptation to climate change is considered fundamentally a governance issue – a process through which individual or collective deliberate actions, or inactions, are negotiated and structured (Adger, Lorenzoni and O’Brien 2009). Power is an intrinsic aspect of such negotiations between individuals and groups with differing, and at times competing, interests and aspirations (Eriksen *et al.* 2015). Power not only determines the extent to which a person or group has access to resources and/or whose voices are heard in decision-making processes, it also delineates authority to decide which development pathways are deemed desirable (Ensor *et al.* 2014; Eriksen *et al.* 2014; Swyngedouw 1997). ‘Authority’ is here seen as the ability to exert one’s agendas over another’s within environmental governance and adaptation processes (Eriksen *et al.* 2015).

Recognising that climate change is fundamentally a development issue, any efforts aimed at adaptation should support a move towards

more climate-resilient development pathways – meaning development trajectories that combine mitigation of emissions, equitable development and reduced vulnerability (O'Brien *et al.* 2015; Pelling, O'Brien and Matyas 2015). 'Resilience' is here considered to be the ability of an individual, group or a system 'to resist, absorb, accommodate to and recover from the effects of a hazard in a timely and efficient manner, including through the preservation and restoration of its essential basic structures and functions' (UNISDR 2009: 24). Resilience is a broad concept that spans the disaster risk management continuum, from the pre- to the post-disaster phase, and moves beyond merely being the opposite of 'vulnerability' by also focusing on factors such as capacities, exposure and self-organisation. Reducing vulnerability may contribute to strengthening resilience to shocks and stressors – but greater transformations are often needed, such as empowering marginalised groups to influence decisions that concern their lives and livelihoods.

This study employed a qualitative research approach, and empirical data was collected in Isiolo town, Kinna, Garba Tula, Malkadaka, Gafarsa and Belgesh between February and March 2015. Additional key informant interviews were conducted in Nairobi. Data collection included open-ended and semi-structured qualitative interviews, participatory observation at meetings and humanitarian interventions, and a review of relevant documents and statistics from Isiolo and Nairobi. Eleven focus group discussions, 33 key informant interviews and 40 household interviews were conducted, totalling 84 interviews with more than 170 informants, of which 118 were women. The wealth, education level, social status, source of livelihood and ethnicity of informants varied widely.

### **3 Vulnerability in Isiolo: drivers and the role of power relations**

Isiolo County has a population of 143,234 (Republic of Kenya 2013a). Pastoralism is the principal livelihood activity, along with agro-pastoralism or farming, trade, casual labour, charcoal production and formal employment. The county suffers from recurring droughts, with recent ones in 2009, 2011, 2014 and 2017, and floods, notably in relation to strong El Niño episodes like the ones that took place in 1997/98 and 2015/16 (Jebet and Muchui 2015). Respondents across the sites perceive that temperatures are increasing while precipitation is decreasing; droughts are becoming more frequent, and the rainy seasons are increasingly unpredictable. Previously, droughts occurred after periods of 10–15 years, but now they occur every two to three years. These changing climatic conditions affect pastoralists and farmers in Isiolo in important ways. Respondents tell of pasture grounds drying up and some species of grass disappearing altogether. Reduced rainfall intensity has also led to drying up of springs, and reduced water availability due to a sinking water table and limited recharge.

These impacts are closely linked to a number of other factors that shape the vulnerability context, such as cultural and religious customs and norms, conflict and insecurity, power relations and marginalisation

processes. For instance, while female genital mutilation (FGM) and under-age marriages are prohibited in Kenya, these practices are still widespread in Isiolo and have a number of harmful implications for female health, such as causing complications during pregnancies and childbirth. Furthermore, due to religious beliefs, weather forecasts and the idea of preparing for climate change were resisted by many on the grounds that it is beyond human control, and commercial loans and insurance were, according to informants, considered *haram* – or illegal within Islam. This restricts investments in measures that may limit risks or diversify livelihoods.

