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Changing generations: Dynamics of Generation- and Age-Sets in Southeastern Sudan (Toposa) and Northwestern Kenya (Turkana)

Verlag **breitenbach** Publishers
Saarbrücken – Fort Lauderdale 1989

(Spektrum; Bd. 17)

ISBN 3-88156-440-3

Generation- and age-set systems are found in many parts of the world. They are of particular importance in Africa, and here especially in East Africa where some ethnic groups, including Toposa and Turkana, operate systems where generation-sets play an outstanding role.

By means of a computerized simulation model it is made clear that generation-set systems are rather stable from the demographic point of view. Based on this, the material presented on the Toposa and Turkana generation-set systems shows their dynamic character and the changes which have taken place in each system, caused by conflict or stress, internal or external to the society. When we understand that „chaos“ and change in the system is not a distortion of a stable state but its normal mode of operation, then some of the confusions which still beset the analysis of theses systems will become obsolete. Finally, some tentative generalizations about change in generation-set systems may explain the shape of existing generation-set systems in East Africa and their connections with each other.

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1. SUMMARY

Generation- and age-set systems are found in many parts of the world. They are of particular importance in Africa, and here especially in East Africa where some ethnic groups, including Toposa and Turkana, operate systems where generation-sets play an outstanding role.

This study contributes **(1)** material on the Toposa and Turkana generation-set systems, emphasizing their dynamic character and the changes which have taken place in each system. Up to now, only a few scattered data on the Toposa system were available. The Turkana system is much better documented, by Gulliver, but his description is partly misleading as he underestimates the importance of the generational aspect in the Turkana System.

It seems that in dealing with generation- and age-set systems, both in descriptions and theoretically, often too much weight is placed on the concept of age while the generational aspect is underestimated - Gulliver's description of the Turkana system is a typical example of this. On the other hand, this very generational aspect raises severe confusion in the relevant literature, the cause of which seems to be the overlap in age between generations (the extent of which could, until now, only be subject to speculation). Thus, based on previous work (Müller 1985) I have examined **(2)** the demographic composition of consecutive generations by means of a computerized simulation model. The results give us a much better idea of what we are talking about when dealing with 'generation-sets' and they also make clear that **(3)** generation-set systems are rather stable from the demographic point of view.

Another contribution to the theory of generation-set systems is that **(4)** the dynamic character of genera- tion-set systems is made evident, using examples from the Toposa and Turkana. When we consider genera- tion-set systems not so much as static institutions and when we understand that 'chaos' and change in the system is not a distortion of a stable state but its normal dynamic mode of operation, then some of the confusions which still beset the analysis of these systems will become obsolete.

The description of the changes in the Toposa and Turkana generation-set systems gives us some ideas **(5)** why these systems change (because of conflict or stress, internal or external to the society) and **(6)** how these systems change. Finally, **(7)** some generalizations about change in generation- set systems can be made which may explain the shape of existing generation-set systems in East Africa and their connection with each other.

2. INTRODUCTION

2.1. AIMS, SCOPE AND METHOD

When I started the research on which this study is based, I had little in mind other than to collect information on an ethnic group in south-eastern Sudan, the Toposa, who were only marginally represented in the ethnographic material. In the preparatory phase of my first field trip I studied the few sources available (see ch.3.1), and it became clear to me that among the Toposa I would find a well-developed generation-set system to be the backbone of their sociopolitical system, an assumption which was substantiated in the field. I also came to realize that in the field I had by no means understood how the Toposa generation-set system really worked. I consulted the relevant theoretical literature and became even more confused: quite a few authors argued that generation-set systems of this kind cannot work properly and must collapse or at least be constantly altered, resulting from discrepancies with their demographic background.[1] But in reality these systems did not seem to break down; no trace of a generation-set system actually collapsing because of 'built-in malfunctioning'[2] could be found in the literature, and I had just returned from Toposaland where a generation-set system seemed to be flourishing. To resolve this contradiction I decided to investigate the demographic background, i.e. to find out what 'generation' or 'generation-set' demographically means, both generally as well as in the special context of societies like the Toposa. For this purpose I developed a computerized simulation programme (see ch.4.2.3.) which revealed, among other things, that generation-set systems of the Toposa type are quite stable from the demographic point of view, and that changes in the system must be caused by influences external to it, whether they originate from within or without the particular society.

This finding put me on a new track: if it was not demographic complexities, what then was the reason why generation-set systems varied so much in their layout, even when they stemmed from a common origin as for example in the Toposa/Turkana case. And why did they constantly change their shape? - While among the Toposa I learned that they had recently changed their generation-set system. It seemed that generation-set systems were not the static institutions described in much of the anthropological literature, but rather flexible and dynamic systems able to react and to adapt themselves to the specific, current situation in their society.

With this approach in mind I went into the field again, and a comparative study of Toposa and Turkana proved fruitful. The results are laid out in this study, grouped into four main areas:

1. An ethnographic description and theoretical analysis of the Toposa and Turkana generation-set systems, which were described unsatisfactorily in the sources available.

2. Basic structural principles of generation and age-set systems (with the underlying assumption that the Toposa and Turkana generation-set systems, or rather the system from which they are derived, is a basic form of generation-set system).

3. Description of changes in the structure of the Toposa and Turkana generation-set systems and an exploration of the circumstances which triggered these changes and the way in which they took place.

4. A test of the basic thesis that generation-set systems are not rigid structural frames but systems which are constituted by the action of the people involved.

The results laid out here can only be a modest contribution towards a comprehensive understanding of generation-set systems. I have concentrated as much as possible on the four main points mentioned above, al- though in many places it was tempting to investigate deeper into questions concerning the raison d'être of age- and generation-sets or other interesting issues. Furthermore the quantity of ethnographic material and other background information has been restricted to that required for the understanding of the text and its arguments. For more anthropological material, reference is made to Gulliver (1951).

The Toposa and Turkana generation-set systems (together with those of some of their neighbours) differ profoundly from other age- or generation-set systems: the sociopolitical importance of the generational aspect seems to be much greater than in most other societies, there are no fixed time intervals for the duration of generation- and age-sets and for the transmission of power from one leading generation-set to the next, and age-sets generally do not define a man's status in the society. This must be borne in mind before applying conclusions of this study to other societies. Astonishingly enough, however, it seems that some of its results may shed light on even such different and complicated systems as *gada* (see ch.5.2).

The dynamic system approach to generation-sets also facilitates dealing with some terms which often appear in the literature on the subject, such as rules and change.

Some theorists like Legesse (1973) and Stewart (1977), in trying to analyze or categorize generation- and age-set systems, focus their attention in my opinion (and also in the eyes of Kertzer[3] and Baxter/Almagor[4]) too much on the rules which seem to govern the system. But then the question promptly arises: 'why should so many age-systems generate rules which are difficult, even impossible to follow'?[5] Spencer (1978:147) gives a plausible explanation when he suggests that in some cases these rules are just the 'rhetoric of elders determined to pin down the junior generation'. Baxter and Almagor (1978:4f.) put it in more general terms: "what a 'rules approach' tends to ignore is

the actual behaviour of age-set members to each other and to members of other sets, and the ways in which the members of an age-system are enmeshed in other social, economic and ritual relationships". In fact, whenever I tried to extract 'rules' concerning generation- and age-sets from my informants, it was with little success; all I got was a few very basic ones (see ch.5.2). To me there is an evident danger that the 'rules' which bring order to an apparently chaotic system, are really only created in the mind of the researcher. The 'chaos' in the system and in the way it is described by informants (see ch.2.2) appears to be chaotic only to the observer from outside. But this very 'chaos' actually signifies the dynamic aspect of the system and its tendency to change. Dynamic systems are liable to change, and no other force need be made exclusively responsible for the form in which change takes place, even if this outside force be its triggering mechanism. All this will, to some extent, be elaborated in the course of the study.

> Throughout the study, some terms like 'rules', 'change', 'system', 'network' etc. remain undefined, as it was felt that the way in which they are commonly understood would raise no misunderstandings in the context of this study and that an additional corpus of definitions would have overloaded the text. Critical terms like 'generation', 'generation-sets', 'age-grade' and 'age-sets' are defined in ch.4.1 or at the appropriate place.

Although there are female age-sets among Turkana and Toposa (see Appendix 3), this study is another piece of work on the male part of those societies. Up to now, the bulk of information available deals with the male system, and though it seems that the system of age-sets for women is not as developed as it is for men, thorough research might change this picture. This work has yet to be done, however.

In a comparative study of this kind a systematic problem arises: sometimes information, description or analysis is different for each group while on other occasions it applies equally to both. For this reason it must be kept in mind that statements in the text which are not qualified by reference to a particular group, have always to be seen as general statements which apply to Toposa as well as to Turkana. Otherwise the difference will be made clear.

The Toposa and Turkana languages, sharing a common origin, are still very close to each other, one of the main differences being the Toposa practice of adding an extra 'ny-'prefix to most nouns. Most vernacular words occuring in the text are given in the Turkana form, and the Toposa form can always be derived in the described way. The transcription of Toposa and Turkana words follows the method locally adopted which is slightly different from English usage:

a as in 'master'
c as in 'child'
e as in 'better'
g as in 'guest'
i as in 'spin'
j as in 'Japan', also at the end of words
o as in 'hot'
u as in 'foot'
oe as in 'loiter'
ae as in 'wine'

s and k are often aspirated. As in any language, sounds, especially vowels, occur in different variants. An exhaustive phonology can be found in Dimmendaal (1983).
The stress is in general on the last syllable.

The text is structured in the following way:

1) Essential background information is given in ch.3, concerning the country, the people and their history, their way of life and their general economic and socio-political system.

2) Basic theoretical tools are made available in the first part of ch.4 (chs. 4.1 and 4.2):
- terminology,
- a discussion of the term 'generation' (i.e. the question: 'what is a generation?'),
- underlying structural principles of age-set and generation-set systems,
- the computer simulation of generations,
- a survey of some theoretical remarks regarding East African generation-and age-set systems,
- a list of the theses which constitute the conceptional frame for the study.

3) Ethnographic material connected with Toposa and Turkana generation-sets is presented in ch.4.4.

4) In ch.4.5. both the Toposa and Turkana generation-set systems and their dynamic aspects are analyzed, using the empirical data and the theoretical tools available.

5) Ch.5, called 'conclusions', aimes to give an idea as to how this study can contribute to the general theory of generation-set systems. In part, it is a repetition and summary of results already laid out in the text. The points raised just mark an initial step, and it would be interesting to speculate as to where further research in this direction might lead.

2.2. DATA BASE

Basic data for this study were collected in three stages. Initially, a 6-month period of field research was carried out among the Toposa in 1982/83 which provided material for my M.A. thesis (Müller 1985), which dealt mainly with the demographic background of the Toposa generation- and age-set system.

I intended to collect more detailed information on the Toposa socio-political system during another 6-month period of field research in 1986. By that time the security situation in Southern Sudan had become quite problematic, and so I tried to enter the Toposa area from Kenya, as the Toposa territory is located immediately behind the Kenyan border northwest of Lake Turkana. Until the end of 1985 this part of Eastern Equatoria had remained unafflicted by the civil war but when I arrived in March 1986, the disturbances had also reached this area. Thus I decided to stay in Kenya and work among the Turkana who are related to the Toposa; they speak the same language and have similar cultural and socio-political patterns. In the meantime, ICRC (International Committee of the Red Cross) had started a relief operation in the Toposa area, and in August 1986 I was called in to work as a consultant for three weeks at Narus, a famine camp established on Sudanese territory 30 kms north of the Kenya-Sudan border, on the Lockichokio-Kapoeta road. Although time was short, I had the opportunity to gather some information on the current situation in the Toposa area at that time.

Another 4-month period of field research in Turkana District provided me with the rest of the material needed for the compilation of this study. On this occasion I also met some Toposa refugees in Lokichokio who supplied me with further information on the Toposa generation-set system.

Even in the early stages of the research, while still concentrating on the Toposa generation-set system, the dynamic character of this type of socio-political system became obvious to me. This aspect was even more marked among the Turkana, and through a comparison of both systems, the internal dynamics became much clearer. Thus what started as misfortune, the impossibility of continuing my research among the Toposa, I came to see as an advantage, as the study became a comparative one.

The data was gathered via observation and interviews - for more details on this see ch.3.2.

Of all the male informants (see Appendix 1) who contributed orally to the data, the statements of 156 were recorded. Of these,

20	(13%)	were bilingual, i.e. we communicated directly in English,
136	(87%)	were not bilingual, i.e. we communicated through an interpreter,
79	(51%)	were 'elders' (older than 50),
53	(34%)	were middle aged men (between 30 to 50).
24	(15%)	were young men (younger than 30),
107	(69%)	were heads of a family,
106	(68%)	were living in the traditional sector,
17	(11%)	were employed in the modern sector (missions, schools, administration),
33	(21%)	were living in the traditional sector and additionally attached to the modern sector (through functions in the mission, by part-time employment in a lodge, etc.),
19	(12%)	had primary school education,
9	(6%)	had secondary school education.

Most men had Christian names, but only a handful of them seemed to be practising Christians. (No enquiries were made on this topic.) Of those of my informants who publically practised Christianity, only one came from the traditional sector.

Roughly half of the interviews were group interviews. There were rarely more than three or four active partners in group interviews, i.e. the elders spoke and the others listened.

I have tried as far as possible to make clear in the text, on which field material certain interpretations of the Toposa and Turkana generation-set systems are based, and I have also given references for sources whenever possible. In many cases, however, this was not possible, especially in the case of the Turkana generation-set system. Its structure varies locally and in most places is changing. Some informants were better, others worse informed, some gave me information on how things actually worked, others on how they thought things should work, failing to mention where reality diverged from their description. Others again were just ignorant and gave misleading descriptions. The layout of the Turkana generation-set system displayed in this study is thus the outcome of a puzzle based on small pieces of information which sometimes sounded contradictory at first hand.

All interviews were taped and are available from me, except for most of the 1982/83 Toposa interviews which had to be erased for logistic reasons. (Being without my own transport and with limited luggage space at the time, I was not able to carry enough tapes.)

Computer simulations were programmed in BASIC and effected on a Schneider Personal Computer PCW 8256.

2.3. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

On all three of my field trips I went together with my wife Martina who did her own research and who was my good spirit first in the field and later during the hard times at my desk. Both before and during the 16 months of field research, as well as afterwards while compiling this study, I received assistance from people and institutions listed below as well as from others who cannot here be mentioned. Except for the Toposa and Turkana who, of course, naturally come first, the list is arranged in alphabetical order.

1) Toposa and Turkana: a list of all the informants can be found in Appendix 1. Special thanks go to Akore, Akunyuk, the late Angatani Koker, Aurelio Lorot, Cyriakos Lolinga, Ekori, Immanuel Ichor, the late Kamilio Loparan, Kinyang, Locoro, Lomorukai, Nakibuel, Nakoel, and my translators Benson Emekwi, Lucy Lokwale, Milton Maria, Pauline Ekaran, Thomas Ekamais and my field assistant Peter Muzee.

2) Administration: both the Sudanese and the Kenyan administration supplied me in a generous way with visa and research permits, in particular the National Records Office in Khartoum and the Office of the President in Nairobi.

3) Assistance in the field: travelling in the way we did, meant dependence on the goodwill and help of countless persons, only a few of them can be mentioned here: Fr. Tony Barrett (Lorugumu), Russell Cross (Lotubae), Anne and Peter Glauben (Lodwar), Fr. Bernhard Ruhnau (Oropoi) and Dr. Sabine and Prof.Dr. Jürgen Schwartz (Nairobi).

4) Assistance at home: Dr. Bernhard Streck, Prof.Dr. Hermann Amborn, Prof.Dr. Fritz Kramer; Prof.Dr. Ivo Strecker and Prof.Dr. Georg Elwert who advised and guided me through the various stages of this study and, last but not least, Prof.Dr. Serge Tornay.

5) Institutions: the Institute of African and Asian Studies at Khartoum University, the Institute of African Studies at Nairobi University, the British Institute in Eastern Africa, NCA (Norwegian Church Aid) in Torit and Kapoeta, NORAD in Lodwar, AMREF in Lokichokio.

6) Sponsors: the 1982/83 research was partly financed by the Institute of Ethnology at the Free University of Berlin. For the 1986 research I was granted a sholarship by the DAAD (German Academic Exchange Service). While writing the thesis I was supported by a two-year NaföG scholarship. The publication of this study was financially assited by the "Forschungsgebietsschwerpunkt Ethnizität und Gesellschaft" of the Freie Universität Berlin.

3. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

3.1. SOURCES REVIEW

(Toposa - Turkana - Generation- and age-set theory)

Toposa. Little published material is available on the Toposa: three pages in Seligman (1932), 17 pages of Captain King in Nalder (1937), 6 pages in Gulliver/Gulliver (1953), 19 pages in Eriksen (1978), and 10 pages in Schröder (1987). They are mentioned in Lamphear (1976a), in Tornay (1982b) and in some other books and articles dealing with their neighbours. Two dissertations have been written by Toposa scholars, Loiria's (1979) "Political awakening in Southern Sudan 1946-1955" and Longokwo's (1981) "Family and marriage among the Toposa". All these sources mention the Toposa generation-set system as important socially and politically, but none of them gives a clear picture of its layout and functioning.

By contrast the Turkana have attracted the attention of dozens of writers. The difference in the attention given to the two ethnic groups is probably a product of several factors. First, the European travellers who explored East Africa at the turn of the last century, started in most cases from the coast and rarely came much further than Lake Turkana. Economically, both areas were of little interest to the British colonial administration. It turned out, however, that the Turkana were, at least indirectly, a threat to the European settlers in the White Highlands of Kenya (see ch. 3.3.5.3). Therefore, while the Toposa were only loosely administered (see ch. 3.3.5.4), the Turkana were, and still are, subject to much stronger government administration. Today, the Toposa area has fewer contacts to the "modern world" than does Turkanaland with its abundance of development agencies (see ch. 3.3.7). Finally, the 16 years of civil war in Sudan (1956-1972) and its renewed outbreak after 1983 (1985 in the Toposa area) prevented and prevent any scholarly inquiry in Toposaland.

Turkana. Since the early travels and publications (Höhnel (1892) who described Count Telekis travel in 1888, Cavendish (1898), Wellby (1900), Austin (1902), Powell-Cotton (1904), Dundas (1910) and others) the information available on the Turkana has steadily increased. In 1949, Pamela and Philip H. Gulliver arrived in Lodwar, the district capital, and started work on the first comprehensive anthropological survey of Turkanaland. The results of this were seen in 1951 when P.H. Gulliver published his "Preliminary Survey of the Turkana" which is still today the standard reference work on the Turkana, who in 1985 found their way into the Human Relation Area Files (HRAF) through the work of R. Dyson-Hudson and T. McCabe. Besides innumerous reports for

different governmental and foreign organizations, academic research has resulted in a few dissertations: Brainard (1981), McCabe (1984), Wienpahl (1984), Coppock (1985), Galvin (1985) and Shelley (1985). In 1985, the Institute of African Studies in Nairobi compiled "A Socio-Cultural Profile of Turkana District" (ed. by R.C. Soper). In addition to the "Preliminary Survey" and his (1955) "The Family Herds" (on Jie and Turkana) P.H. Gulliver has also published an article on "The Turkana age organization" (1958) which is an important reference source on East African generation- and age-sets. Although full of valuable information, this article has produced and given currency to a general misconception of the Turkana generation-set system which I will look at later in this study. Essentially, the mistake is his assumption that the Turkana system of generations has changed into a mere age-set system, an assumption which is not completely wrong as the tendency is there, but in the terms he talks about is inadequate as generations can be still detected in most parts of the country. G. Best has published three volumes on the Turkana (1978, 1983, 1984) which however deal only marginally with their generation-set system. Japanese scholars have contributed to details of Turkana ethnography: Itani (1980), Ohta (1980, 1982, 1984, 1987). John Lamphear has contributed valuable historical data (1976a, b, c, forthcoming a, b).

Generation- and age-set theory. Since 1902, when Schurtz published his "Altersklassen und Männerbünde", age-sets have become a focus of scientific interest. In connection with anthropological exploration, age- and generation-sets became a major issue, especially in East Africa where they were recognized as possessing outstanding importance. This led to a flood of publications of which all cannot here be listed: reference is made to Stewart's commented bibliography (1977:8ff.). As well as works bringing together ethnographic material, some attempts have been made to develop a theoretical framework for the generation- and age-set problem: Bernardi (1952), Eisenstadt (1954,1956), Fleming (1965), Stewart (1977), Baxter/Almagor (eds.,1978), Bernardi (1985) and Tornay's recent publications. In 1978, however, Kertzer still claimed that "the theoretical development of the field has remained rudimentary" (1978:368) and that "perhaps the greatest area of conceptual confusion in the study of age groups concerns generation-group systems" (1978:372). Reasons for the unsatisfactory state of theory on generation- and age-sets may be, among others, the following:

1) Generation- and age-set systems are seen as static institutions and their dynamic qualities are underestimated.

2) The theoretical approach is too formal. In Kertzer's words: "There is a tendency to focus on normative statements of the rules of the systems and to compare these at the expense of understanding how people actually cope with these rules" (1978:370). Eisenstadt (1956) has been criticised in this manner (Fleming 1965:5, Kertzer 1978:368). Stewart (1977), although a store-house of information, exemplifies in many ways all that is problematic with a formal approach. He specifies a priori a set of features pertaining to age-sets, and then classifies real generation- and age-set systems using these abstract criteria. Apart from the fact that this approach is of little cognitive value anyway, it is made doubly worse in Stewart's case by the fact that he concentrates too much on age and underestimates the importance of the generation concept.

3) No proper distinction is made between age and generation concepts.

4) Generation-sets are seen as a specific form of age-sets or even as "distorted" age-sets (e.g. Huntingford (1968), Legesse (1973), Stewart (1977)).

5) Basic data like demographic structures of the populations in question are either missing or not yet processed in the necesssary way; or they are not known to the authors. Lotka (1928,1929) and Müller (1985, 1986) have contributed some initial material towards resolving this problem.

More sources on the theory of age-and generation-sets will be discussed in the text, especially in chapter 4.

3.2. ISAKI NYO? WHAT ARE YOU LOOKING FOR?

Field work for this study was mainly carried out by interviewing people, most of them elders. Long-run developments of the sociopolitical system as well as certain parts of its structure could only be uncovered in this way. Interviews tended to be more formal when I approached elders of an area at their usual talking spot under their shade tree (see ch.4.4.1). Apart from this I had talks with friends in their homestead near which I had often put up my tent. On other occasions, people from surrounding homesteads came to our camp and, in exchange for some tobacco, answered my questions. Observation of people's actions gave me some idea as to how the system worked in real-life situations and how people behaved within the framework of constraint and advantage implied by the system of generation- and age-sets. While observing I frequently found myself becoming a participant in goings on, when, for example, I interfered with or was involved in the people's day-to-day affairs (building of our hut, provision of food, transport etc., disputes and quarrels, acquiring a small herd of goats of our own, etc.) or when we took an active part in ceremonies like *akiriket* (see below).

Ceremonies witnessed were *akiriket*, ceremonial slaughter of animals (witnessed amongst both Turkana and Toposa); *nyepeyo*, an akiriket where an ox is given by a young generation to an older one (Toposa); *nyakilepa ka ngimongin*, where the younger generation begs the older one for oxen (Toposa); *nyakidamadam*, generation-set gathering and dancing event (Toposa); different parts of wedding ceremonies (Toposa and Turkana); *asapan*, initiation ceremony (Turkana), various minor events such as the practice of reading entrails and other forms of fortune telling.

Approach to informants was in many cases made by establishing friendship bonds (formalized bond-friendships in two cases) rather than through "buying" information. Of course, everybody relished a share of tobacco, and small gifts of food were frequently given. As my knowledge of the Turkana-Toposa language is still not adequate (the language is very difficult, and even Gulliver (1951:10) admits that he has never come to terms with it), interpreters were used. Most interviews were taped.

On establishing a contact, I always tried to answer that question *isaki nyo*? (What do you want, what are you after?) I generally told people that there is considerable curiosity in our country about their way of life and that it might be also possible that we learn from them. I am not quite sure whether they could make sense of a white man's desire to learn from them, but the point about curiosity was well accepted, especially by the Toposa who are very proud of their own culture. Turkana reacted somewhat more reservedly, maybe because their area had been flooded with all kinds of researchers in the recent past and they were a bit sick of being weighed, measured and asked funny questions. In addition, Turkana have been told too often that they are a backward people, and by now they have not the same strong belief in their cultural heritage that they once had or that the

Toposa still have. For example, taking photographs is absolutely no problem among the Toposa - they just do not care, whereas Turkana in general try to escape being photographed; or else they ask for money. In my opinion, that reflects the approach of the Kenian majority towards people like the Turkana: naked "savages" are an embarrassement to the country and so should not be photographed unless of course it can all be marketed. The fear of being photographed thus seems to me to be an acceptance of the negative stereotype, the stigma of being only a naked Turkana.

Whenever I sat together with Toposa, the conversation inevitably turned after a while towards the generation-set system, and everybody was eager to explain it to me. In the conception the people themselves had of it, the generation-set system was one of the major features of public life, and they saw no reason to hide it. In Turkana society, the generation-set system plays a different role, and it was much more difficult to obtain information as some Turkana were quite reluctant to reveal these things to outsiders, and some of them just did not know much about it.

Neither Toposa nor Turkana are in the habit of inventing "pleasing stories" to satisfy the curiosity of the interviewer. They would rather admit that they do not know, or are not interested, and they let the researcher clearly know when they are tired of being questioned.

Information on generation-sets and age-sets was always difficult to obtain. There are, for example, no separate words in Toposa/Turkana for the separate English concepts "generation- set" and "age-set". Both are subsumed under the term *anaket* which means literally "suckling group", i.e. "the ones who suckled together at their mothers' breasts". For the Toposa or Turkana it is in each case quite clear from the context what is meant by *anaket*, but for the researcher this is often much more difficult.

The Toposa are quite clear about their generation-sets. They are well defined, and each one has a different name. The matter of generations is more complicated amongst the Turkana: in most parts of their area they have at present only two alternating names for their generations, Ngimor and Ngirisai, and when talking about, say, Ngimor, it is often not clear (for the researcher) whether the younger or older group of Ngimor (the older group are the grandfathers of the younger group) is being referred to, or even whether the Turkana make that distinction at all. Toposa and Turkana are not social scientists with a theoretical understanding of structures and systems. Rather they use the elements of what I call a "system" in their daily intercourse. In an *akiriket* in which different age-sets participate, men sit in a semi-circle in order of seniority. The relative ranking of the age-sets present is quite clear to them but they find it difficult to memorize a complete age-set list in its proper order of seniority. An Emorut (sg. of Ngimor) might tell an Erisait (sg. of Ngirisai) to obey him, arguing that Ngimor are the fathers of Ngirisai, and then, the following day, with different people, the argument might be the other way round, leaving the researcher in a state of bafflement. Age-set names vary between areas, one age-set in one area might be known by different names, perhaps an "official" one and a nickname (or several of them), age-sets split and merge, generation-

sets are referred to by the name of one of their age-sets, and so on, leaving the researcher's order-seeking brain in an advancing state of chaos. The dangers for the researcher are obvious: he either dissipates his energies trying to obtain orderly age-set lists, or, alternatively, produces a hypothetical system at an early stage into which he squeezes all sorts of inconsistent information. However since the generation-set systems of the Toposa and Turkana are not static but highly flexible and dynamic, any description of them reflects only their temporary condition or a local or individual perception of it; at a different time, place or in the eyes of different individuals, the systems may look quite different. Thus, the portrayal of the Toposa and Turkana generation- and age-set systems offered in this study is still ringed with question marks, but at this stage it is obviously the best approximation available.

3.3. THE PEOPLE AND THEIR ENVIRONMENT

The Turkana represent one of the few tribes left in Kenya whose essential habits have remained materially unchanged by the impact of a white civilisation. Except that he is expected to pay tribute to Government and to refrain from raiding his neighbours the tribesman leads radically the same existence as his forebears who descended to these plains from the Njie country. His wants are few, milk, blood and a little meat. His clothing is negligible and a few branches supply him with a home. He is free to wander in search of sustenance over vast desert areas. An observer looking at a typical semi-permanent manyatta or at the scenes enacted daily round any of the larger groups of wells could easily imagine himself translated to the days of the Biblical patriarchs.

The question arises, what can be done to further the welfare of this primitive tribe? They have no need of education except in animal husbandry and the rudiments of agriculture as long they remain cut off from civilization by their habitat and mode of life. Their diseases are few, their material wants nil. The sole possible amelioration of their condition is to attempt to increase the supplies of water in their rapidly dessicating country and it is trusted that Government will reward a loyal people by taking steps to this end. Unless a scheme of water- conservation is evolved and developed the future of the tribe is scarcely speculative. They are fated to become uncompromisingly nomadic, existing on goats and camels, the only stock capable of survival under extreme desert conditions, and ultimately to extinction. Possibly natural extinction though contrary to sentiment, is the kindest fate for these picturesque anachronisms as neither the tribe nor their country are potentially an asset to a material and progressive world. And gradual extinction may ultimately be a more kindly fate than to allow these fine savages to be included, in the words of a former District Commissioner, in "the fuel to produce the mediocre amalgam which men call civilization".

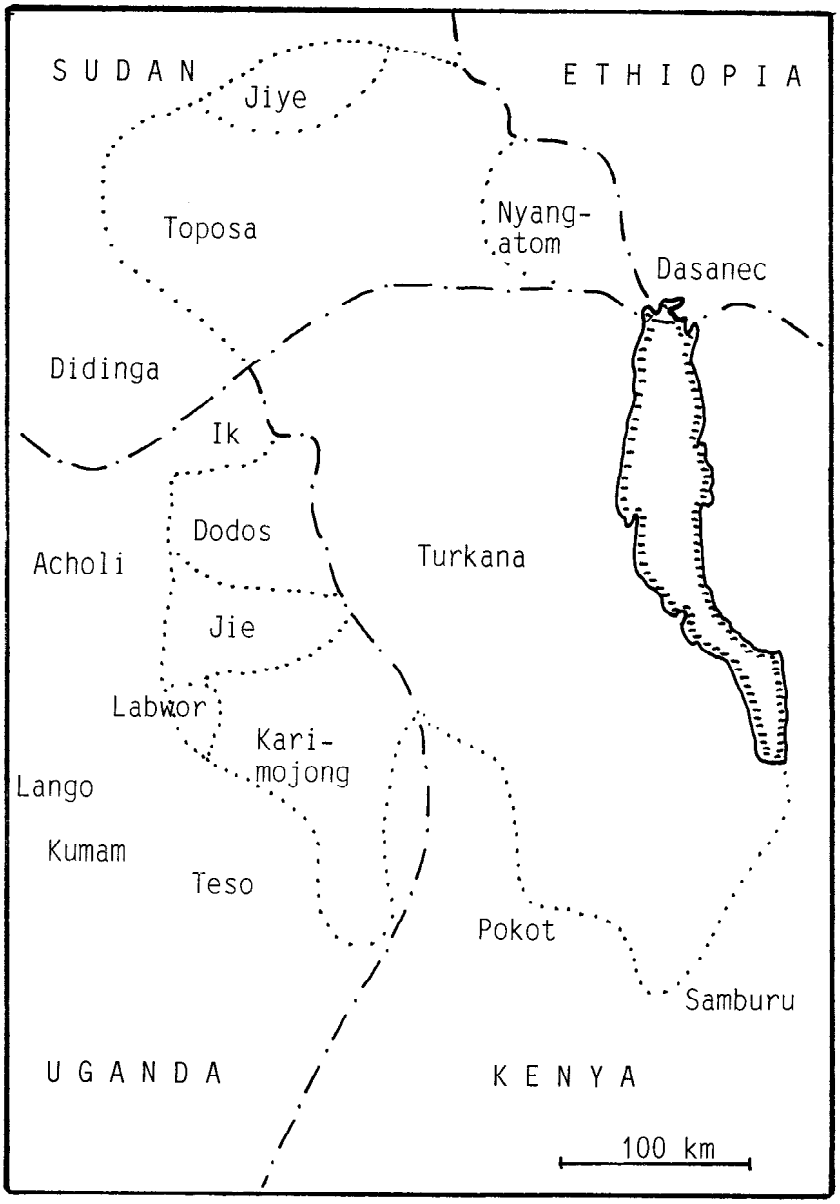
The writing is already on the wall, who will heed it? (District Annual Reports, Ryland 1937)

The Turkana ... are a friendly and likeable lot and their powers of endurance are worthy of the greatest admiration, nevertheless it would be idle to pretend that they are other than irresponsible, dirty and shockkingly immoral and their quaint coiffure and entertaining dances hardly compensate for their gross neglect of their stock or for that promiscuity which makes whoring the rule and marriage the exception. ... With sheep and goats they are competent but with camels they are ignorant and apathetic. ... Lack of discipline and internal authority amongst the Turkana ... has always been a characteristic of the people; nevertheless there is the possibility that the authority exists but is not, for some reason, being exerted.

(District Annual Reports, Turnbull 1944)

There are no foreigners who have ever gone to the Sudan and come back without knowledge of the Toposa. Even though no books have been written on this people due to their geographical position, they have attracted more attention than the Nubians, Dinka, Nuer, and other herders in the Sudan. The Toposa way of life has always elicited deep admiration from those who came across them. (Longokwo 1981:14)

Turkana and Toposa are part of the group of Ateker[1], an ethnic cluster comprising also Jie, Karimojong and Dodos in Uganda, Nyangatom in Ethiopia on the southern Sudanese border, as well as the Jiye neighbouring the Toposa in the north. Originating from a core land in the northeastern part of what is nowadays called Uganda, they all dispersed to their present habitats, in a slow process during the period from the 16th to 19th century. Due to their origin, they still have a great deal in common. Their language is split into dialects, but without major differences; identical clan names are found in the whole area of distribution; and their values and socio-political organization are similar. Their economy is agro-pastoral with much emphasis on the pastoral complex. Depending on ecological conditions, agriculture is a more or less important feature. Part of Dodos territory, for example, enables a good food production and also the Toposa are able to grow grain on fertile stretches among some riverbeds, whereas Turkanaland is semidesert for a great part which forces the Turkana to rely almost exclusively on pastoralism.



Map 1 Location of the Ateker

(adapted from Gulliver (1952b:2) and Best (1978:35)

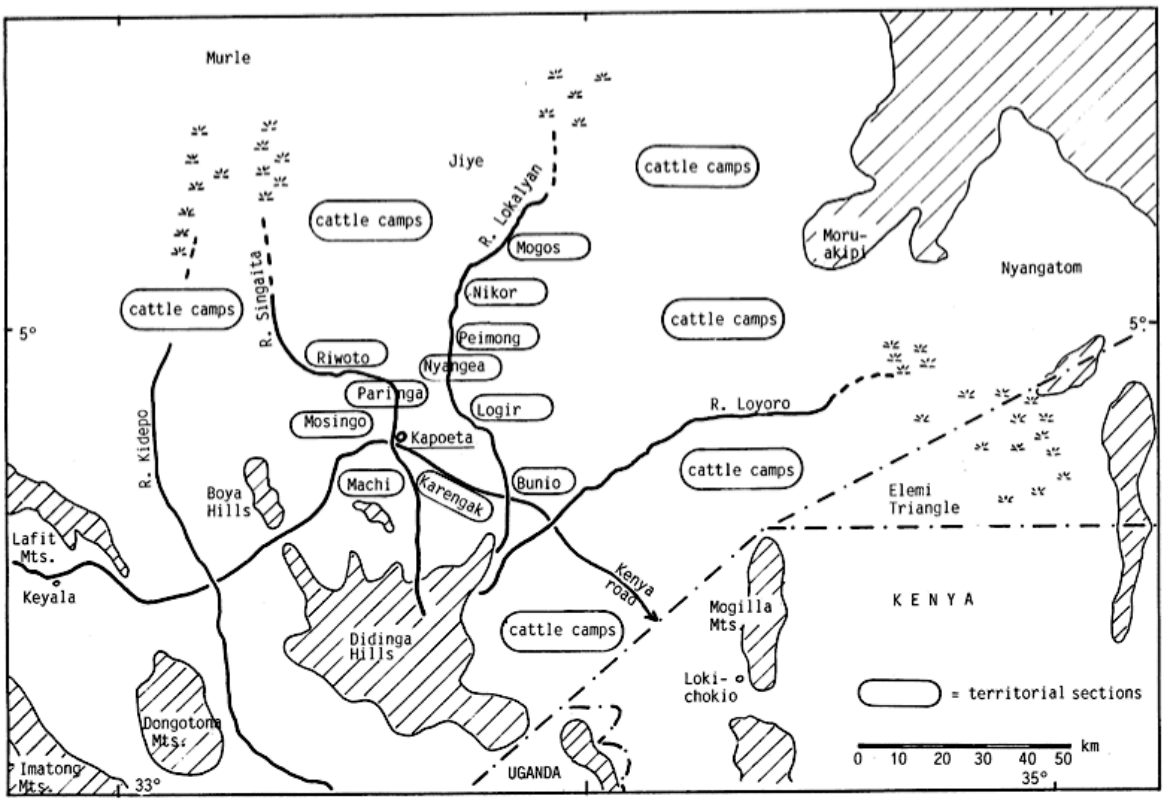
Relations between the different Ateker groups are complex. Between Toposa, Nyangatom and Dodos, for example, stable friendship is established, and there is a great deal of intermarriage. When we were among the Toposa, we often met Dodos who came to visit their relatives. Between Toposa and Turkana, on the other hand, the relation is one of extreme hostility, the issue always being raiding of livestock. Nevertheless, despite the generally warlike situation between the two groups, intermarriage goes on. And alliances and enmities change. Driberg for instance reports[2] the Turkana and Toposa being allies during the 1920's. Despite some minor raids, relations between the two groups remained excellent until 1939 when peace was broken by a great Toposa raid.[3] The situation then recovered so that Whitehouse, in 1946, was able to report "hearty" relations.[4] But in 1948,

relations deteriorated again, when Turkana carried out a severe raid on the Toposa. The tense feelings between the two groups have not recovered since, despite some interim efforts to establish peace.[5] In 1986, as another example, there was peace between Turkana and Dodos, confirmed by a treaty, but nobody knew how long it would be before the peace was broken again by renewed raiding. And indeed, in March 1986, hostilities again broke out after a minor Dodos raid at Oropoi which was followed, in the beginning of 1987, by a Turkana counter-raid. When the Dodos declared their attention to avenge the raid, this precipitated the evacuation of a strip about 40 km wide between the Uganda- Kenya border and the town of Kakuma. Escalation had reached its peak in June, 1987, when the Dodos fulfilled their promise and raided Kakuma. As I left the area in July, 1987, people had started drifting back to their westward homelands. Raiding comes and goes, and the attempts of the respective governments to stop it show little sign of success.

The total population of Turkana District was counted in 1984 as 248,000.[6] Population figures for the Toposa vary from 60,000[7] to 250,000[8]. My own estimate is 120,000 but may also be wrong.

In the following, only a brief introduction is given to the Turkana and Toposa environment and way of life. Excellent and exhaustive information can be obtained from Gulliver 1951 and, in a condensed form, from Soper (1985).