Power and socio-political relations in Isiolo are closely linked to markers of social differentiation, including ethnic affiliation, gender, age, livelihood, education and wealth. As in other parts of Kenya, ethnicity is still among one of the most significant identity markers in Isiolo, and tribalism and clannism are a fundamental aspect of political processes and struggles over access to resources and decision-making power (Auma 2015; Sharamo 2014). Isiolo is home to a number of ethnic groups, including the Borana, Somali, Turkana, Samburu, Sakuye, Gabra, Rendille and Meru, and recurring inter-ethnic clashes and cattle-rustling sporadically lead to loss of lives and livestock, displacements and hampers mobility (Jebet 2016; Sharamo 2014).

Current patterns of power relations have deep historical roots. The Borana ethnic group, a branch of the Cushitic Oromo people originating from southern Ethiopia, is the most populous in Isiolo today, and is considered to be the most dominant in politics and decision-making processes. Traditionally a nomadic, pastoralist people, the Borana migrated to northern Kenya during the end of the 1900s in search of water and pasture. One group started to settle near water wells in Wajir, but after recurring conflict between the Borana and Somali over access to water and grazing rights, the British colonial government in 1932 decided to transfer the area of Wajir to the Somali in exchange for the Ewaso Nyiro area of Isiolo, which was given to the Borana people (Aguilar 1998; Arero 2007). This group of resettled Borana people was from then on referred to as the ‘Waso Borana’, and is still by many considered to be the rightful ‘owners’ of Isiolo. This notion of autochthony, meaning that a people is entitled to a certain piece of land due to their ancestral rights to it (Boås and Dunn 2013), can still be found resonated in the rhetoric of Borana politicians during election campaigns. According to informants in this study, election campaigns in Isiolo are characterised by ethnic cleavages, rather than opposing political ideologies, and loose alliances between representatives from different tribes/clans are commonly formed based on linguistic, cultural and religious traits.

Intra-ethnic clan structures are also of great importance to how authority and power is delineated. For instance, within the Borana ethnic group, there are ten clans of varying size. The clans Karayo and Warjida are commonly the greatest rivals in Isiolo politics. Karayo is the

most populous in Isiolo County, with about 50 per cent of all Borana people in Isiolo, while Warjida is the clan of the current governor, and is therefore according to informants considered to be the 'clan in power'. The clans considered to be the least powerful were according to informants the minority clans of Hawatu, Nunito and Digalu. These were explained to be low in both number and political influence.

Wealth is another key marker of societal differentiation in Isiolo. Major wealth indicators include having livestock, educated children and big houses. The poor were identified as those without livestock, without education, and those who relied on livelihoods such as casual labour, charcoal production or petty trade. Wealth is also closely associated with the impression of being 'successful' and having the ability to make good choices, thus shaping people's relative authority in decision-making processes.

Among the Borana, livestock is also a major determinant of power and authority. As explained by a key informant, 'those with less than 30 heads of livestock are considered to be poor; those with more than 30 are well off; while those with more than 50 are considered to be rich.' Camels are the most expensive.<sup>5</sup> Cattle are worth roughly a tenth of the value of a camel, while sheep and goats are worth a hundredth. Keeping livestock is, however, not only considered to be an investment and a source of food and income, but is closely related to identity and pride. The following quote typifies this: 'Recognition here is when you have herds. Nobody recognise you if you don't have herds. People don't even know you. You just remain and work in a world of oblivion.'<sup>6</sup>

Livestock ownership is increasingly being concentrated into fewer and fewer hands of wealthy pastoralists, and the gap between rich and poor is increasing as the rich are able to employ strategies that minimise their own and capitalise on other's losses during droughts (Tari and Pattison 2014). For example, wealthy pastoralists may send their livestock for grazing at ranches in other parts of Kenya during extended dry seasons or droughts, or bribe park rangers to send their livestock for grazing inside Meru National Park.