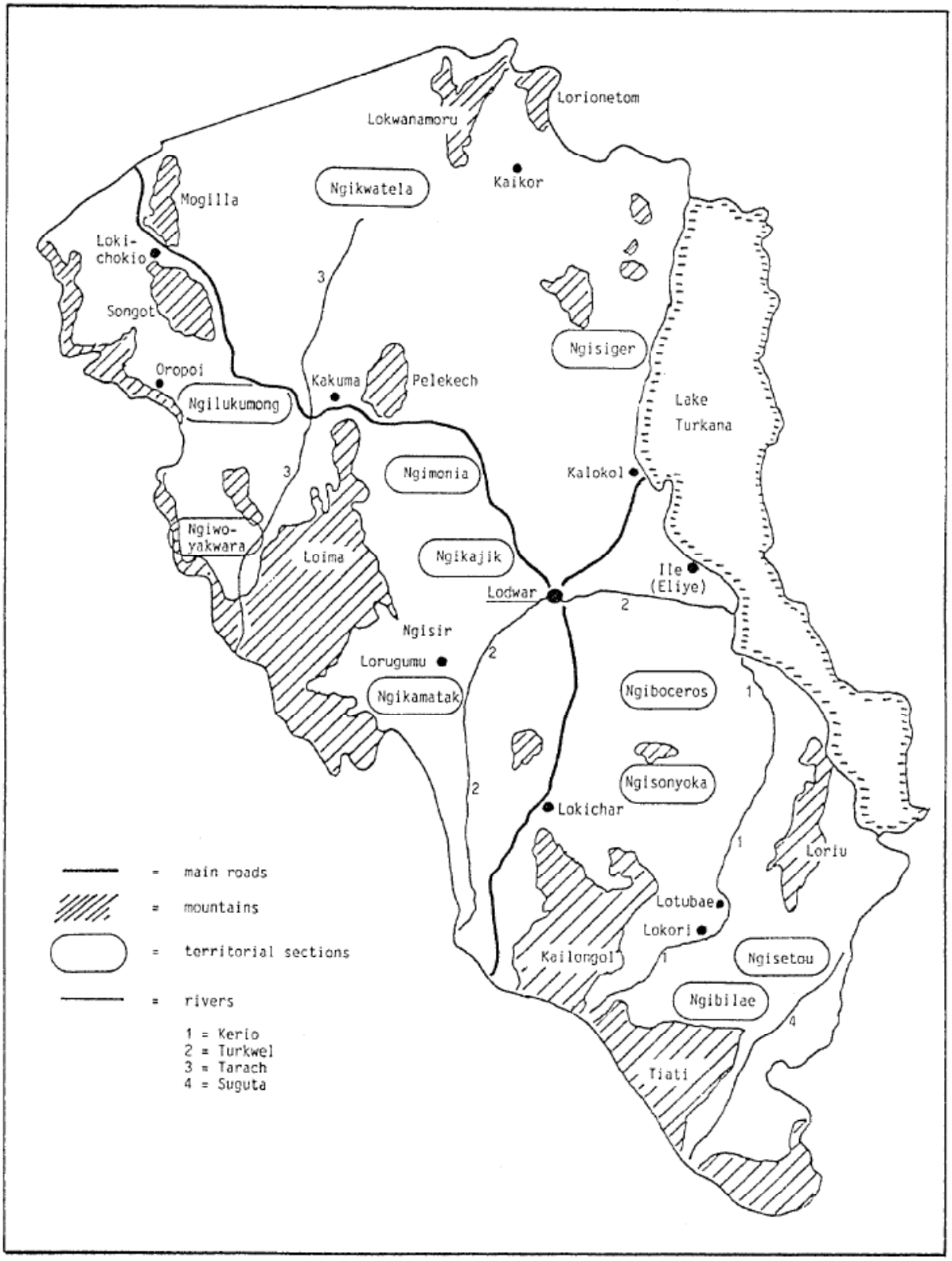
3.3.1. TOPOGRAPHY



Map 2 Toposaland

The Toposa inhabit the far southeastern corner of the Republic of Sudan, roughly between the 33rd and 35th meridian and between 4°30' and 5°30' north of the equator, an area of about 15,000 km2. Kapoeta is the only major settlement and the administrative centre. Toposaland is more or less one vast arid plain with an average elevation of 700 m. It is ringed by mountains with the Boya Hills in the west, the Didinga Hills in the south, the Mogilla and Lokwanamoru Mountains in the southeast, Moruakipi[9] in the east and the Boma Plateau in the northeast. The political border between Sudan and Kenya is also the border between Toposa and Turkana.

The word 'border' raises two questions: first, can a border even be determined between two ethnic groups having a common history (see ch.3.3.5.1), a number of common clan names and some intermarriage? Second, what is the role played in that context by externally imposed colonial borders? Both Toposa and Turkana came to live in their present homelands as migration groups (see ch.3.3.5.1), and they developed a sense of ethnic identity in opposition to their neighbouring tribes. Border areas were always disputed, and during the Turkana expansion (see ch.3.3.5.2) the Toposa were expelled from the area which is now the



Map 3 Turkanaland

border region. Until today the Toposa claim the Mogilla Range, now part of Turkana territory, as theirs. Between ethnic groups who habitually raid each other, a no-mans land develops which might be called a 'border'. This border will shift according to the prevailing balance of power. In the Toposa- Turkana case, the status quo of the 1920s was fixed by the colonial borders.

Turkana District covers an area of about 65,000 km^2, between the 34th and 37th meridian and between 1° and 5° north of the equator. It lies 'almost entirely within the Gregory Rift Valley, a finger of the Great Rift Valley which extends from the Red Sea southward to central South Africa. The low lying arid plains with an elevation of between 300 m and 800 m are broken by lava hills and plateaus which rise several hundred meters above the plains, and by basement-complex mountains some of which reach an elevation of 2200 m. The Turkana plains are ringed on the north, west and south by the Rift Valley wall, and bordered on the east by the Samburu Hills and the 200 km western shoreline of Lake Turkana'.[10] The capital of Turkana District is Lodwar, and other major settlements and administrative centres are Lokori, Kaputir, Lokichar, Lorugumu, Kalokol, Kakuma, Lokichokio, Lokitaung and Todenyang.

There are neither in Toposaland nor in Turkana District any permanent rivers. In the rainy season, however, some otherwise dry riverbeds may become torrent streams, in particular the main Toposa rivers Singaita, Lokalyan and Loyoro and the main Turkana ones Kerio, Turkwel, Tarach and Suguta. Except for Kerio and Turkwel none of these rivers continues flowing for long after the rains have finished. After this, people have to dig wells in the sandy riverbeds of these and other minor rivers, and some water is also found in wells which is often brackish. The water of Lake Turkana, despite its high fluorine and soda content is drinkable, but people prefer water from springs wherever possible.

3.3.2. ECOLOGY

> "The drought is always, even long years ago. The livestock dies of drought, even people die because of the drought. ... During the drought we eat (wild fruits as) Edapal, Edung, Ebei, Elamac, Ngitir ... (and others). That is the food of the Turkana. ... A long drought comes, and all of the livestock dies. Even before our fathers this happened. When it rains, it rains heavily. ... Long ago, some years, all livestock got finished. People went to Marille (Dasanec), they went up to Dongiro (Nyangatom). They ate their sleeping hides, they ate the leather of the donkey carriers. Drought comes and passes."
>
> (Icum in Lopuseki, 2.7.1987)[11]

> [In Turkanaland] there is such a notably harsh and difficult environment that its effect on social life is all-pervasive. ... To a certain extent any study of the Turkana is also an ecological study
>
> (Gulliver 1955:16)

Climate in Turkana- and Toposaland is hot and dry. Mean temperatures are between 24°C and 38°C.[12] The Turkana plains are classified by Pratt/Gwynne (1977) as arid and very arid, and only the higher mountain ranges which enjoy a somewhat higher rainfall are classified as semi-arid.[13]

85% of Turkanaland receive less than 500 mm precipitation per year.[14] There are few rainfall figures for Toposaland available. It rains there a little more than in Turkana District, and the mean annual rainfall in Kapoeta is around 600 mm. But Kapoeta is situated relatively close to the mountains, and rainfall in the more remote parts of the plains is certainly lower. Even 600 mm which might, under European conditions, be considered a good deal of precipitation, here counts for much less as rainfall is unevenly distributed throughout the year and the annual potential evaporation is higher than 2.000 mm.[15] Rainfall comes in heavy thunderstorms, mostly in the rainy season which is said to be from March to August, but in fact both timing and quantity are rather unpredictable. Statistically, 'the highest probability of rainfall is during March through May. Usually more than 50 per cent of the precipitation falls during this period. There are other, smaller, peaks of rainfall probability in July and in November.'[16]

Station	**no.years**	**Ø mm**	**min.mm**	**max.mm**
Lokickokio	16	353	160	1.326
Lokitaung	17	409	115	1.017
Todenyang	17	361	13	1.256
Lodwar	30	162	19	662
Nakwamoru	11	394	215	560
Kapedo	11	380	185	959

Table 1 Annual rainfall at selected stations in Turkana District[17]

Table 1 shows the amount of variation and unpredictability of rainfall in Turkana. It is said that, on average, 10 years have two bad years and two very bad years[18], and only one year out of four[19] is a good year with above average rainfall.

The most regular thing about rainfall in Turkanaland might seem to be its irregularity. There do appear to be, however, ecological cycles, although at the moment, countrywide data are insufficient to prove their length. Swift concludes from his rainfall analysis:

> First, there are both local droughts, and Turkana-wide droughts. The frequency of the latter seems to be about once in 10 years. ... Second, a serious dry period of some sort occurs more frequently at individual stations: once every 5 to 7 years in general, and more often at Lodwar and Todenyang. (1985:31)

Lokaito (1986:12) has compiled rainfall figures for Lodwar. As the total annual rainfall figures present a rather distorted picture - including as they do rain which comes at the wrong time - he has extracted from the data the wet season (March to August) rainfall figures. These are graphically displayed in Fig.1.

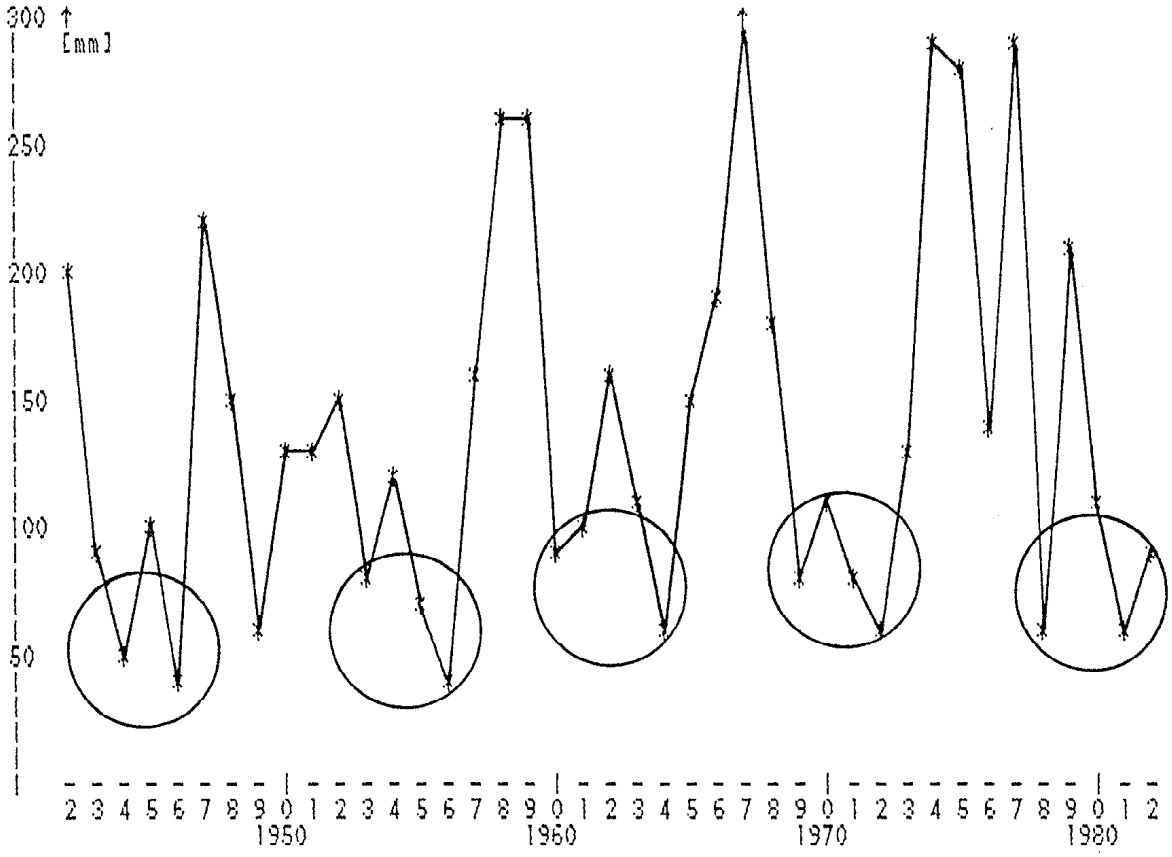


Fig. 1 Lodwar wet season rainfall
(adpted from Lokaito 1986:12)

At first glance, Fig.1 seems to reveal nothing but irregularity, but if we concentrate on the ringed parts which show the droughts in *consecutive* years (the effect of which is to turn a drought into a disaster) we can see that these catastrophies occur with a certain regularity, i.e. every 7 to 10 years.

As Icum said "Drought is always. Drought comes and passes." Drought is part of the people's lives, and they have to cope with it almost every other year. But once every 7 to 10 years it is a country-wide disaster, bringing life almost to an end.

Rain usually comes in thunderstorms. At the 'wrong' time, when the Toposa, and to a lesser extent, the Turkana, have just planted their Sorghum, the torrents from the sky are as disastrous for the crops as a drought. Everything is washed away. It is amazing to be in the middle of such a flood and see how the landscape turns into a lake. After a couple of hours all the water has gone, drained into innumerous brooks and from there into the rivers which become furious streams, but only for a few days, maybe even only for hours, and afterwards they are again dry stretches of sand. An exception is made by the rivers Kerio and Turkwel which both have their headwaters in mountainous areas and are therefore flowing most of the year round, although they still, for the most part, run dry before reaching the lake.

In addition to the arid weather conditions, soil qualities are not favourable for agriculture. Soils are constantly exposed to erosion by water and wind. 'Often they are capped by stone mantles. Colluvial soils tend to be reddish over the basement system and generally grey, buff or white over the volcanics. Aeolian soils are dune sands, either active or fossil; alluvial soils range from coarse sands to flash flood silts, while black or brown clays occur locally in areas of impeded drainage.'[20] The 'assessed composite soil constraints to agriculture' are listed by ECOSYSTEMS 1985 as being serious and/or prohibitive for 72% of Turkanaland, cautionary for 16% and minimal for only 12%. Together with the uneven and unpredictable rainfall distribution this is the reason why agriculture in Turkana District can only contribute marginally to subsistence. Things are slightly better in Toposaland. Along the three rivers Singaita, Lokalyan and Loyoro there are wide stretches of fertile soil which may yield a fairly good crop - if rains are good.

At first glance, vegetation in the area seems to be a uniform mixture of shrub and Acacia trees, but 'variations in altitude, precipitation, topography, and soils lead to a high diversity of plant life forms. Vegetation on the plains varies from impenetrable stands of thorny bushes and perennial grasslands to dry wooded annual grasslands. In and adjacent to the intermittent drainage channels, the vegetation is dominated by large trees - Acacia tortilis, A. elatior, and A. senegal. The highlands and mountains are covered by a shrub-forest, with a ground layer of grasses and forbs.'[21] 'In the dry season the plains are almost bare of ground vegetation from grazing and browsing. After rain, annual grasses and herbs germinate quickly and perennials put out shoots, producing a rapid flush of vegetation, which may, however, wither as quickly as it appeared in the absence of any further rain.'[22]

As neither Toposa nor Turkana are keen hunters, a wide range of wild animals can be found, though never in large quantities, like elephants, leopards, cheetahs, antelopes, gazelles, wart hogs, wild dogs, etc.

Few resources for industrial activity have been found in the area. There was a short gold rush in Toposaland in the early 1980s, but geological prospecting has found the area unsuitable for industrial goldmining. Prospecting for oil has been quite favourable in northern Turkana District, and oil rigs may be future landmarks on the plains.

3.3.3. NON-STOCK ECONOMY

All the Ateker groups are agro-pastoralists, i.e. their economy is a mixture of agriculture, Sorghum being the main crop, and pastoralism with cattle, goats and sheep, donkeys and, in the case of the Turkana, camels. According to the prevailing ecological conditions, agriculture is more or less developed. Although Toposa would always emphasize that they are 'herders', agriculture here plays an equally important role as pastoralism, from the nutritional point of view.

This balance seems to have been heavily afflicted during the last years by droughts, a rising population and an unstable political situation in which many Toposa fled from their settlements and fields (see ch.3.3.5.4).

Turkana agriculture, due to the environmental constraints, can only offer a marginal contribution to their resources. Nevertheless, Turkana 'are nearly all part time cultivators, despite a tradition that has portrayed them as purely pastoral'[29]. The reason why so many outsiders failed to notice their agricultural aspect is that the people themselves put much more emphasis on pastoralism than on agriculture. 'They talk, think and dream cattle', as King[24], referring to the Toposa puts it (for whom, as laid out above, agriculture plays an even more important role than it does for the Turkana).

Toposa settlements are stretched out along the three main rivers Singaita, Lokalyan and Loyoro, for two reasons: water can be dug in the dry riverbeds all year round, and on the riverbanks soil conditions are favourable for rainfed agriculture with Sorghum (Sorghum nigra or Sorghum nigracans), an undemanding crop which, with a little rain, ripens within a mere 2½ months. The fields are prepared in March, sowing is in April, and harvest in June/July, although the exact dates vary, depending on the rainfall that year. At harvest, the stalks are left standing in the fields, and if it rains later in the year, a second, smaller, yield from the same plants may be possible. The fields are the domain of the women. Men help in clearing the ground and fencing the fields with thorny branches. The rest is women's business: sowing, weeding, harvesting, threshing, storing and rationing the grain. There are three moments critical for a good outcome of the crop. First, after the seeds have been sown, some rain has to soak the ground to enable them to germinate. But the rain must not be so strong as to wash them away. Then, after a couple of weeks, more rain is required for the sprouts to grow. And finally, when the crop is almost ripe, it has to be defended against the birds who, having few natural enemies to control their numbers, come in hundreds and thousands to eat the sweet and soft corn. Bird chasing is mainly done by children who, on platforms in the fields, throw pebbles and mud, trying to scare them away. After harvesting and threshing, the grain is stored in granaries, big basketlike containers mounted on stilts to protect the contents from animals and water flowing on the ground. It is the duty of the woman to select the best moment to sow and to decide how to ration the grain throughout the season. A man may never look into his wives' granaries to try and control the reserves; that would be a matter beyond his competence and would severely affect the women's pride.

Judged by Toposa standards, Turkana agriculture is marginal. Even at the lake, there is little cultivable soil, and the rest of the plains are largely covered with unfertile sand from the lake which once extended over the whole area. Fields are cultivated in some parts along rivers and in small water catchments. No granaries are needed as the little yield can be stored in leather bags and is consumed quickly. An exception to this pattern is made by the Ngibotok section in the southwest where people are permanent settled agriculturists.[25]

Gathering is an economic activity which adds to the diet in a considerable way, especially in the dry season when other supplies are scarce. There are plenty of wild fruits, berries and nuts which are collected and prepared by women and girls.[26] Trade goods are bartered for with animals, or stock is sold to obtain cash money.

Fishing in Lake Turkana traditionally 'only plays a small part in the total Turkana economy'.[27] As an addi- tion to their diet but not for trade, some Turkana from the Ngisiger, Ngiboceros and Ngisietou sections (who live close to the lake) used to spear fish or catch it with wicker baskets. Sometimes simple rafts were and are still used, no boats however. After the 1934 drought, the British Administration supplied some Turkana with nets and two boats. In 1962, when drought had again deprived many Turkana of their means of subsistence, the Government of Kenya started a fisheries Project at Lake Turkana which won the support of foreign agencies, especially NORAD. In 1965, the Turkana Fishermens' Co-operative Society was established which in 1968 began the production of dried fish. Today it has 5000 members, the main station being Kalokol, with six branches in Todenyang, Lowarenyak, Nachekwi, Kataboi, Eliye and Kerio. Fish yields from the lake are not as high as the first estimates indicated, and fish landings have dropped from c. 15,000 tons in 1976 to c. 8,000 tons in 1985.[28] Main fishing grounds used to stretch from Kataboi to Eliye, but when I was in the area, I never saw a single boat. I was told that all the boats were fishing on the eastern shore of the lake as yields on the western side had become so poor. In 1987, Kalokol even faced an exodus of people because of the bad fishing conditions. Contrary to the optimistic planners' assumptions, fishing is not very likely to become a major part of Turkana welfare.

3.3.4. LIVESTOCK AND MIGRATIONS

Livestock is the universal reference point for Turkana and Toposa. Livestock is their economic basis. Agriculture contributes to their needs, but the expected effort brings returns even less predictable than animal husbandry. During a drought animals die and crops fail, but some animals will survive to build up the herd again, thus being a kind of insurance against the unpredictable fortunes in this harsh environment. Bonds between people are established by the exchange of animals, which thus represent the material manifestation of individuals' social networks which are indispensable especially in times of need. No ritual takes place without the slaughtering of animals, and communication between people and their High God Akuj is effected by sacrificing animals. Animals evoke emotions, and a man is not really a man without his favourite ox, whose name he carries, whose song he sings and the shape of whose horns he imitates with his arms in dance or fight. As Gulliver puts it:

> They are not just a means of livelihood, nor even only a necessary part of the mechanism of ritual and mystic affairs. They are the very stuff of life to all the people, involved in their labour, happiness, worry and disasters. As a person grows up and develops and passes through the stages of individual life he is accompanied at every stage by stock - at first his father's, later his own. As soon as he is able a boy begins to herd his father's stock and to learn the traditional knowledge of husbandry. Girls learn to water, milk, skin and cut up carcasses and cook the meat and work the skins. Movements of the family, its temporary sub-divisions and later rejoinings, in all of which the children are involved from the beginning, are directly dependent on the requirements of the stock as well appreciated by all the people. ... Initiation and marriage are both important stock occasions. ... Constant reminders, if any were needed, of the importance of stock come in the shape of ... compensation, magico-religious affairs, dance-oxen and dances in general etc., not to mention the very real aesthetic pleasure that a man gets out of his herds. The herds form a continuum in the development of the family. They are only one thread of development but the most important one, since ... family relations tend to follow rights in stock. Where rights diminish there also kinship relations fade; where stock rights disappear there also kin relations are forgotten. ... A man does not own stock, the family does. (Gulliver 1951:21)

It has to be pointed out that European legal and individualistic ownership concepts are misleading and not applicable in this context. The head of a family has only limited disposal rights over 'his' stock. As well as the animals owned directly by his wives (presents from their parents and kin, their share of married daughters' bridewealth, etc.), part of the herd is allocated to them anyway, and many of the other animals are not really his own, as others have a claim on them: old bridewealth debts, compensations, loans, etc. Some stock is required for fulfilling social obligations, and a man may not give away his oxen, for example, as his age-set has a claim on them for its meat feasts. Finally, a responsible man has to provide for times of need, i.e. he has to accumulate reserves for the inevitable next drought or animal disease. Table 2 shows what a severe drought like the one of 1979/80 can do to the animal population.

	1977	1981	Decrease(%)
Cattle	385,390	31,810	91
Smallstock	1,002,529	212,339	78
Camels	47,138	28,694	39
Donkeys	25,313	13,788	45

Table 2 Decrease in Turkana animal population between 1977 and 1981
(adapted from Hogg 1982:164)

'From the strictly economic point of view goats and sheep are perhaps the [most] indispensable and of greatest use in everyday life. They are the chief source of normal meat supplies, all the year round milk and blood, the main source of women's and girls' clothing, they can live in the poorest areas ... and are the commonest forms of gifts and trade goods.'[29] Goats and sheep are kind of 'small change', but 'real' wealth is cattle. A man is only taken to be a rich man if he is rich in cattle, no matter how much small stock he has. Turkana have acquired camels only in the last century, and from the economic point of view a camel is more productive under Turkana desert-like conditions, but up to now the Turkana have not developed the same feeling towards camels as they have towards cattle, and perhaps they never will.

Food and water requirements of their animals govern the movements of the people. Settlement and migration patterns are somewhat different for Toposa and Turkana.

Toposa have their settlement areas along the rivers where they also grow Sorghum, their cereal food. During the rainy season, the herds of cattle and smallstock are kept closer to the villages, although a sizeable share may also be kept in distant cattle camps to avoid overgrazing in the settlement area. This is the time of plenty when there is enough milk and grain, the time when feasts and all kinds of social events take place. In the dry season, the young men take off with the bulk of the herd to far off grazing grounds leaving behind only smallstock and some milk cows to supply milk for the old men and the women and children remaining in the settlements. Once in a while the cows are exchanged for fresh ones from the cattle camps. There is a continuous flow of people, information and goods between the settlements and the cattle camps, and even the old head of the family, who may already be aged 60 or above, will, once in a while, walk 50 to 100 miles to look after his animals.

The Toposa word for 'settlement' and 'home' is *nyere*, for 'cattle camp' *nyawi*. This corresponds linguistically to the Turkana words *ere* and *awi*, although the use is slightly different, reflecting the different settlement patterns of the two groups. The Turkana homestead is not as fixed as the Toposa one. Just as the Toposa *nyawi* (cattle camp) is always on the move, so the Turkana settlement often changes place according to the requirements of the animals. Logically the Turkana calls his settlement *awi*. Due to the diversity of their herds and their different food requirements - cattle need grass and more water while camels and goats browse and survive under harsher semi-desert

conditions - the Turkana *awi* is often split up into different units, the *awi apolon*, the main awi, and the secondary one, *awi abor*. The head of the family will remain in the *awi apolon* sending off to the *awi abor* one or more of his wives along with their grown-up sons and other children. Most Turkana are people of the plains. Thus the *awi apolon*, though moving along, will in general stick to the plains, with the camels and the most of the goats. The *awi abor* on the other hand would usually be close to a mountain range where grazing conditions are better for cattle and sheep. Rich families may have more than one secondary *awi*. All the *ngawiyei* (pl. of *awi*) may move about throughout the year whenever grazing or browsing in one place has become insufficient or for other reasons. But a herd owner would try to remain in or at least return in the rainy season to his ere, his 'home area' i.e. the place where generally 'he was brought up, where his father died and was buried, and where he has ownership to particular resources, viz., certain fodder and fruit trees, and a permanent dry season well'[30]. Thus the Toposa and Turkana concepts of *nyere/ere* and *nyawi/awi* are quite similar. *Nyere/ere* stands for home and permanent settlement while *nyawi/awi* stands for movement of the people together with their animals.

For an average 10-person Turkana family unit, Gulliver[31] has estimated the average herd size as being 25-30 cattle, 10 camels, 100 smallstock and 12 donkeys. Donkeys excluded as they are not productive and only used for transport, this makes a Standard Stock Unit (SSU) figure of 5 per person (1 SSU = 1 cow = 1 camel = 7 smallstock - definition and equivalences according to Pratt/Gwynne 1977:279). Gulliver (1951) contrasts his own estimates with official figures (80,000 people with 90,000 cattle, 30,000 camels, 400,000 smallstock) which are much lower and would result in a SSU of only 2.25 per person. Recent figures of ECOSYSTEMS[32] are 156,800 cattle, 95,600 camels and 1,296.400 smallstock. For 178,000 pastoralists, this results in an SSU of 2.5 per person. The virtual coincidence of the two official figures is striking, but may be related to the fact that Turkana are skilled at hiding their wealth from others, especially officials.

It is often argued that pastoralists like the Turkana increase their herds beyond reasonable limit. At least for the Turkana, this is not true. According to Lokaito[33], one person needs 4 SSU if he or she depends only on animal products/milk. Lokaito's calculation is only a rough one, but it gives us a good idea as to the approximate number of animals a pastoralist family really needs. A 'rich' man with 100 head of cattle and 500 smallstock (i.e. 175 SSU) may in reality be not rich at all. If his family and dependants number 40, which is not unusual, 160 SSU are needed for human subsistence alone, leaving little margin for social obligations and almost no reserve, should drought or disease kill a portion of the animals. The example above is equal to Gulliver's 5 SSU. If the official figures of only 2.5 SSU were correct, the Turkana stock population would be below the margin where people could be properly fed, and there would be no reserves to overcome a bad year. Official figures are probably too low, but nonetheless the livestock situation in Turkanaland today still seems critical.

Corresponding figures for Toposa herd sizes are not available at the moment. The situation there may also have recently deteriorated due to the political disturbances which in 1985 reached the area.

For an exhaustive description of livestock management and related practices, reference is made again to Gulliver (1951 and 1955) and to the publications of Rada Dyson-Hudson and Terrence McCabe.

3.3.5 HISTORY

Social systems are not only influenced by the existing ecological and political situation but are also a product of the respective society's history. Toposa and Turkana have a shared ancestry, the two social systems are thus offspring from the same roots. In the following chapters, the common beginning and separate history of Turkana and Toposa shall be briefly outlined. It will be shown later how the two different historical experiences have contributed to the evolution of different generation- and age-set systems. The main historical factors in provoking change seem to be migrations and outside influences from other tribes including colonizing Europeans.

The wide theoretical implications raised by the term 'change' cannot be discussed here. In this study, the way in which change takes place is not regarded as being imposed onto a society from without. Rather, there seem to be different potential layouts of the society's socio-political structure or of parts of it. The actual layout is then triggered by internal or external forces or stress, and changes may be reversible or non-reversible, according to the specific conditions - for example, it will be shown below how the change in the Toposa generation-set system is reversible while in the Turkana system it is not.

There is more material available on Turkana than on Toposa history. This reflects the fact that the Toposa are still much more remote than the Turkana and that European contacts and the colonial period were less troublesome in the Toposa area than they were in Turkanaland. The Toposa were never engaged in warlike resistance against the European intruders to the extent to which the Turkana were who had and still have to face its consequences.

3.3.5.1. THE ATEKER GENESIS

As mentioned above, Turkana and Toposa have a common origin, both being part of the Ateker group. In the following, the genesis of these now distinct but still closely related ethnic groups shall be briefly described. Credit for having discovered the historical facts goes to John Lamphear, and as my own information on these early times is rather scanty, much of the following is based on Lamphear (1976a:61-200).

The area now occupied by the different Ateker groups was inhabited long before their arrival. Remnants of Stone Age cultures have been found in many parts of the region, and the Lake Turkana basin even seems to be a cradle of mankind. The hominide findings at Lothagam (3.7 million years) and Kanapoi (2.9 million years)[34], for example, are among the oldest ever recorded, and as recently as 1984, following on from the 1971 find of a 1.5 million year old homo erectus at Koobi Fora on the eastern side of Lake Turkana, another 1.6 million year old skeleton was unearthed on the western shore of the lake at Nariokotome[35].

'There has been a long tradition of pastoral exploitation of the area around Lake Turkana. People, probably Cushitic-speaking groups, herded small stock in the lake basin about 3000 BC, and cultivated grain as well. There is evidence of cattle in the Lake Turkana basin from the 3rd millennnium BC. Some of the people who lived along the lake during this period apparently also fished. Kalenjin-speaking Southern Nilotic cultivators and herdsmen moved down from the southeastern corner of the Sudan in the middle of the 1st millennium BC, followed by a wave of Maa-speaking Eastern Nilotes early in the 1st millennium AD.'[36]

The time before c. 1500: Oral traditions of the Ateker recall a time when their ancestors lived in the north, in an area which is now the south-eastern part of the Republic of Sudan. These people, called by Lamphear **Primordial Central Paranilotes**, were most probably hunters and gatherers. At one point they must have started a southward movement, splitting up into two groups, an eastern one which Lamphear calls **Proto-Koten-Magos group** and a western one which was influenced by and soon joined another southbound movement of agricultural **Northern Paranilotes** and **Lwo** groups. In the course of that contact the western group of the Primordial Central Paranilotes acquired an agricultural complex, and thus we may call the whole group of western migrants **Agricultural Paranilotes**. Both the western and the eastern migratory movement entered into the area which is nowadays called Karamoja and which at that time was occupied by 'Fringe Cushitic' (Ngikuliak, Teuso, Tepes, Nyangea) and Kalenjin speakers who were either expelled, incorporated by the newcomers (eg. the Nyangea section of Toposa) or were able to retain their independent existence in a niche (eg. Teuso/Ik, Turnbulls 'mountain people').

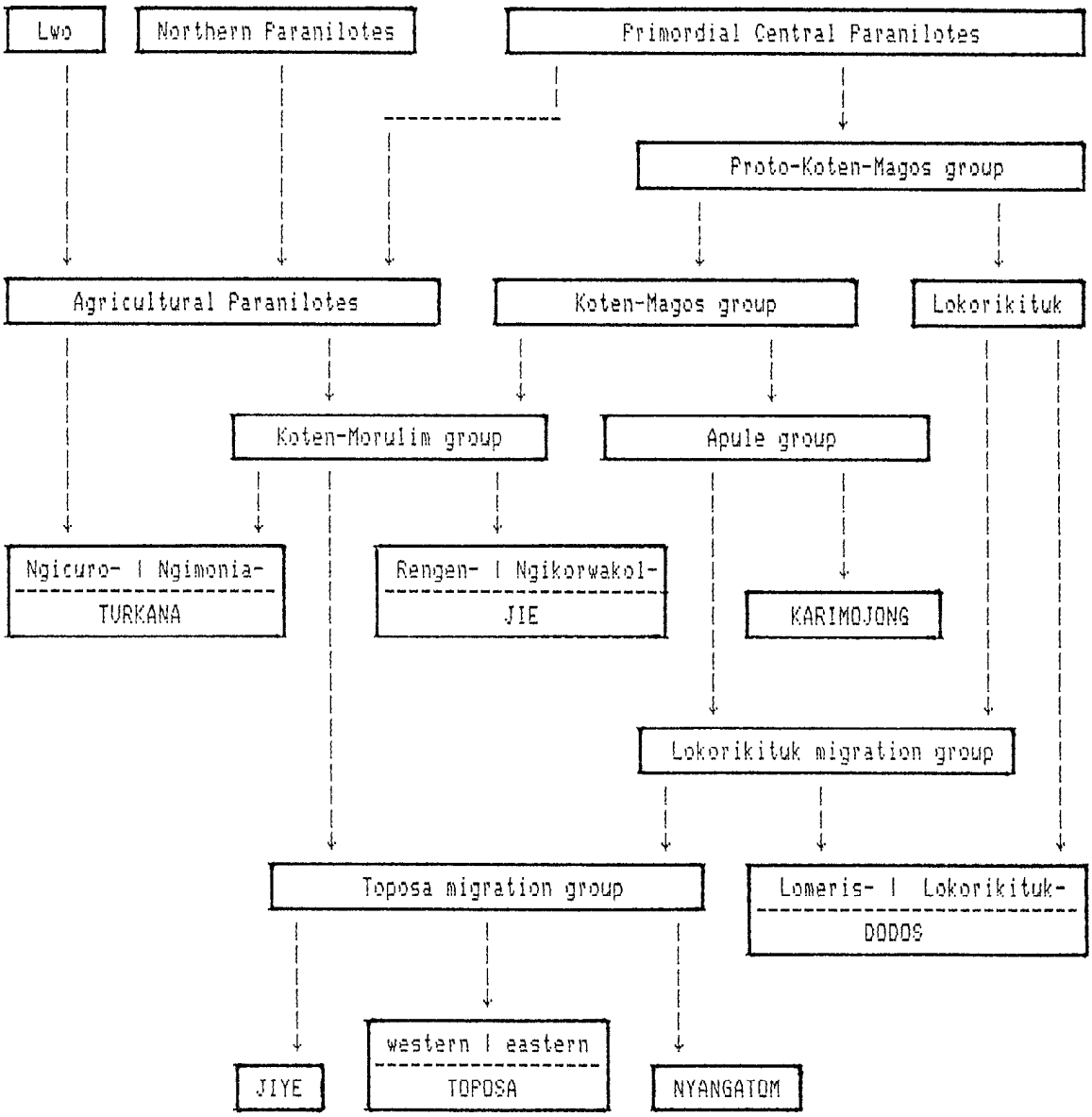


Fig. 2 The Ateker genesis
(based on Lamphear 1976a)

Still before ca. 1500, a group of the western Agricultural Paranilotes had set off eastwards down the escarpment and reached the plains, forming the core of the Ngicuro Turkana major division. A second wave, of pastoral migrants, would follow some 200 years later and become the Ngimonia Turkana major division.

Around 1500, the eastern migratory movement had acquired its pastoral complex, for ecological reasons, as Lamphear (1976a:78) argues.

The formation of the different Ateker groups, in its earlier as well as in its later stages, is a complicated process of fusions and fissions. I have tried to systematize Lamphear's (1976a) findings and to combine and display them graphically as shown in Fig.2.

The time from c. 1500 to c. 1850: Throughout this period the process of fission and fusion was continuous; splinter groups moved away from their home areas, and during their migration they merged with others; alliances were formed and changed; and as a result, among others, the seven distinct ethnic groups called Turkana, Toposa, Jie, Karimojong, Dodos, Nyangatom and Jiye were established.

These processes of fission and fusion were often, if not always, initiated by younger men at the cattle camps. Still today, cattle camps are sometimes far away from the area of permanent settlement. Toposa told us that their present area of residence was where there had once before been cattle camps. Sometimes the young men, together with their girl friends, went off without the consent of their fathers, taking the animals with them. The old generation stayed behind, and the young generation started a new community. 'The concept of a new group being formed by the break-away of young men going to cattle-camps is a very popular one in (Ateker) oral tradition.'[37] As an example, the Turkana story of Moru a Nayece shall be presented, in a version collected by Lamphear:

> Long ago, an old woman called Nayece came from the west from Najie gathering wild fruits. She came to the hill now called Moru a Nayece near the Tarash River, where she settled. Then a bull (engiro) got lost in Najie and also came east, following the Tarash River, until he came to the place where Nayece was living. During the day the bull would go out to graze, and during the night he would sleep at Nayece's compound. Then eight young men, the children of Nayece, came from the west searching for her and for the bull which was lost. They tracked the bull and they found him together with Nayece, who was drying wild fruits she had collected. They remained there for some time and saw that there were many wild fruits and good grass. Then they returned to Najie and told the people there about the good area they had found. And so a large group of young men and girls took cattle and went to the east as though they were going to *ngauyoi* [dry- season cattle camps]. They grazed their herds at Moru a Nayece, and they decided to settle there. So at first the Turkana were people of the *ngauyoi*, and their real home had been Najie (1976a:91)

According to Lamphear the old woman Nayece represents the first wave of Turkana migrants, i.e. the Ngikatapa agriculturalists who were still highly dependent on gathering wild fruit. These migrants were then joined by the young pastoralists from Najie.