The importance of livestock for authority and social standing is well illustrated through the example of the marginalisation of the Watha group. The Watha is an endogamous<sup>7</sup> group of former Boran pastoralists who allegedly lost their livestock herds at some point in history and started hunting wild animals, such as giraffes, elephants or antelopes, and gathering honey, fruits, roots and berries for survival. These hunters and gatherers coexisted peacefully with the pastoralist Boran people for decades. A key informant described the relationship thus:

*In times of major drought, when all livestock of the Boran was dead, the Boran respected the Watha a lot, because the Boran didn't have skills to hunt. So the Watha gave them meat. The 'relief food' of that time was that of wild animals provided by Watha.<sup>8</sup>*

This changed when it became illegal to hunt wild game in Kenya in 1977 (Barnett 1998): as a result, the main livelihood of the Watha was effectively criminalised. The Watha then had to find alternative livelihoods, and started farming, doing casual labour or producing charcoal. ‘That was when they became totally poor and respect was lost. Their dignity lost. After the prohibition, there was no relief coming from Watha, so nobody cared about them any more’, our informant continued. ‘Although some of the hunters and gatherers even went back and started owning livestock, people don’t consider Watha as people with dignity.’ To this day, the Watha are stigmatised in the Borana community, and excluded from decision-making processes.

In addition to the Watha group, this study also revealed that women, people from minority ethnic groups, people with disabilities, orphans, people living with HIV/AIDS and widows felt discriminated against and excluded from accessing resources and decision-making processes. This also included a group of people that were displaced from their homes during the 2007–08 post-election violence in Kenya, locally referred to as the ‘Tenne’ people.

#### **4 The changing humanitarian policy landscape in Isiolo**

Humanitarian interventions in Isiolo date back to the period after the Shifta War of 1963–68, when the newly independent Kenyan government fought secessionists in the Northern Frontier District (NFD), who wanted NFD to become integrated into the ‘Greater Somalia’ (Arero 2007; Dahl 1979; Hogg 1983). The Shifta conflict was brutal and had detrimental effects on the livelihoods and economy of people in northeastern Kenya, and a severe drought in 1970–71 left the already destitute population in a severe condition. According to Hogg (1983), 95 per cent of the total camel population in Isiolo was lost between 1963 and 1970, from 200,000 heads to 6,000, while the small stock population declined by 90 per cent.

Massive relief operations were then initiated by the Kenyan government and various religious and international aid organisations, and at one point, as many as 140,000 people were living on famine relief in northern Kenya (nearly half of the total population of the NFD at that time) (Dahl 1979; Lewis 1963). Small-scale irrigation schemes were also established to provide pastoralists who had lost their livestock with alternative sources of food and income (Hogg 1983).

After the 1970s, the post-independence Kenyan government held back investments in infrastructure and service delivery in the former NFD region as they argued that public investments should go to areas with abundant natural resources where revenues would be higher (Elmi and Birch 2013). The collective punishments of the Cushitic-speaking pastoralists of northern Kenya by the Bantu-dominant government during and after the Shifta conflict led to mistrust of the government among the Borana (Hjort 1979). As explained by Arero (2007: 297), ‘The Borana felt they were being punished for a problem caused by the activities of the Somali, and as a result they began to lose faith in

the young Kenyan nation'. Governmental neglect of infrastructural development also led to a high reliance on humanitarian relief, provided primarily by non-state actors, during periods of stress such as drought or floods. However, as also pointed out by informants in this study, these short-term interventions did not address or change the root causes of vulnerability – they just treated the symptoms.

The last decade has, however, seen a significant transformation in the governmental approach to development in the ASAL regions of Kenya. In 2012, the Government of Kenya approved the *Sessional Paper No. 8 of 2012 on National Policy for the Sustainable Development of Northern Kenya and other Arid Lands*, also referred to as the ASAL policy (Republic of Kenya 2012a). Here the government acknowledges that impoverishment in ASAL regions is partly a result of conscious public policy choices taken in Kenya's past, and declares a commitment to facilitate sustainable development, strengthen climate resilience and ensure sustainable livelihoods in the ASALs (Republic of Kenya 2012a). The Kenyan 'Vision 2030' development blueprint launched in 2007 also declared Isiolo County as a site for the establishment of a flagship project, while the subsequent 'Vision 2030 Development Strategy for Northern Kenya and other Arid Lands' aimed to achieve: 'A secure, just and prosperous Northern Kenya and other arid lands, where people achieve their full potential and enjoy a high quality of life' (Republic of Kenya 2007, 2012b). Furthermore, the Ending Drought Emergencies (EDE) Strategy launched in 2014 places particular emphasis on strengthening climate resilience in the ASAL regions (Republic of Kenya 2013b, 2014). According to informants in this study, the renewed focus on development of the ASAL regions is not only attracting private investments, but also leading to greater availability of donor funding and an influx of both humanitarian and developmental (or mixed mandate) non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and United Nations agencies.