3.3.5.2. TURKANA: EXPANSION

From the second half of the 18th century until the middle of the 19th century, the Turkana expanded their territory in all directions, at the expense of Toposa, Nyangatom and Dasanec in the north, Dodos and Karimojong in the west, Pokot in the south and Samburu (and, more indirectly, Rendille and Boran) in the southeast. The former inhabitants of the occupied areas were either expelled or swallowed up. 'Turkana expansion in many areas was probably about as much a process of large-scale assimilations of rivals, who 'became Turkana' in the face of mounting ecological and raiding pressures, as a direct armed invasion and occupation of the territory by the Turkana themselves.'[38] The Siger people, for example, were partly incorporated into Turkana society as the Ngisiger clan; another part took refuge with the Dasanec, becoming one of their sections, and the rest escaped to the Pokot and became one of their clans.[39]

It is not quite clear just why it was the Turkana who were able to spread at the expense of other groups. On the other hand it is very clear that this expansion must have placed considerable stress on their socio-political system.

Lamphear (forthcoming b) argues that it might have been a combination of several factors which enabled the Turkana to disperse and swallow up other groups. His first argument is that the Turkana brought with them a breed of Zebu cattle which was better adapted to the harsh environment than the long-horned Sanga type owned by some of their rivals. The complete defeat of the Siger group can at any rate be explained by the fact that their Sanga cattle were decimated by a terrible drought at the end of the 18th century, while the Turkana Zebu cattle had suffered comparatively few losses. Another reason given by Lamphear for the superiority of the Turkana is that their society was backed up by close trade links with their western neighbours, especially the Jie who supplied them with grain and iron weapons. Lamphear cites one of his informants as saying:[40]

> The Kor, Upe, Malire <Samburu etc., Pokot, Dasanec, H.K.M.> and Karimojong were all defeated and driven from this land by our ancestors. All those people were defeated with spears made by the Labwor and brought to us by our Jie friends.

Finally, Lamphear argues that the Turkana had changed deliberately their generation-set system and strengthened its age-set aspect, to enhance their military power:

> A fundamental change also had taken place with the generation-set system. While the Putiro <i.e. Ngiputiro, H.K.M.> were still initiating it had been possible to convene the congregation of senior elders at Chokochok in central Eturkan <i.e. Turkanaland, H.K.M.>. As the advance <of Turkana expansion> pushed further and further afield, however, such concerted action became impossible and generation-set activity came to be focused on individual local areas. The system itself took on a new form, and even the basic principle that the initiations of alternate 'father-son' generations were supposed to follow one upon another was disregarded, and they began to be held concurrently. This was probably less a 'deterioration' of the original model than a creative adaption which allowed for the more efficient mobilization of young fighting men, probably in-

> spired to some extent by the age-system of Maa-speakers encountered during the expansion. Nonetheless, it did signal a marked decrease in the traditional authority of the senior elders who previously had provided such an important focus of Turkana group identity. (forthcoming b)

The notion underlying Lamphear's statement is that the Turkana changed their generation-set system into an age-set system. This assumption, most probably based on Gulliver's (1958) description of the Turkana generation-set system, is incorrect according to my own information. The Turkana did indeed change their generation-set system at that time, but not into an age-set system (see ch.4.5.2). The differences between generation- and age-set systems have not yet been dealt with in detail (see chs.4.2.2 and 4.2.3), but at this point it can still be said, that there is little evidence that a generation-set system is less militarily efficient than an age-set system.

Lamphear's argument is however convincing in one important respect: the increasing decentralization of Turkana society caused by the rapid expansion resulted in power shifting away from the elders, as they were no longer able to coordinate their actions efficiently. This made way for the emergence of powerful single leading figures who were prophet-diviners (emuron, pl. ngimurok) and were able to organize concerted military action. Their influence diminished when the Turkana expansion came to a halt at the end of the 19th century, but rose again when British colonization provoked armed resistance.

3.3.5.3. TURKANA: COLONIZATION

> "I don't really remember the year when the White Man came to take the animals, but I remember they took many camels. ... The enemy came and started chasing people. People were rushing for their lives. ... And the enemy had come to claim for the Turkana. They took all camels, it was that way, it was that way. Then later, this enemy came to raid us. Then we went to the bush, but the enemy had come first here. They had collected all the camels and cows, and they had assembled all the animals here. Then the enemy was shooting, and their guns were saying "Pah, pah, pah". Then I asked "Where are the ewoi-fruits falling from?" <L. had not seen guns and bullets before.> When people were running in the bush, I got hold of a sheep, and I started milking it. When the enemy was shooting, the leaves were falling in the bush. Then my mother came and called me to the bush. That's when they killed Auko."
>
> (Lotoya, 16.5.1987 at Kadekaiken, transl. by Pauline Ekaran)

> "That time there was fight, but we did not have guns, we were fighting with sticks . Then people bought guns from Marille <Dasanec>, and all over. Then they fought with guns. But when the government came, it took all our guns. - The Ngiputiro <extinct generation-set, H.K.M.> used to fight with sticks; then when you <the Europeans, H.K.M.> came, you stopped us from fighting. And we used even to fight with the wrist knife. But when you came you brought us to one tree for peace. - I just remember when they came, and they chased and killed people. And we were also fierce, and we could kill them. Then they were able to beat us because they were using guns. And then they said they were bringing peace. And we were told to make an agreement, and we were to give out animals. All right. Then we became together as it is now. - We were very small by then. And we can't remember all that was happening. They came shooting, and we all ran away, after when they took our animals. I was about this size (pointing out the size of a 7-year old boy). So we can just see now, such a boy does not know a lot. Then, when we

grew up, we grew up knowing of peace. Then we stopped killing each other. Then they came, and they started jailing us. When we fought amongst ourselves, we were taken to prison. - And then they brought Christianity, and medicine.

We used to fight with spears and shields, like that ..., and whenever you lost one step you were killed. We were very fierce, we used to kill them also. They were also killing us. Then peace came up to now. Then we just shared tobacco. Then we were given money, and we used not to eat posho. And everything they used to eat we eat nowadays. - If it was that old time, I could have shot you (laughing)."

(Ekori, 15.5.1987 at Aipa, transl. by Thomas Ekamais)

Around the turn of the century, Turkana expansion had come to a halt and relations with neighbouring people had become more or less stable (Lamphear 1976c:230ff.), insofar as relations between people who habitually raid each other can be regarded as being stable.

In contrast to the Toposa area, however, which was not of much interest to the 'outside world', Turkana territory now became a place where outsiders' commercial and controversial political interests played an increasing role. Initially, northern Turkanaland was attached to the British Colonial Administration of Uganda which however showed little interest in the area; the Ethiopians took advantage of this situation to extend their influence in the area. This went so far as to lead to the establishment of 'chiefs' and the distribution of firearms to the Turkana for use against the British. Northern Turkanaland remained a bone of contention between the British and the Ethiopians until in 1919 the whole of Turkanaland came de facto (officially in 1926) under one (British East Africa) administration.[41]

In 1898, ‘H.H. Austin led the first official British expedition into Turkanaland. Like most of his predecessors, Austin had great disdain for the Turkana, whom he categorized as 'treacherous tigers' with whom it was 'useless to try and maintain friendly intercourse', and he had a series of clashes with them. A second expedition he led in 1901 was a close re- enactment of the first.’ (Lamphear 1976c:230f.)

Since then, through a series of misunderstandings and mutual aggression, an atmosphere of distrust and hostility built up between the British and Turkana, leading to several clashes, the climax of which was the 1918 'Labur Patrol' where the British managed to 'pacify' the Turkana.

In principle, Turkana were not unwilling to cooperate with the British. Some of them, especially in the south, even paid 'hut taxes', most probably because they expected to receive protection from the British against livestock raids. Stock raiding is (still today) a permanent threat in the area, and not only the Turkana indulge in this 'time honoured'[42] method of building up or rebuilding their herds. Their neighbours do it to the same extent. It seems, however, that the British blamed mainly the Turkana for the ongoing raids, maybe because Turkana actions were more spectacular. In contrast to their neighbours at that time, the Turkana had influential war-leaders, backed up by famous prophet-diviners (*ngimurok*). The most powerful of these leaders was Ebei who, according to British estimates, was able to raise temporary armies of two thousand men.[43] Ebei even sent a message

to the British that he would attack them and drive them out of the area. Although Ebei never put his threat into action, tensions between British and Turkana increased.

In 1909, after a rinderpest epidemic had decimated their herds[44], Turkana raided the Pokot. In a British punitive campaign, 30 Turkana were killed and 16,000 head of livestock confiscated. In the same year the Karimojong raided the Turkana, killing several hundred people and driving away a considerable number of their animals. Initially the British blamed the Turkana again, though then came to realise that this time it had been the Karimojong who were responsible. They were fined, but the Turkana must have been puzzled by the fact that, while 16,000 animals had been taken from them, the Karimojong needed pay only 300, of which only 200 were returned to the Turkana.[45]

In 1911, similar incidents occurred. Turkana herds had been decimated by a severe drought, and they raided the Samburu and the Pokot. But 'although heavy Karimojong attacks and even some Pokot counter-raids took place at the same time, it was only the Turkana who were fined.'[46]

The Turkana, for whom stock-raiding was a legitimate means of acquiring livestock, could hardly be expected to accept a 'Pax Britannica' approach to the problem. The British who came and fined them by confiscating animals were just another enemy who raided them, and unfortunately,

> these Europeans had no herds of their own which the Turkana could raid in return. Therefore, the Turkana sought to in- crease their raiding of those people who had come under British administration: the Pokot, Samburu and some tribes in Karamoja. (Lamphear 1976c:234)

This infuriated the British even further, they carried out more punitive campaigns against the Turkana (in 1912, 1914, 1915), confiscated more livestock and succeeded in provoking only more Turkana raids. In this fashion the escalation mounted. Ebei was even able to gain the support of the Dasanec and Nyangatom, northern neighbours of the Turkana.

> With armies as large as three thousand men, Ebei attacked the Pokot, Karimojong and Dodos during the first half of 1917. The Turkana and their allies skirmished with British patrols which came out to intercept them, and even attacked Government posts in southern Turkanaland. Large numbers of southern Turkana 'friendlies' also began to join Ebei's forces. The British reaction to the onslaughts was one of sheer panic, especially when large numbers of terrified Pokot came flooding back onto the highland farms of European settlers to the south. Suddenly, it was feared that the Turkana would swallow up these areas reserved for white settlement. ... Therefore it was decided that the power of these 'savage nomadic people hopelessly incapable of even becoming useful members of ... [British Colonial] Society' must be broken once and for all.
>
> Accordingly, Turkanaland was declared a military district in 1917 and the British set about amassing a large expedition for what they hoped would be the final invasion of Turkanaland. This force, known as the 'Turkana Patrol' or 'Labur Patrol', was composed of over 700 regulars, 600 armed levies and huge numbers of porters, drivers and other casuals drawn from East Africa, Uganda and the Sudan. ... It was equipped with heavy weapons including machine guns, mortars and even a field gun. (Lamphear 1976c:240f.)

Although the British troops killed some 350 of Ebei's warriors, they were not able to defeat them militarily. Turkana resistance was however broken in a much more effective way:

> By 1918 the British had adopted a policy which seriously undermined not only the offensive capabilities of the Turkana, but their very ability to survive. Like other military commanders before them, the officers in Turkanaland had begun to realize that it was simpler to starve a people into submission than to wage costly campaigns against them. Between 1916 and 1918, an estimated quarter-million livestock were confiscated from the (Ngikamatak section of the)[47] Turkana and many more were slaughtered by various expeditions and garrisons for their rations. ... By the end of 1918, the northern sections had lost nearly all their cattle, and as late as 1933 many Turkana herds had still not been rebuilt to their former size. In the face of these conditions, the primary concern of the Turkana became subsistence instead of resistance, and the following of ... Ebei simply melted away. (Lamphear 1976c:241f.)
>
> Turkana resistance, though now unco-ordinated and spotty, continued well on into the 1920s, making the Turkana one of the last peoples anywhere on the African continent to be brought effectively under European colonial rule. (Lamphear 1976c:242f.)

In the context of this study, the Labur Patrol is of special interest. The confiscation of hundreds of thousands of animals did not only starve the Turkana into submission but also had its effect on the Turkana social system. For quite a while many Turkana were not able to raise the animal bridewealth needed for marriage which resulted in an increase in the number of 'illegitimate children', and this in turn affected the functioning of their generation-set system. Here, only the historical fact shall be recorded. The mechanisms by which an external stress of this kind has an impact on the performance of a generation-set system (resulting in its change), will be discussed in full detail below (especially in ch.4.5.2).

3.3.5.4. THE TOPOSA

When the Toposa reached their present territory at the beginning of the last century, they came in two streams, one west and one east of the Didinga Hills. They probably pushed northwards the Jiye who, of the same roots as the Toposa, had come earlier from Najie. Some Murle living in the vast plains north of the Didinga Hills were incorporated into the Toposa Paringa section, while others escaped to the north. The western group settled mainly beside the Singaita River and the eastern group mainly around River Loyoro. The Ngikor group of the Toposa (now a territorial section), who seem to have been the leaders of this expedition, brought with them from the sacred groves of Najie to River Loyoro not only a black stone (which then became their new ritual centre) but also the very name of that river: the Loyoro in what is now Dodos territory is the river where the Ngikor lived before their final migration.

Initially the eastern Toposa also occupied the Mogilla mountains, but later withdrew when they were subjected to heavy raiding pressure from the Turkana. There is evidence that at least some of them settled for a while at Moruakipi[48] before finally establishing themselves in what is their pre-

sent territory. Since the middle of the last century the situation seems to have been quite stable, interrupted only by the usual quarrels with neighbours over livestock, water and grazing.

Towards the end of the 19th century, Ethiopian and Swahili traders and ivory hunters intruded onto Toposa territory, whose inhabitants they generally remained on good terms with.

The British administration of Southern Sudan was just not interested in the remote and inhospitable part of the country where the Toposa lived, but when the Kenyan administration continued to demand that the Toposa be "administered" in order to prevent further raids and counter-raids,[49] the Colonial Office was forced into taking action. Finally, in 1927, a post was established in Kapoeta which remains the only administrative centre of Toposaland up to the present day. After some scattered clashes with the Toposa who tried to defend their land from the intruders, an extensive 'punitive' campaign was launched, and the Toposa had to accept the military superiority of the British.[50] In contrast with what happened to the Turkana, no further fighting occurred between Toposa and the British and the Toposa never suffered the incredible livestock confiscations to which the Turkana were subjected during the years 1915 to 1918. On the whole the Toposa were better off and until today have been allowed (with a few exceptions) to mind their own business, and thus retain to a much higher degree their traditional way of life and their indigenous social and political institutions.

The first civil war in Sudan from 1955 to 1972 did not touch Toposaland, and only a few individual Toposa were involved as fighters with the Anya-Nya (the anti-government force at that time). When in 1983 civil war in southern Sudan broke out again, it took more than two years for the disturbances to reach the area. Late in 1985 however the area became highly insecure due to the fighting between Government troops and the SPLA (Sudanese People's Liberation Army), and it seems that the civilian population is suffering heavily from the war. Exact information cannot be obtained however as the area is at present inaccesible to foreigners.

3.3.6. SOCIO-POLITICAL SYSTEM

Compared with other ethnic groups, the Ateker seem to have few formal and institutionalized organizational features. The main and primary social unit is the (polygynous) nuclear family which manages its life in its own independent way. Cooperation with others, even if it be only temporary,

is needed, however, to overcome the crucial challenges of the harsh environment. Thus, each family is entangled in a wide web of social connections of mutual aid and obligation.

What makes it so difficult for the outside observer is that these social networks are rarely institutionalized, rather they are created by the changing interests of individuals and therefore highly flexible. Territorial sections, clans, neighbourhoods and the generation- and age-sets provide frames of action and they may be exploited by individuals to their advantage, but they do not really determine individuals' behaviour. Thus, observers tend to state that territorial sections, clans and even the generation- and age-sets have only little significance.[51] But the institutions are there, and they are used when needed. As Dismas Karenga expressed it talking about the age-sets: it is a 'standby institution' and can only be detected when it is activated in order to be used.[52]

Of course, individual behaviour is also constrained by features of the social organization. But these constraints are only insofar effective as other individuals put them into operation.

This applies in general to the Toposa as well as to the Turkana. Toposa settlement patterns are more stable, however, as are their socio-political institutions. The Turkana territory is much larger, in area and in relation to the population, and the comparatively recent Turkana expansion has prevented socio-political institutions from stabilizing. But the "atomization" (Gulliver 1958:918) of Turkana society should not be explained only by historical facts: every few years a disintegrative process takes place when a severe drought forces the starving people to exploit every single niche of pasture and thus to split up into small and highly mobile groups. This process is characterforming: people seem to be highly individualistic and always ready to gain whatever profit they can for themselves, but on the other hand are also charming and thoroughly hospitable. In any case, Soper is right in saying: "The Turkana's philosophy of life is shaped by his environment which allows no margin for material or spiritual luxuries" (1985:23). The environment also forces people to be conservative: an experiment which goes wrong could mean death.

Turkana society is much more diversified than Toposa society; while it is still possible to speak of an 'average' Toposa household and its way of life (with all the due caution required by the concept 'average'), this is not possible in the case of the Turkana. Statements like "the Turkana are X" or "the Turkana do Y" are, in many cases, an oversimplification. Historically, Turkana society is an amalgamation of many different elements as shown above. In addition, there is a wide diversity in present conditions. A Turkana of the Ngikwatela territorial section may lead a transhumant life with his cattle between the mountains and the plains, always alert for fear of raids (or on a raid himself). A member of the Ngiboceros section living close to Lake Turkana will never have seen a raider, again there is less rain here, he cannot keep cattle and has thus become a camel herder living on the dry plains. In the south, there are even agriculturists: the Ngikateok. All are called Turkana, and although they have plenty in common, the differences may be almost as great. It can probably be

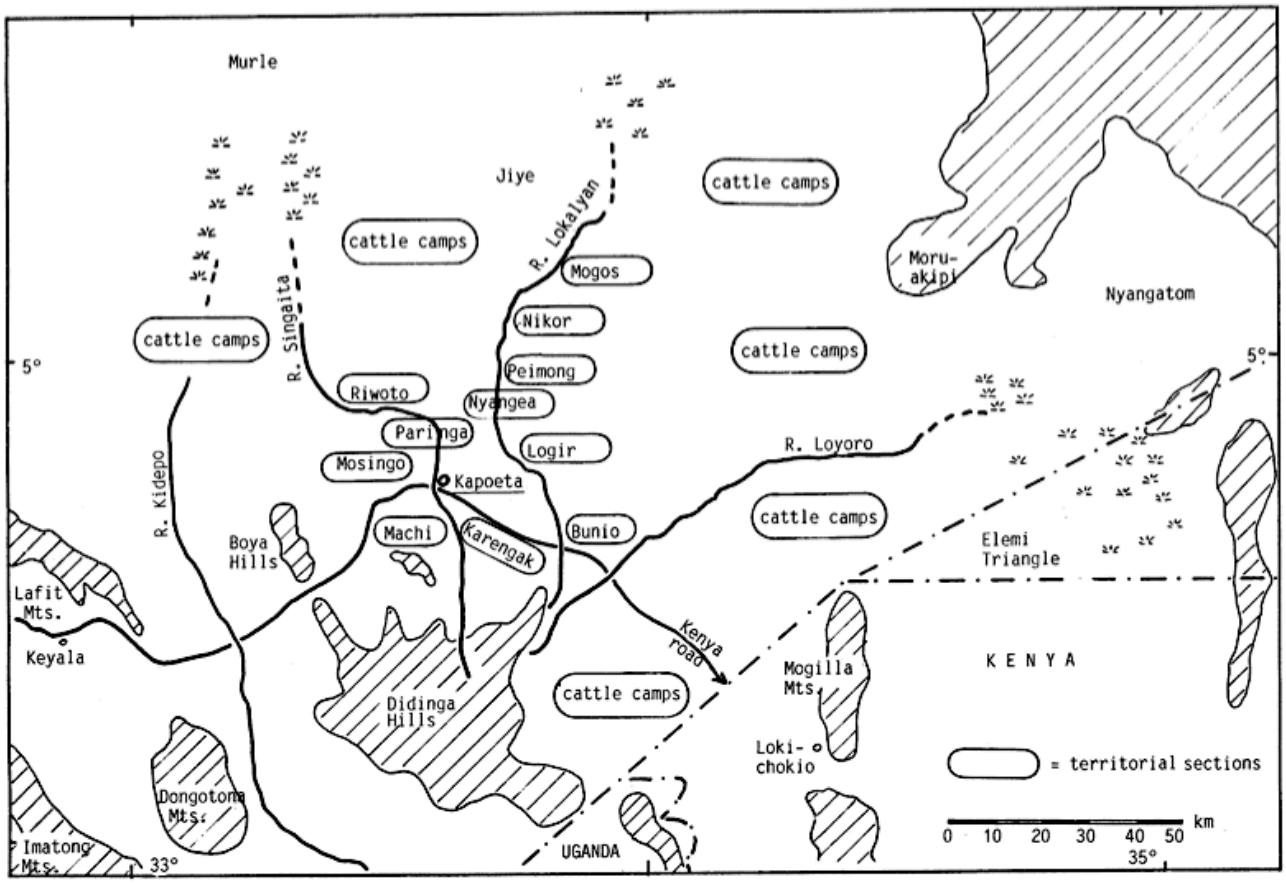
said that cultural differences between Toposa and their neighbouring Turkana are smaller than those between northern and southern Turkana.

3.3.6.1. TERRITORIAL SECTIONS AND ADMINISTRATIVE UNITS

The **Toposa** distinguish 11 territorial sections,[53] according to their areas of permanent settlement: The sections are grouped into two major divisions called 'Eastern' and 'Western' Toposa. This division goes back to the time when the Toposa reached their present homeland in two streams, as described above.

Eastern Toposa	(Ngitoposa kalo kide)
Ngikor	(the dancers)
Nginyangea	(name probably not of Toposa origin)
Ngibunio	
Ngipeimong	(those who killed only one bull)
Ngimogos	(the proud ones)
Ngilogir	(name probably not of Toposa origin)
Western Toposa	(Ngitoposa kalo to)
Ngiriwoto	(those of the west)
Ngimosingo	(those of the rhino)
Ngimaci	(the eloquent ones)
Ngiparinga	
Ngikarengak	(those living on red soil)

Table 3 Toposa territorial sections



Map 4 Toposa territorial sections

Administrative units are called Karengak, Lokamoru, Kapoeta, Riwoto/Lomeyan, Riwoto/ Cumakori, Mosingo, Mogos, Machi, Jiye, Bunio, Nikor, Nyangea, Peimong A, Peimong B, Paringa, Loyoro, Kalokupe, Logir, i.e. some traditional sections have been subdivided, some new administrative units have been created like Loyoro where different sections mingle, and the Jiye in the north have been incorporated into the Toposa Administration. There is an Assistant Commissioner (who was non-Toposa until 1982 when for the first time a Toposa was appointed) and a Toposa head-chief in Kapoeta and a subchief for each administrative unit in the respective area.

For the Toposa themselves, the modified pattern of administrative units seems to have little relevance. When in 1986, for example, ICRC (International Committee of the Red Cross) established a famine camp at Narus (on the SudanKenya road, 40 kms from Lokichokio), the refugees grouped themselves according to the traditional 11-section pattern.

As among the Toposa, **Turkana** sections are grouped into two major divisions, Ngicuro (also called Ngikamatak) and Ngimonia (also called Ngisir, or a part of it), reflecting the two waves of arrivals in Turkanaland. The Ngichuro sections occupy the west and south, and the Ngimonia sections are

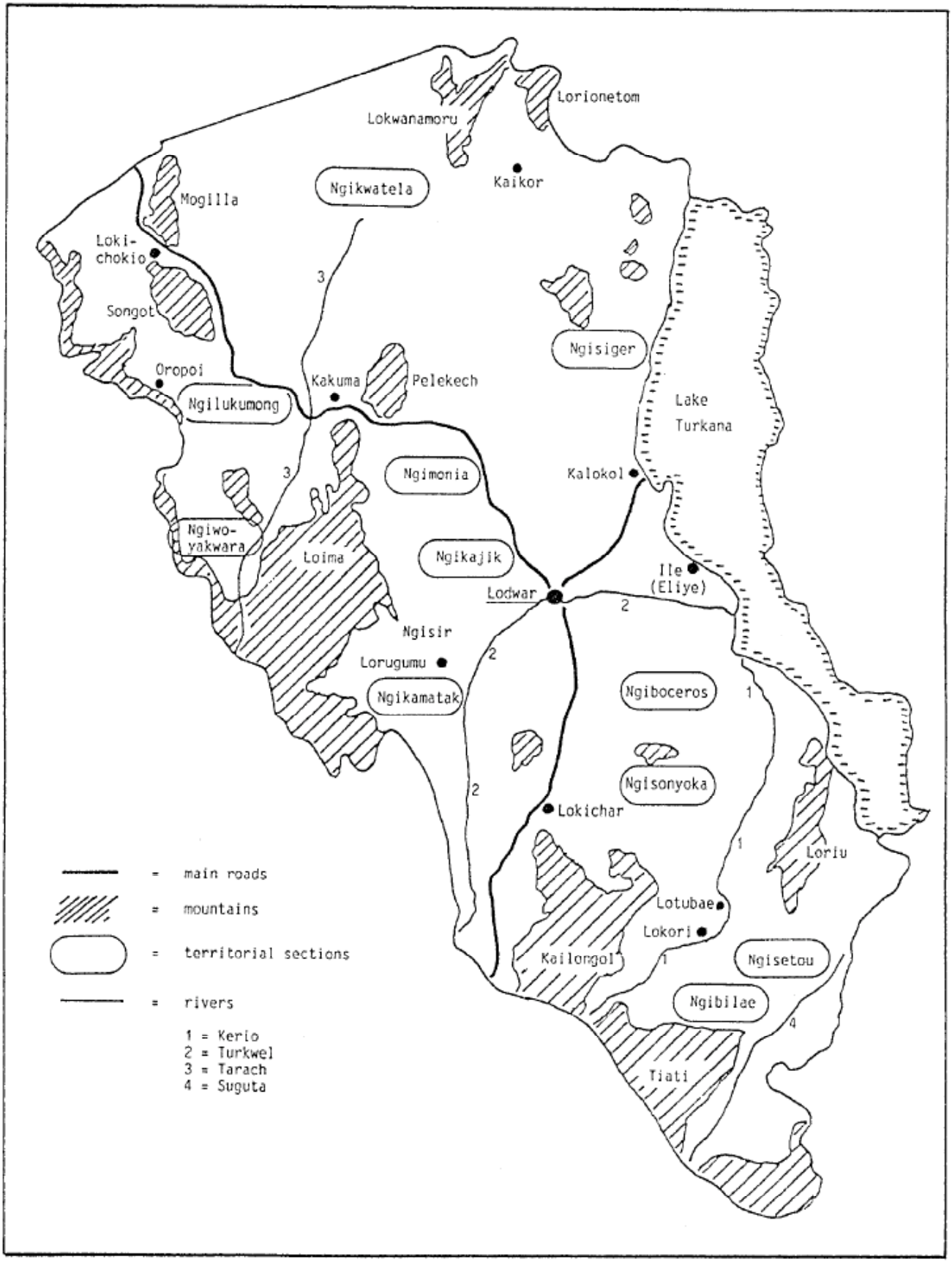
located in the central area, in the east and in the north.[54] Sections refer to the Turkana wet season areas, i.e. a man's section is where he has his ere.

Ngichuro	(the people of the wells) <?>
Ngilukumong	(those of the oxen with down-sweeping horns)
Ngiwoyakwara	(those of the long spears)
Ngikamatak	(the drinkers <living at the rivers>)
Ngibelae	(those of the broken <fighting?> sticks)
Ngikebotok	(the poor people) <not recognized by all people as a section, maybe only the destitutes at different irrigation projects in the south>
Ngimonia	(the people of the bush) <?>
Ngikwatela	(those of the white area)
Ngijie (lu Akorumwa Anarengan)	= Jie (of the red beads) <named after the Turkana forefathers they wear necklaces of red beads>
Ngiyepakuno	(cutters of ekinoit tree[55]) <for the fences of their craals>
Ngisiger	(name probably not of Turkana origin)
Anyangataak	(those of the yellow calves)
Ngiboceros	
Ngikajik	
Ngisonyoka	(those of the sheep tails) <rich in sheep>
Ngiesetou	

Table 4 Turkana territorial sections

Gulliver (1951:57) mentions some more names, but they were rejected by my informants as not being proper sectional names. In most cases it was stated that they were names of sub-sections. The above listed territorial sections are compiled from different own sources (mainly Lomorukai and Akunyuk) and vary slightly from the ones shown in Map 5, as some are not included in the ECOSYSTEMS 1985 report which, however, also shows a Ngimonia and a Ngisir section. These are names for one of the two major divisions and reflect the Turkana habit of calling some smaller sections by the name of the major division.

Although in theory Toposa and 'Turkana know no rights in pasture land at all'[56], sections control access to grazing and water, to varying degrees, according to the environmental circumstances. If, for example, Gullivers (1951) account is correct, then membership of a particular section in northern Turkanaland is of little relevance for access to pasture, while in southern Turkanaland, according to Dyson- Hudson/McCabe (1985), it is, because 'in South Turkana, plains and highland areas are interspersed, so that water sources and both lowland and highland pastures can be included within a bounded area. This is impossible in North Turkana, where most of the vast plains areas are distant from the highland areas.'[57] In other words: Where wet season grazing areas (highlands) and dry season grazing areas (plains) are fairly close, rights of access tend to be defended by members of a section. Where, however, wet and dry season grazing areas are rather distant (most parts of northern Turkana and Toposa), the notion of sectional division applies only to the *nyere/ere* areas,



Map 5 Turkana territorial sections
(adapted from ECOSYSTEMS 1985)

the areas of permanent settlement and /or wet season pastures. In the dry season grazing areas, no sectional demarcations are known, and herds from different sections mingle freely.

Neither in Toposa- nor in Turkanaland do territorial sections have a corporate quality, and there are no sectional leaders. The generation- and age-set system is vaguely 'linked with the section, mainly because both are based on good wet season habitation'.[58]

Administrative units in Turkana District are (in the order: north, south / east, west):

Divisions: Lokitaung, Kakuma, Central, Katilu, Lokori

Locations:
Lokitaung: Ngikwatela, Kaaling, Ngisiger,
Kakuma: Lokichokio, Mogilla, Pelekech, Kalobeyei,
Central: Ngikajik, Lodwar, Ngisir, Kalakol, Kangatotha, Kerio
Katilu: Lorengippi, Kalapata, Loyapat
Lokori: Loriu, Lomelo, Ngibilae

Head of the Turkana District civil Administration is a District Commissioner. Divisions are administered by District Officers, and each location has its Turkana chief. Locations are sub-divided into sub-locations each with a Turkana sub- chief.

3.3.6.2. CLANS (*emacar*, pl. *ngimacarin* = animal brand)

> "If my cow is lost, and that cow goes with livestock of different people, and when I go to find it, and when I am asked: 'What is showing that cow is yours?' it is the *emacar* <clan brand>. If somebody had got that cow over there and if there was no *emacar*, even though that cow belonged to me, that person would refuse to return that cow. Even if we fight, he would refuse to return the cow, and even if other people would come and judge the case, they would blame me, and they would ask me ' Where is your *emacar* on this cow?' That is the importance of the *emacar*. ... This *emacar* of mine, I made it with my own hands. And everybody places his emacar in his own style. ... The *emacar* is, among all Turkana, only branded in the morning. The tool is an iron stick like the lower part of the spear. Even the shaft of the spear is sometimes taken. It is heated and bent into shape. Then, when the livestock is branded, the iron is placed into fire. When it becomes red I take it and brand the animal with it. ... You said a true thing before, because the *ngimacarin* of Ngidoca <Akunyuk's clan> are many. It is true. We could fight because of a cow. We could even fight so that someone would be killed, because another man's *emacar* is the same as mine. We would fight because I say the cow is mine, and also the other man would say it is his. Such things happen. But by that, Ngidoca would be divided by hatred. And therefore we place the *emacar* differently. ... People of one emacar cannot marry each other. Also the ones who have different *ngimacarin* inside Ngidoca cannot marry. The man would be called *ekapilan* <sorcerer>. ... All people of one *emacar* are like brothers. We do say 'All Ngidoca are one family.' ... There is a communication, and we share. Food for example. Or even a few animals if someone has problems. We help each other with collecting for bridewealth. With regards to food, there is no problem. If your family is starving at home and you find a camel of a clansman, you can even kill that camel, no problem. When a bad drought has come and your livestock is finished, and your clansman has still got his, he ... might give you a cow, and

another one five goats, and another one one donkey. Your *emacar*. That's how we help each other. ... And if I come to a different area where I know nobody, I would be assisted by the people of my *emacar*. They might even kill a goat for me. Also others would assist me with food. You see, people are different. There are the ones who are bad, there are the ones who are good. Even in the other *ngimacarin* a good person can help my stomach. It is that way. ... If I would get stranded in an area where nobody knows me, I would first of all look out for the brands of Ngidoca, the marks on the livestock, before I go to anybody's home. I will go to the *awi*, where these animals are around. And people would ask 'Which person is this?' and I would answer 'I am related to that *emacar*. I am not related to you. I am related to that livestock. I will eat these animals.' And the people will have nothing to say against it. They will not ask me anything again. They will say 'This person belongs to this awi ... come, come, this is our awi.' I will be given a skin to sit on, and the people would ask me about my where- abouts. I would tell them 'I am the son of so-and-so, I am from Mogilla, all my animals are finished, even my women have gone, I'm left alone. I am only related to these animals.' And that would be it. That is the *emacar*."

(Akunyuk at Lopur, 4.7.1987, transl. by Peter Muzee)

There are 32 **Toposa** clans:[59]

(1)	
Ngikabuni	
Ngisigiar	*
Ngingonyir	
Ngibuya	*
Ngimamteker	(those without relatives)
Ngeona	(those who like to play)
(2)	
Ngidodoso	*
Ngijie	*
Ngiteuso	*
Ngirwasuwa	(those of the iron chains)
Ngikatap	* (the porridge people)
Nginyoto	
(3)	
Ngikateok	
Ngikurier	
Nginyangea	*
Ngiboca	(the good neighbours)
Ngilobal	
Ngikolokurwo	
Ngisogata	
Ngimunyomerio	
Ngikolitaka	(those of the white and black calves)
Ngimogos	*
Ngikarowok	
Ngipoot	*
Ngingelepo	
Ngitikolio	
Ngisamukwo	
Ngiraputa	
Ngipacolo	
Ngitoromugio	
Ngikadanya	
Ngikadukuny	

Table 5 Toposa clans

Clans (1) are only found in the western sections, (2) are only found in the eastern sections, and (3) are found more or less everywhere.

Clans marked with an asterisk took their name from a different tribe or section (e.g. Ngijie are former Jie, Ngimogos are former Mogos living in other sections). This applies also to the Turkana clan list below.

There are 29 **Turkana** clans:[60]

(1)	
Ngirarak	(those of the cheetahs)
Ngimedeo	
Ngiteso	*
Ngikateok	
Ngikurer	
Ngitengor	(those of the rat)
Ngikatap	* (the porridge people)
Ngipoot	
Ngikinom	(those of the fire)
Ngikadanya	
Ngikuruk	(those of the crows)
Ngilobal	
Ngikarewok	
Ngiwona	
Ngiriamar	
(2)	
Ngikomerosoko	(those of the spearpoint
Ngimacarmukata	(those of the branded sandals)
Ngitarapakolong	(those who cover against the sun)
Ngimeturana	(those of the leaves of the ewoi tree)
Ngisiger	*
Ngimeripur	
(3)	
Ngiduya	
Ngiponga	(those of the aponga bush)
Ngipuco	(those of the epuco bush)
Ngingoleretu	
Ngidocha	(those of the edocha plant)
Ngikaleso	(those of the ostriches)
Ngisolika	
Ngileleto	(those of the nuts of eedung tree)

Table 6 Turkana clans

Clans (1) are mainly found in Ngichuro major division i.e. in the west and south, (2) are mainly found in Ngimonia major division, and (3) are found more or less everywhere.

Nine clans are found among both the Toposa and Turkana, which amounts to almost one third of all the clans.

Toposa clan name	Turkana clan name
Ngisigiar	Ngisiger
Ngeona	Ngiwona
Ngikatap	Ngikatap
Ngikateok	Ngikateok
Ngikurier	Ngikurer
Ngilobal	Ngilobal
Ngikarowok	Ngikarewok
Ngipoot	Ngipoot
Ngikadanya	Ngikadanya

Table 7 Toposa/Turkana clan equivalents

Clans are exogamous. 'At birth every person automatically becomes a member of his or her father's clan. A man retains his membership for life, and a woman takes the clan of her husband at marriage.'[61] It may however be the case, that a woman's original clan membership continues to carry significance for her even after marriage, but no information on this matter is available at the moment.

Some of the Toposa clans are linked to certain ritual activities: Ngikurier are the firemakers, Ngikateok are the rainmakers, Ngikadanya are healers, etc. No such specializations have been reported for the Turkana.[62] Each clan has its own stock brands *ngimacarin* (pl. of *emacar*). Clans do not act as corporate groups, but for each member they are an additional potential source of support.[63]

3.3.6.3. FAMILY, KIN AND NEIGHBOURHOODS

(Toposa settlement patterns - Turkana settlement and migration patterns - The adakar - The family unit, marriage and bridewealth - Illegitimate children - Kinship relations)

Toposa settlement patterns. The basic unit of a Toposa permanent settlement is the nyere, the family compound. It houses the head of the family together with his wives and their children, his unmarried younger brothers and possibly his married younger brothers and their families, sometimes even also the parents of the family head, other relatives, and/or friends. Each married woman has her own hut, an enclosed kitchen and one or several granaries. The head of the family has his

own hut or fenced sleeping place, there is a sun shelter for meetings, and thus it is not uncommon for a nyere to comprise 30 to 40 huts or more. The whole compound, including the cattle enclosures and smallstock craals, is surrounded with a fence made of thorny branches. *Ngerea* (pl. of *nyere*) are rarely clustered together to form what we would call a village. Some *ngerea* can be found just as isolated units out in the bush. Usually though Toposa like and need social intercourse, and thus most ngerea are within earshot of the next or are combined into groups of two or more. When I visited the Kotome area in northeastern Turkanaland, I made friends with Nakibuel who was the head of his family and who lived and migrated, together with his brother's family and others, in a cluster of family units, called 'Neighbourhood of the Ngicumatak (age-set)' (adakar a Ngicumatak). The different family units of the neighbourhood were well dispersed on the plain, each separated from the other by a kilometre or so. Nakibuel's closest neighbour was his brother who lived 100 metres away. I tried to adapt myself to the usual settlement pattern and started to build my little camp by the river, one kilometre away from Nakibuel's home. But I had underestimated how much of a friend I had become. He became quite upset and asked me to move closer.Apparently the distance between settlements reflects the closeness of relations between people, and if somebody neglects this, Turkana would say (in Nakibuel's words): "Why does that man stay so far away from us, what is wrong with this man, is he a sorcerer or a witch?"