Echoing a paradigm shift in the humanitarian sector internationally, state and non-state actors interviewed in this study were also emphasising sustainability, community participation and capacity building as increasingly important. Furthermore, as a result of the growing emphasis among donor agencies on partnerships and holistic and cross-sectorial approaches in the humanitarian and development sector, both humanitarian and development NGOs in Isiolo are increasingly coming together and forming consortiums to access funds. This is, according to informants, changing the humanitarian landscape in the area, and contributing to eroding the humanitarian/development divide. Even humanitarian NGOs in Isiolo are increasingly embracing 'resilience' thinking in their policies and strategies and moving towards longer-term integrated programmes.

### **5 Humanitarian assistance and vulnerability to climate change in Isiolo**

In spite of a growing emphasis on climate change and resilience in humanitarian *policies* in Isiolo County, humanitarian *practices* seemed in this study to remain more or less the same, and little seems to be done in

practice to address unequal power relations and marginalisation processes that lead to differential vulnerability. Humanitarian efforts implemented in response to drought during the time of this study were still focusing on addressing basic needs (e.g. relief food, water trucking) and providing some livelihood support, primarily to pastoralists (including livestock off-take and re-stocking, distribution of hay, vaccinations, medicines and concentrates such as saltlicks, molasses and minerals), but also some to farmers (provision of hand pumps for irrigation). Those relying on other sources of income were not given any livelihood support and, as identified earlier, these were commonly understood to be among the most vulnerable. Rather than support transformational adaptation processes, the humanitarian efforts thus served to keep the status quo and consolidate existing vulnerability patterns.

The phenomenon of ‘elite capture’ has been well documented in development research previously (e.g. Dasgupta and Beard 2007; Platteau 2004) and was, perhaps not surprisingly, also to some extent observed in this case study. Respondents argued that wealthy, well-educated people with a large social network were able to capitalise on their ties with people in power to channel humanitarian resources to their own families and ethnic kin. Many local informants argued that they felt bypassed and neglected by both development projects and humanitarian assistance from government or non-state actors, and argued that these interventions were influenced by existing power structures such that those who were marginalised in the community were effectively restricted from accessing humanitarian assistance (and development aid more broadly). As a female, elderly farmer said:

*That assistance depends on your ‘know-who’. That help always goes to the rich, and the poor remain without help. Those who are in charge of giving out the assistance are only concerned with helping their friends or building their own wealth.<sup>9</sup>*

An elderly male agro-pastoralist<sup>10</sup> also said: ‘The assistance that comes to this area goes to those people in charge and they only give to their relatives. So those who need it never benefit.’ In Kinna, among those who complained the most about being neglected included the marginalised groups of Watha, Meru, Kikuyu and Tenne; and minority clans such as Digalu and Nunito, women, and non-pastoralists relying on charcoal production, petty trade or casual labour.

State and non-state humanitarian actors operating in Isiolo emphasised that their activities were needs-driven and based on comprehensive vulnerability assessments and community consultations, and an increased focus on ‘bottom-up’ approaches and ‘participation’ in both project design and implementation was found to be evident in this study. This was primarily done through engaging with local formal and informal institutions, such as the chiefs, village elders, community committees or community-based organisations. These institutions do not, however, necessarily represent the views and interests of everyone in the community equally. Many respondents in this study argued that the

people who were selected to represent the community in local institutions such as the village elders were typically those with economic, social and political power and authority, and informants complained that these 'representatives' channel benefits and resources through personal and family relations and along clan lines. A male informant provided an example of this; some poor, vulnerable women were supposed to be given goats by a humanitarian NGO, and in order to find out whom the most vulnerable women in that community were, a local committee was consulted and given the task of submitting a list of names of the most needy. However, the list included almost exclusively women from one particular clan, and was neither representative nor needs-based. This, and other examples, seem to indicate that local power relations and patterns of authority thus influence the 'participatory' process of targeting and lead to some being favoured over others.