Toposa permanent settlements are situated along the three main rivers Singaita, Lokalyan and Loyoro. Although they move every once in a while (when the soil is exhausted, when the termites have damaged the houses[64] or when there is a quarrel in the neighbourhood) they still stay more or less in the same area, and are permanent in the sense that, at any given time, the family unit is always centred around one point. This applies especially during the rainy season when almost the entire family lives together in the nyere; and even if some of the animals have to be kept in separate camps (ngawiyei), they are not far away, and the youngsters tending the animals keep in close contact with the nyere. The situation changes in the dry season when the bulk of the herd has to be sent away to distant herding camps, escorted by the young men who must be prepared to defend it against raids from neighbouring tribes. The young men may be accompanied by girls or their wives if they are married but the ekapolon, the head of the family, stays in his nyere together with his wives and small children.

Turkana settlement and migration patterns. Turkanaland is even harsher, in part practically desert, with only occasional cultivable soils and rains fewer and less predictable than in Toposaland. These ecological conditions together with the historical and political background (to be discussed below), have led to the somewhat different structure of Turkana society. In general, Turkana are less engaged in agriculture. Therefore a Turkana family head is less confined to a certain spot. Although a man has his home area (ere), he may move more freely together with his animals. Furthermore, Turkana have a greater variety of animals. In addition to cattle, smallstock (goats and sheep) and donkeys, they keep camels which, unlike cattle, are well adapted to the desert-like conditions. However, as the forage requirements for cattle and camels are different - grass for cattle, browse for camels - the Turkana herds have to be split up and kept in different places all year round.

Thus, while the Toposa family is only separated for part of the year, i.e. in the dry season, for the Turkana family separation has often been continuous. A typical family head of central Turkanaland having two wives, might, for example, stay, together with one wife and her children, in the plains with the camels and part of his smallstock while his other wife, together with her children, is far away close to mountains where the cattle can find sufficient grass. In this sense, Turkana society may be called 'atomistic' (Gulliver 1958:918).

It must be reemphasized that, accurately speaking there is nothing "typically" Turkana because of the great variety of lifestyles within Turkana society. All examples must thus be taken with some reserve.

There are other ecological reasons for the 'atomization' of Turkana society, reasons which partly apply to the Toposa as well. In most parts of the plains, the density of a herding population is necessarily low due to the sparse vegetation. Water for the animals (the requirements for human consumption are negligible in comparison with animals' needs) is another problem. In the dry season, shallow wells have to be dug in dry riverbeds, but the output of each waterhole is low and potential sites are far removed from one another. Each of the scattered watering spots can thus generally only supply a limited number of animals.

Scarcity of both forage and water have another effect: when resources are finished up in one spot, another must be sought where people and animals can be safe from molestation by competitors and raiding enemies. This task can only be fulfilled by small and highly flexible and mobile herding groups.

The adakar. *Adakar* (pl. *ngadakarin*) means literally 'grazing community' (from *akidak* = to graze). In Toposaland, the use of this word seems indeed to be restricted to the area around cattle camps where people cluster together for co- operation and security against wild animals and raids. In Turkanaland, where the categories of residence and herding are more closely related, adakar also incorporates the more general notion of 'neighbourhood' (see Gulliver 1951).

Gulliver distinguishes between 'primary', 'secondary' and 'tertiary' neighbourhoods, according to their size (1958:109), a distinction which seems to be superfluous to me, all the more so as the Turkana themselves do not make it.

During the dry season in the plains, each small herding unit must get by on its own as detailed above. However, during the rainy season, and all year round in the mountainous areas, herding groups are both able to co-operate, and in the mountainous areas are even forced to, because most of the mountains are situated in the border region and thus subject to frequent raids from enemies. Here, adakar is a grazing community in its proper sense. It may range in size from between a few dozen people together with a couple of hundred animals, up to perhaps even a thousand people with a huge number of animals.

Ngadakarin are voluntary associations and though they are stable in the short term, each constituent part may go its own way whenever it wants. Often, an adakar gathers around a central figure of in-

fluence who may be an emuron, a diviner/fortune teller. Interestingly enough, another basis on which ngadakarin form is common age; the family heads often belong to the same age-set. I visited, for example, in Kotome the adakar a Ngicumatak, and in Lorengippi the adakar a Ngilingakori (also called adakar a Nginyakituk = adakar of grass and cows). In both cases, the overwhelming majority of family heads shared a common age-set.

The family unit, marriage and bridewealth. In this study, "family unit" denotes a married man, his wives and children and all his other dependants such as younger brothers or other relatives and non-relatives living in his primary and, if applicable, secondary homestead(s).

Men marry late, rarely before they reach the age of 30. Women in general marry when aged between 17 and 20[65]. Toposa and Turkana men are polygamists, and most family heads have two or three wives. Some men I came across had six or more wives while others could "afford" only one. Still others remained unmarried at 40 or older.

Fig.3 depicts schematically the relation between polygyny and marriage age.[66] Granted an equal proportion of males/females in the population, the extent to which polygyny occurs will be directly correlated with the difference in ages of males and females at marriage.

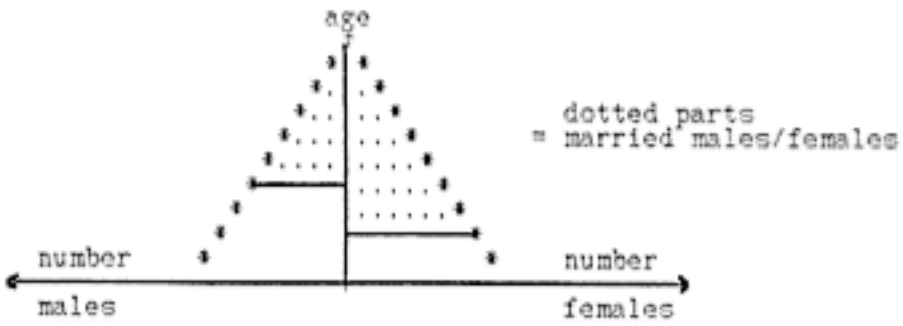


Fig. 3 Schematic population pyramid

A man's age at his first marriage is not prescribed by fixed rules nor does his membership in a generation- or age-set play a role in the matter. He is free to marry as soon as it is his turn according to his rank within the family (see below). He must first also have accumulated enough animals to feed a family and be in a position to collect the bridewealth which is a gift of livestock and is quite considerable: on average about 20-40 cattle or camels and 50-100 smallstock.

There are a variety of resources to which a young man may turn when trying to accumulate livestock. His fahter will give him some for looking after the family herd, his mother will let him have some of hers[67], or he may inherit all or part of her animals. Raiding does not directly lead to the increase of a young man's herd as he is obliged to distribute raided animals amongst his relatives

and friends. In return however, he will claim other animals from them, and others again from friends and relatives of his parents. The bridegroom's father usually plays an active part in gathering together his son's first bridewealth. Only about half of the bridewealth or even less comes from the family herd; to acquire the rest a man makes use of his network, i.e. his kin and closest stock associates (see below). Gulliver (1952:231) gives an example from Turkanaland (a man's second wedding, smallstock not included):

Groom	22 cattle,	4 camels
Full-brother	3 cattle,	1 camel
Half-brother	1 cow,	1 camel
Father's full-brother	4 cattle,	1 camel
Father's half-brother	2 cattle,	1 camel
Half-cousin		1 camel
Mother's brother	2 cattle	
1st Wife's full brother I	2 cattle	
1st Wife's full brother II	1 ox	
Sister's husband		1 camel
6 bond-friends (1 head each)	6 cattle	

Table 8 Composition of bridewealth (Turkana example)
(adapted from Gulliver 1955:23)

Those who donate towards the bridewealth will benefit in return on another occasion, for example when the bridegroom one day marries one of his daughters from whose bridewealth they will then receive a share.

Marriage consists in a series of consecutive ceremonies which are, after the bridewealth is completely handed over, sealed by the final ceremony, the killing of an ox. (Turkana: emong ka akoota, Toposa: nyemong ka nyekidur. Turkana sometimes kill a camel but still call it "ox".) Bridewealth is not only given to the bride's father and mother but also to her uncles, aunts, brothers, sisters and some other relatives. Marriages are traditionally arranged by the parents, divorces are rare.

> "A girl can be given to a negative man, whom she doesn't prefer. But staying there for one week or two - the conditions go together. She now says 'Well, what else can I do? My parents have already eaten the animals, the bull has been killed, I am wearing this neck ring <sign of a married woman, H.K.M.>, and so, what can I do? Let me just stay with this man.' The life becomes easy, it changes." (John Ekales at Lorugumu, 20.5.1987. A testimony from a woman in such a position, which I was not able to record, might sound rather different.)

Turkana and Toposa practise levirate, i.e. a deceased man's widow is taken in by his brother or son[69] and becomes, along with her children, a member of this man's family. She practically becomes his wife, but her children are still deemed to be those of the deceased man, even if they are born after his death and if the physical father is different. Thus, a dead man may 'procreate' even after his death.

It makes sense to subdivide the family unit into what Gulliver calls "houses", the Turkana *ekol* or ekal and the Toposa nyekal: literally, a woman's day hut. In a general sense, ekol refers to a woman

and her children, and each ekol is an independent economic unit with sufficient animal and man-power resources to survive. Especially among the Turkana the significance of this sub-division becomes visible when a family head splits up his ngikolia (pl. of ekol), sending away one or more with part of the herd to a different grazing or browsing area.

Illegitimate children. In the case of levirate we have already seen that in this cultural area it is social rather than physical fatherhood that matters. This concept has its advantages: a social father can always by definition be found, even if the physical father is unknown, absent or dead. This also applies in cases where unmarried girls give birth to a child. Even though the family will try, whatever way possible, to find the physical father and to extract compensation from him, the child will remain in the girl's family and become the "true" son or daugther of its physical grandfather. The rule could be formulated in this way: if no bridewealth has been given for a woman, her offspring belong to her father.

The same rule also applies to women called ngapesur angabus (pl.). Apese angabus (sg.), by some authors somewhat ungallantly translated as "concubine", means literally "girl wearing a woman's apron" and is the wife of a man from whom no bridewealth or only a part has been received. In legal terms, children of ngapesur angabus do not belong to her husband but to her father. Fathers may choose to claim them or not, but the legal fact remains and is not disputed by anybody.

Kinship relations. It has been shown that the area's environmental conditions necessitate relatively small economic units. Migration is essential for survival, residence in one place can only be temporary, families are seasonally separated, wealth is highly insecure and land cannot be monopolized. All these factors make the development of a lineage organization most unlikely. Agnatic ties are weak, there is even competition between fathers and sons for the family herd, and also between brothers which, in extreme cases, may go as far as fratricide.[69] Thus sons prefer to separate themselves from their father's family unit as quickly as they can, and seek co-operation not with their brothers but with friends and in-laws.

There is a strict hierarchy, an order of seniority within each family which is described in ch.3.3.6.5 (part "Seniority in the family").

According to Gulliver, kinship 'relations tend to follow rights in stock. Where rights diminish there also kinship relations fade; where stock rights disappear there also kin relations are forgotten' (1951:219). My own experience in the field, although I did no specific research on the subject, seemed to substantiate this statement in the case of the Turkana and Toposa. If it is true, then kinship relations here do not possess the same outstanding quality as in many other societies. Toposa and Turkana kinship relations can never be seen as isolated structures, for, important though they may be, they are only one part of the network of mutual support and obligation, indispensable for survival in this harsh and unpredictable environment.

3.3.6.4 NETWORKS

When I travelled with my Turkana interpreters in their land, I was always amazed at how easily they found their way around: there was always a place for them to sleep and eat, and in most places they had friends, relatives or at least vague connections of some sort. After a while even I enjoyed the support of a "Turkana network" when, for example, my car got stuck in the mud and a man came by who by chance was the brother of another man with whom I had made friends a couple of hundred kilometres away. Without asking for any payment - which nowadays is quite unusual - he had arranged within no time a "digging party" to get the car out of the mud for me.

For an economic unit based on stock-keeping, whose welfare is dependent on the prevailing ecological conditions existing in the area, a support network as broad as useful and as effective as possible is the only means of survival. The harsh and unpredictable environment forces people to seek their fortune in small, mobile groups at a family, or even sub-familial, level, and even the best herd manager will suffer severe losses once in a while. Yet rains which fail completely in one area may be better elsewhere, and a clever herd owner will thus distribute some of his animals with friends, and will have also established links with relatives and friends in other areas which he will be able to draw on in times of need. When drought or animal diseases have decimated a man's herd, he will activate his network of support and by collecting animals here and there will be able to rebuild his herd. This applies for both Toposa and Turkana, though in Turkanaland conditions are even harsher and make a proper network of support even more essential. But even without catastrophe, networks are needed almost daily: for access to pasture and water, for defence against raiding, when collecting for bridewealth and compensations, for assistance in political and judical matters, and so on.

Networks may be classified as follows:
1) Networks of descent: brothers and sisters, patrilinear and matrilinear relatives, clan membership.
2) Affinal networks: in-laws.
3) Residential networks: present and former neighbours, membership in a territorial section.
4) Patronages: institutionalized patronages at birth, initiation etc.
5) Stock associations: economic ties established by exchange of stock.
6) Best friends.
7) Age-mates (generation-sets and age-sets).
8) Access to other networks through relatives, friends, age-mates etc.

A few of these networks,[70] such as the closest of the family ties and the membership of generation and age-sets are ascribed. Most others have to be acquired and/or reinforced by continual cooperation and exchange of animals.[71]

Bridewealth plays an important role in this context. The following list is an example of how bridewealth may be distributed. It was recorded in 1987 and refers to Loteleng Koriyang's wedding in Nangolemoru, in the Ngiboceros territorial section of Turkana, which had taken place in 1986. It had been an expensive wedding. In total, 91 camels, 46 cattle, 473 smallstock and 25 donkeys were distributed.

Receiver	**Camels**	**Cows**	**Smallstock**	**(Donkeys)**	**SSU**
Fa	5	10	80	(4)	26.5
Mo (FaWil)	5	10	60	(5)	23.5
FaBr 1	8	8	50	(3)	23.0
FaBr 2	8	9	50	(4)	24.0
FaBr 3	6	3	60	(4)	17.5
FaBr 4	6	2	50	(3)	15.0
FaBr 5	7	4	5	(2)	12.0
FaWi 2	2	-	-		2.0
FaWi 3	4	-	-		4.0
FaWi 4	5	-	-		5.0
FaWi 5	4	-	-		4.0
FaWi 6	3	-	-		3.0
FaWi 7	5	-	-		5.0
FaWi 8	3	-	-		3.0
Br 1	3	-	10		4.5
Br 2	2	-	10		3.5
Br 3	5	-	20		8.0
Br 4	1	-	10		2.5
Br 5	1	-	10		2.5
Br 6	1	-	10		2.5
Si 1	2	-	10		3.5
Si 2	2	-	10		3.5
Si 3	3	-	20		5.0
Si 4	-	-	8		1.0

(All kinship terms refer to the bride. All the recipients are married except Br4 to Br6. 1 SSU = 1 camel = 1 cow = 7 smallstock)

The above list shall not be discussed qualitatively; no attempt will be made to analyse the composition of the groups making up the recipients, for example, who they are, whether they are primarily patrilinear or matrilinear relatives or how they are ranked. Furthermore, the list was given to me orally roughly a year after the marriage had actually taken place, and might be incomplete. It is however significant that this list was remembered in so much detail. It shows that animal bridewealth helps to build and keep essential economic and social links. In any case this list is not representative, but is presented as an example to illustrate the huge extent of the network constructed by a single event: through this wedding, Loteleng and his father Koriyang have established stock connections with 24 persons, i.e. with 14 (17 when brothers 4 to 5 have married) family units and many more when the normal process of family fission is taken into consideration. For Kori-

yang, the father, this is only part of his affinal network established by marriages of sons and daughters. Loteleng, the son, will use his father's affinal network as well, and with his first marriage he has just begun to weave his own.

People are aware of the bond-creating function of marriages: one day as my wife teased a young Turkana man, suggesting he marry a certain lovely young orphan girl aged about 18, he answered: "Well, I'd like to, but who could I give the bridewealth to? She hasn't got any relatives."

3.3.6.5. AUTHORITY, GENERATION- AND AGE-SET SYSTEM

(The seniority principle - Seniority in the family - Seniority in the generation-set system - Other sources of seniority - The consensus principle - Leadership - Elders and their authority - The sacred spear - Authority and the generation-set system)

> The lack of formal leaders or even broadly defined groups of men to initiate activities, and the absence of formal processes is an outstanding feature of the (Turkana) society. (Gulliver 1951:136)

Gulliver's statement reflects a typical approach to societies like those of Turkana and Toposa, an approach which goes about looking for formalized institutions and fixed structures of authority.[72] The organisation of the societies in question is certainly very flexible and changeable but exists nevertheless and there are leaders and 'groups of men to initiate activities'. Moreover, it is questionable whether even speaking of "the" Turkana society makes sense: briefly dealt with and yet to be fully elaborated (ch.4.5.2) is the important point that within Turkanaland there is considerable local variation in the socio-political structure.

Both Toposa and Turkana societies could be described as socio-political systems in which a balance prevails between two principles, those of seniority and consensus.

The seniority principle. Societies in the area have often been termed "gerontocratic" (e.g. Spencer 1965). In my opinion, this expression puts too much weight on age to the exclusion of all other factors and I thus prefer the concept of "seniority".[73] The basic principle of seniority is quite simple and clear: should private or public interests be in conflict, it is the most senior individual or group who will be able to impose their will on the others. What then makes an individual or a group "senior"?

Seniority in the family. Within each family unit the most senior member is the family head. His wives are ranked according to the number of years in marriage, the first wife remaining throughout her life in a position of absolute seniority. Sons are ranked according to the seniority of their mothers, i.e. first the oldest son of the first wife followed by his full-brothers in order of their birth, these then followed by the sons of the second wife, and so on.[74] This general rule works well, provided that the interval between consecutive marriages is long enough, and that a woman has borne most of her children before her husband's next marriage, which is often the case. Should formal seniority and actual seniority in years contradict each other to what is felt to be an unbearable extent, a 're-classification' may take place. Gulliver's assumption (1953:154) that an approximate time span of five years might be critical in this respect, seems to be reasonable.

Ranking of brothers has its practical consequences. They are initiated in this order, and a man cannot start a family before his "older" brothers have married - neither his father nor his relatives and friends would assist him with animals for the bridewealth.

Seniority in the generation-set system. A man's seniority within the generation- and age-set system depends both on his father's status and his own rank within his family. The general rule is that within an age-set, senior rank will be given to whoever is initiated first. Brothers are initiated according to their rank in their family. Coevals of different families who are initiated together are ranked according to their father's rank in his age-set.

A father's membership in a generation-set determines the generation-set status of his sons; they will all be members of the generation-set succeeding his. As generation-set are also ranked (see below), this will be a further element determining a man's seniority. This feature is very clear among the Toposa but has become more vague in parts of Turkanaland as will be shown below.

Within the generation- and age-set system a man's seniority is thus defined by the status of his generation-set, the status of his age-set at that point in time and his rank within his age-set. A man's relative seniority towards others remains unchanged but his absolute status increases steadily: his generation-set may become promoted, and as he gets older the status of his age-set rises as younger men are initiated and new age-sets are formed.