Furthermore, some informants argued that they were not reached by humanitarian (or development) aid because they were not considered to be part of the *community*, and therefore were not able to sit on committees or even be invited to community meetings (*barazas*). For instance, an informant said:<sup>11</sup>

*Watha people end up being disadvantaged because we are within the community, but nobody asks for us. NGOs tell the community to select their own committees which they think are appropriate, and unfortunately, we are not part of the people who will be selected.*

This exemplifies some of the challenges with using the notion of 'community participation' uncritically, as widely discussed by Cannon and Schipper in the *World Disasters Report 2014* (IFRC 2014).

When those who are invited to represent the community are already the most wealthy and powerful, the question is to what extent the priorities and interests put forth by those who are invited to participate in the 'participatory', 'bottom-up' process actually reflect the needs of those who are the most vulnerable? Are their views representative of a heterogeneous population? Findings in this study suggest that they do not. Interventions seem to do little to reduce the underlying causes of differential vulnerability, also bringing into question the extent to which findings from 'participatory' vulnerability assessments and consultations are acted upon in practice. It might be argued that these are often conducted primarily for the sake of 'ticking a box' in donor proposals and reports, and do not necessarily guide interventions in practice.

This case study accentuates the difficulties of adopting a technical approach to adaptation. Interventions become part and parcel of socio-political structures. By operating within existing socio-political structures, and not challenging these, asymmetric power relations, marginalisation processes and associated vulnerability patterns may be reproduced. For instance, humanitarian assistance that supports only certain livelihoods or coping strategies in emergency situations, or that

is being channelled through existing local institutions, may inadvertently strengthen the relative power of some over others in a social hierarchy, and thereby indirectly contribute to consolidating vulnerability patterns. People who already have authority to influence decision-making processes, based on their subjectivity and status in the ‘community’, are often also those who end up controlling access to resources. Humanitarian interventions may serve to either entrench or challenge such inequities, and need to take into proper consideration how to address power relations and marginalisation processes that contribute to differential vulnerability, in order to reach the most disadvantaged and support a move towards climate-resilient development pathways.

## 6 Conclusions

This article has discussed to what extent changes in humanitarian approaches in Isiolo County, Kenya, may help reduce vulnerability and support transformational adaptation to climate change. Our findings suggest that while the landscape of humanitarian efforts are changing, with part of the motivation being climate change, there are key challenges remaining in tackling power asymmetries and marginalisation processes.

In particular, we show the importance of understanding how historical trajectories and relationships shape decision-making in contexts with weak formal institutions. This study highlights the importance of paying particular attention to the role of power and politics in the design and implementation of humanitarian interventions, and ensuring that ‘community’ participation does not exacerbate existing vulnerability dynamics but rather gives a voice to the marginalised.

The findings add to the growing number of studies that question assumptions about linear causal relationships between, on the one hand, increased focus, funding and knowledge about climate change among humanitarian actors, and on the other, outcomes for those who have the least capacity to cope with and adapt to climate change. Findings suggest in turn that increased resources and funding could feed into, and entrench, existing power relations, supporting the very processes that create vulnerability in the first place (Lockwood 2013). To avoid this, the findings suggest, in line with a growing number of studies (Adger *et al.* 2009; Brown 2015; Taylor 2015; Eriksen *et al.* 2015; Tschakert *et al.* 2016), that adaptation is fundamentally a governance issue and more attention is needed to the socio-political factors and processes that drive adaptation decisions and outcomes at sub-national and local levels.

### Notes

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- 4 Please note that at the time of finalising this article in May 2017, the future of the proposed Resort City, mega-dam and the LAPSSET corridor, which were expected to lead to massive infrastructural developments in Isiolo, is uncertain, due to ongoing debates regarding the potential environmental implications of the projects.
- 5 One camel may be worth nearly KSh600,000 (£4,618.48).
- 6 Interview, February 2015.
- 7 'Endogamy' is the practice of marrying solely within a specific ethnic group.
- 8 Interview, March 2015.
- 9 Interview, February 2015.
- 10 Interview, February 2015.
- 11 Interview, March 2015.

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