Other sources of seniority. The consequences which a man's position in his generation- and age-set has for his status in day-to-day affairs, is an issue which will be discussed later. A man's status is also, however, defined by features such as his wealth (the size of his herd and his family), his fighting ability, his generosity, his prudence, wisdom and rhetoric qualities, his power in blessing and cursing, the size of his support network and, in some cases, by office.[75]

There are few institutionalised offices among Toposa and Turkana, and they are difficult to detect, partly because they are hidden, for political reasons, from outside observers. Certain functions are associated with particular clans, and although primarily significant as ritual, implications for the socio-political sphere are often apparent. Here, without further detail, are a few examples of clans to which specific tasks are attributed: Ngikurier (firemakers), Ngikateok (rain-makers), Ngikadanya (healers) and Ngimeturana, the Turkana clan of diviners/fortune tellers (*emuron*, pl. *ngimurok*). Authority often concentrates in the hands of individual *ngimurok*, and Lamphear (1976c) has described how they became a focus of ethnic identity and a central point of resistance during the British colonisation of the country. But even an *emuron* is only powerful as long as he is able to maintain his reputation, and between the *ngimurok* there is strong competition[76].

The consensus principle. This brings us to what I call the consensus principle.[77] Until now, the societies in question have appeared "gerontocratic" or, in the terms used here, governed according to the principle of seniority. There are however also powerful balancing mechanisms which it is tempting to call "democratic". What these mechanisms share with our understanding of democracy, is that the process of decision-making is controlled by all. Where it differs from our conception of democratic procedure is that decisions are not made by voting and then adopting the views of the majority, rather they emerge as a result of everyone forming an opinion in a qualified way. If a decision of general importance has to be made, everybody, women included, may contribute to the discussion and will be heard if his or her point of view is sensible. The opinion of an *ekasikaout*, an elder, will tend to carry more weight however, reflecting his greater experience. Certain issues are discussed endlessly, at different meeting places and with different participants. Sometimes this has driven foreign experts almost crazy (when for example, they wanted a quick answer to the question where a borehole for a water pump should best be drilled). Eventually a common opinion emerges from these meetings though, and it is not simply the opinion of a majority group which the minority group is forced, grumbling, to accept, but a consensus accepted and internalised by everybody. As is the case with most "principles", it is difficult to generally assess the importance of the consensus principle. It will not be relevant in every context and can sometimes be outweighed by the seniority principle. Often though, the two balance each other, and we shall encounter this principle again and again when dealing for example with the issues of leadership or with the power of the curse.[78]

Leadership. At each level of organisation leading figures are likely to emerge. In the family, it is by definition the family head, but neighbourhoods, territorial sections, raiding and war parties and age- and generation-sets also have their leaders. A leader earns his position both through his seniority and through possessing the needed skills and abilities. Except for within generation and age-sets, where leadership is ascribed (the first initiated), a leader must always prove his capability by his acts and will lose his position as soon as the consensus, i.e. public opinion, is against him. This is best exemplified in the neighborhood/*adakar* context. Here, a leader is never really able to force his will on other family heads. If they disagree, they are always free to leave and join another *adakar*. As Hogg puts it: "Too high-handed a manner on the part of the *adakar* leader would quickly lead to the dissolution of the *adakar*" (1986:13).

In exceptional, critical situations, charismatic leaders may emerge, as did for example the Turkana diviners (*ngimurok*) during the times of the great territorial expansion or in the era of resistance against the British.

Elders and their authority. An elder is called *ekasikaout* (pl. *ngikasikaou*). *Ekasikaout* is a term of respect and is sometimes even used when politely addressing a European expert or field researcher. A "real" *ekasikaout* however qualifies for his position by possessing a combination of attributes: old age, wealth and personal authority, membership of a top-ranking age-set and the most senior generation-set (if applicable; see below). - How is it that *ngikasikaou*, as individuals or as a group, come to be able to impose their will on others?

Not all the strategies for gaining influence and power can be discussed here. One of them, however, is of special interest in this context: Homans has stated for "informal" groups, that influential men achieve their power by "conforming more closely than anyone else to the norms of the group" (1950:149). In this sense, elders behave as trustees of the ethnic norms, deviation from which would be seen as an offence against the High God Akuj as well as against group solidarity. Both would be seen as bringing misfortune down upon the wrongdoer and his environment. But elders have also direct sanctions at hand: their ability to bless and to curse. How this ability develops shall be briefly exemplified.

Exkursion: The sacred spear (*nyakwara ka nyetal*). The word "*nyakwara*" is the Toposa form, from whom I collected most of my information on this subject. Some Turkana still have their sacred spears, but generally only few spears can be seen and none at all in settlement areas where they are banned by government decree. In Toposaland however, a spear is part of a man's everyday outfit. Spears are slim and approximately two metres long, made of two pieces of iron connected by a short wooden handpiece. The blade is a short oval approximately 20 cms long, and its edge is covered by a leather strip. The spear serves as a weapon and a knife as well as a symbol of manliness. In general, every man has several spears, one of which is his *nyekwara ka nyetal*.

The sacred spear is used at *nyakiriket*, the ritualised meat feast which will be described in more detail in ch.4.4.2. A *nyakiriket* is an age-set or generation-set affair, and the killer of the animal who is also (in an indirect way, see below) the giver of the animal, receives the blessing of the seniormost men attending the ceremony. These will spit on the spear with which he kills the animal. In this symbolic way it accumulates blessings for its owner. Afterwards, the *nyakwara ka nyetal* is stored in the man's house and will only be taken out for another *nyakiriket* or certain other ritual events.

In being blessed by the elders a man's own ritual power grows since it is always via these blessings that a man is brought nearer to the High God Nyakuj, and it is only via Nyakuj that a man has any ritual power at all, for ultimately humans can only request of Nyakuj that he intervenes, not themselves directly exert supernatural power. Thus, the circle is closed: every man wants to become an

elder and have ritual power. Ritual power can only be gained through the elder's blessings. If a man has collected enough blessings from his elders he will become an elder himself with the ability to bless and will start blessing future elders. This naturally reinforces the principle of seniority, as each man depends on the favour of those at the "top". It is a powerful tool for manipulating behaviour when elders hold back their blessings even more so if they threaten to curse. Spencer's statement for Samburu also applies here:

> Real power ... rests entirely on the general belief in their curse. The ability to curse gives each man a power of a sort, but real prestige among the elders is obtained by not resorting to it in the interest of social harmony. ... No man who often makes use of his curse could enjoy any measure of influence. ... A man who wishes to score off an adversary normally prefers to use his curse indirectly, such as by threatening to curse him. (1965:314)

Elders have a say in all matters which go beyond the limits of the family unit: cases of theft, compensation for murder, seduction and adultery; decisions on grazing policy and raiding, organisation of meetings and for defence against raiding, etc. Some of the elders' areas of responsibility have been taken over by governmental organisations. All the same, government chiefs both in Toposa and Turkanaland are well advised to co-operate with the traditional elders if they want to fulfil their duties successfully.

Authority and the generation-set system. A Toposa asked the question who currently possesses ultimate authority, would be able to clearly specify, say, Ngikurono. Ngikurono is the oldest age-set of the oldest generation-set in the Toposa Mogos territorial section. In another section the answer might be different, but it would always be the oldest age-set of the oldest generation-set. A Turkana asked the same question would probably just answer: the elders. Here too, there might be a link between elderhood and power and the generation-set system, but of a more vague kind which will be elaborated below.

3.3.7. RECENT DEVELOPMENT

(Administration - Chiefs - Toposa: gold rush and civil war - Missions - Famine relief - Development aid / Projects - Results of development)

> "When the British first came, they would deceive people into coming together for a meeting, or they would raid people and round them up. When they had collected people together, they would say: 'If you want to be our friends, sign a treaty.' The people would be frightened and so of course they would agree. Then the British would tell them to select a chief from themselves, but usually the people would not. Then the British would just select one they thought was fit and force him to wear clothes on the spot. Then that man was given presents - food, tobacco, and other things - by the British to bring him closer to them. Then they would show the chief to the people and tell them that he was the one responsible for

them. They would tell the people to obey the chief. Then they would bring posho and other food and give it to the chief to distribute to the people himself. In that way the people were to get used to the chiefs. ... That was the method the British always used." (Turkana-Interview, Lamphear n.d.)

"Colonial rule was better than the Government nowadays, because the Whites left us doing things our own way. ... When Kenyatta took over, the Kenyans developed the other parts of the country first, and development came only recently to Turkana." (Turkana-Interview in Kotome, 28.6.1987)

Administration. At first, while on field research among the Toposa I was amazed how friendly their attitudes towards white people were. It seemed somehow as if they remembered the time of British administration as "the good old days". Although they must have been puzzled by the intrusion of foreigners, the administration by these strange people also had its advantages. Baxter argues for the Boran (1979:74) that the Europeans were welcomed by the elders as they brought peace, i.e. they limited internecine feuds and raiding. Raiding is in some ways as much a conflict between young and old as between tribe and tribe: the young men who go raiding have nothing to lose and can only gain, while the elders who are the owners of the herds have to face the possibility of losing part or all of their animals and are thus more concerned to control the raiding.[79]

In a certain sense, the new administration was accepted almost as a natural event, and the people's social system adapted itself to it.[80] In 1936, Ryland noted, with regard to the payment of taxes:

There are few evaders as the average Turkana regards it as a point of honour to meet his dues to Government. If he did not adopt this laudable attitude the collection of tax would be well nigh impossible. (District Annual Reports, Ryland, 1937:35)

There was nonetheless widespread aversion to the new masters; taxes showed no return benefit for the people, their pride as fighters was offended, they were blamed and punished for raiding expeditions, and the Europeans tried to impose their strange culture and habits on them.[81] Tensions between the two parties were stronger in Turkana- than in Toposaland, mainly because European settlers in the "White Highlands" of Kenya pressed the British to end the 'unruliness' in the adjacent north. D.C. Hopkins wrote in 1927:

A study of old records leaves us with the overwhelming conviction that much of the trouble which these <Turkana> people gave in the past and their present poverty and distress has been brought about by repeated punitive campaigns against them carried out, over a long period, by forces of the Kenya, Uganda and Sudan Government. ... The stock taken from the Turkana in these expeditions totals hundreds of thousands of which the bulk appears to have died on our hands. ... It would I think be difficult to find a district in Kenya where the natives under similar circumstances would be more friendly. ... On the whole I am of the opinion that the Turkana are easy to handle. (District Annual Reports, Hopkins, 1927:4f.)

Hopkins' sympathetic attitude however was not typical for either the general approach of the British or, after independence, that of Kenyans. And unlike the Toposa, who just try and ignore the existence of "their" Government, Turkana relations to the Administration are still much coloured with distrust and reserve.

Chiefs. When the British colonised the area they established an administrative system known as "indirect rule". Provinces governed by Province Commissioners were subdivided into districts (run by District Commissioners), divisions (Assistant Commissioners or District Officers) and locations. Each location had its "tribal" chief assisted by sub-chiefs in the sub-locations. This pattern has remained almost unchanged until today. The administrative access to the people, however, has increased, at least in Turkana District. While in Toposaland Kapoeta is still the only administrative centre, there were, in 1985, 67 administered settlements in Turkana District (ECOSYSTEMS 1985). Government access to the people is mainly through the Chiefs and Sub-Chiefs who are now generally accepted as Government agents. Chiefs gain their authority from governmental back-up i.e. the police force and military, and from their personal standing which they are able to improve, using their salaries to increase their animal wealth. Nonetheless as already mentioned, they are still well advised to cooperate with the traditional elders if they want to successfully fulfil their duties which include court cases and tax collection amongst others.

Chiefs in Turkana district are presently appointed by the Government while Toposa chiefs were until 1985 elected in a theoretically democratic process. (Since then, with the arrival of the Sudan civil war, government administration of the area has broken down.) In contrast to the Turkana, the Toposa generation-set system is still effective in this respect: legally, all Toposa, men and women, of the respective area are supposed to elect their chief but in practice it is the oldest age-set of the ruling generation who take the decision and choose the chief, generally ensuring that he not be so strong as to be able to present an effective challenge to the elders' own authority.

Toposa: gold rush and civil war. When in the following reference is made to modern institutions or "development", primarily in mind are the Turkana. The Toposa world is relatively cut off from outside influences, and it was not by accident that this area was the last to be reached by the Sudanese civil war in 1985. The results of these disturbances, especially their influence on the Toposa socio-cultural system cannot be predicted at the moment.

In 1980, there was a gold rush at Lobur on the Sudan-Kenya road between Kapoeta and Lokichokio. More than 20 kgs of gold were unearthed from an area the size of a soccer pitch, and a diggers' camp of over 2,500 people sprouted up. When we arrived in 1983, there were only a few people left as the deposit was almost exhausted. At the end of the day a few Arab merchants had made a fortune buying gold, while the diggers' money had all been spent on liquor, weapons and ammunition as well as in animals, and most of them had gone back to their families. With them however they brought back a challenge to the relatively closed system of Toposa authority: in the gold fields, they had gained some material independence from their elders which only reinforced their ever present opposition. There are some other gold fields south of Kapoeta where in 1984 young men were still washing gold, thereby reportedly refusing to acknowledge elders' orders to take part in defending Toposa animals against Turkana raids.

Missions. In 1930 the Italian Catholic Missionari Comboniani started work among the Toposa[82], and remained in the country until they were expelled in 1964, and their activities were taken over by Sudanese priests. The Italian fathers still enjoy a good reputation among the Toposa, the more so as the few "educated" Toposa that there are (including a professor in Khartoum, a couple of politicians, a priest and some civil servants and teachers), were trained in their schools. In the seventies, a bible translation society (SIL = Summer Institute of Linguistics) established a post north of Kapoeta, and VSG (Voluntary Service Group), a branch of AIM (Africa Inland Mission) opened a couple of health care centres around the country, but all these activities had to be abandoned when the disturbances returned in 1985.

In Turkana, the first mission was opened in 1960 at Lokori by AIM/AIC (Africa Inland Church), and a year later the Catholic St. Patrick's Missionaries were admitted to the District. AIM and the Catholics are still the two major missions in Turkana District, but other churches and sects are also present and compete with each other, often at the same place: Reformed Church, Pentecostal Church, Jehova's Witnesses, Friends' Church etc.

Christianisation of Turkana is often linked with food aid (AIC is admittedly aware of what they call "rice Christianity"[83]), and most probably the majority of "Christian" Turkana has converted because of material or social benefits (I have never tried to examine this question properly).

Christian moral standards often conflict with tradition or even with the established social or family system. For example: Polygyny is banned by all Christians. If an elder is baptised (which counts as a real success for any church because in the main it is women, children and non- influential men who go to church), he is expected to part with all his wives but one, which in the context of Turkana-Toposa society is considered inhuman and antisocial.

Another example shows to what extent the various Churches' approaches to Turkana customs differ: Turkana still today value *asapan*, initiation of the young men, as their most important ritual (for details see below). The Pentecostal Church, on the one hand, has banned *asapan* as a "sin" while, on the other, tendencies within the Catholic Church have tried to re-interpret the ceremony as the Christian confirmation.[84]

Famine relief. Periods of hunger and starvation are common in the area, and they occur at more or less regular intervals, sometimes resulting in heavy human losses. With the arrival of the Europeans, food aid was introduced to ease this burden. In south-eastern Sudan, the NCA (Norwegian Church Aid) supported the Toposa with Sorghum almost every year until in 1986 they were forced out because of the disturbances. In 1986, NCCK (National Council of Churches in Kenya) and ICRC (International Committee of the Red Cross) established a food distribution centre in the Toposa area at Narus, close to the Kenyan border at Lokichokio. They brought the Toposa several hundred tons of Sorghum and maize but then had to withdraw so that the Toposa at present are again left without food aid.

In Turkana District, the British initiated food aid on a small-scale basis in 1930. After the heavy 1960/61 drought the missions, and later also TRP (Turkana Rehabilitation Project), launched a massive famine relief campaign which at its height in 1982 was supplying maize in ten distribution centres to more than a third of the population - 85,000 people (ECOSYSTEMS 1985). Towards the end, food was no longer just freely given, instead "food for work" programmes were applied: fields were cleared and crops planted, shallow wells sunk, trees planted, "water harvested", roads built and maintained and so on.

The problems connected with large-scale famine relief operations cannot be discussed; here mention is made only of some of the implications for the socio-cultural system of the people affected.

Development aid / Projects. At present, all efforts made by NCA and VSG to improve the infrastructure in Toposaland, e.g. schools, roads, water pumps, agriculture, medical aid etc. have been jeopardised by the outbreak of the civil war. In Turkana District, however, development aid and projects nowadays play a major role in the area's economy and socio-political structure.

The major organisation operating in Turkana district is TRP (Turkana Rehabilitation Project), a governmental project founded in 1980 and partly financed by the EEC and the Dutch Government. Initially, the main emphasis was placed on famine aid in an attempt to overcome the most severe sufferings of the people, but since then the target has changed. Now the main issues are preventive measures and improvement of the general infrastructure: 'drought monitoring', restocking, livestock development, medical and veterinary services, water supply, roads, education etc.

Besides the TRP and Kenyan Ministries (of Planning, of Water Resources, of Health, etc.) an impressive number of mostly foreign organisations are engaged in Turkana district such as:

AIC (Africa Inland Church)
AMREF (African Medical Research Foundation)
CRS (Catholic Relief Service)
Danish Volunteer Service
FAO (Food and Agriculture Organisation)
ICRC (International Committee of the Red Cross)
KALRES (Kenya Arid Lands Research
NORAD (Norwegian Aid Organisation)
NORCONSULT (Norwegian Consultant)
ODI (Overseas Development Institute)
OXFAM (Oxford Committee for Famine Relief)
REDD BARNA (Norwegian Save the Children Fund)
STEP (South Turkana Ecosystems Project)
TWP (Turkana Water Project)
WFP (World Food Programme)
WORLD VISION, and others.

Development planning in general has shifted its emphasis in Turkanaland from the agricultural to the pastoral sector, as summarised in the 1985 ODI report:

> It is now widely recognised that the emphasis placed on irrigation development in Turkana District in the 1970s has been notably unsuccessful. (p.25)
>
> After many attempts to develop alternative investment/employment opportunities in Turkana District (water harvesting <construction of rainwater catchments, H.K.M.> for sorghum cultivation, irrigation of cash crops, commercial fishing) both planners and practitioners agree that the most satisfactory way of improving the welfare of the Turkana is through support to the pastoral sector. It is now generally recognised that the nomadic pastoralism practiced by the Turkana is a successful adaption to the low and uncertain rainfall of the District which in most years is unsufficient to sustain a cereal crop. (p.10)

Results of development. As this is not a study on the impact of development, only a few points can be taken up. For reasons explained above, reference is made to Turkana District only.

In 1983 the tarmac all-weather road was opened from Kitale to Lodwar and Kalokol which improved considerably the accessibility of Turkana District. In 1987, work on the Lodwar-Lokichokio road, up to the Sudanese border, was in progress. Except for the mountainous areas, the road and 'motorable track' network built by TRP and other organisations have made accessible almost every part of Turkanaland.

In 1985, the ECOSYSTEMS report recorded 67 permanent Turkana settlements, 17 of which had not existed in 1982. Most people in these settlements still depend in one way or other on foreign food aid. The population of these 67 settlements was given as 70,271 which amounts to almost a third of the total Turkana population. Adding to this all those people who live within 10 kms of a settlement, shows a figure of 57% of the total population as under direct government control (ECOSYSTEMS 1985).

Schooling has increased considerably in the last few years, from 37 primary schools with 5,600 pupils in 1979 to 75 primary schools with 21,100 pupils (a third of them girls) in 1985.[85] There were in 1985 four secondary schools in the district with a total of 480 pupils (almost all of them sponsored by organisations or individual private donors) of which 350 were boys and 130 girls.

Between 1979 and 1983 compulsory education was introduced to Turkana District, but still today the government has to (and does) face the fact that Turkana are not able to send all their children to school as otherwise the families' economies would collapse. Apart from the fact that children are an almost indispensable work force, a boy who goes to school is not able to become a professional herder. On the other hand, Turkana family heads often try to diversify and improve their chances by sending at least one child to school who might later be able to get a paid job and assist the family - a hope often in vain as there are still few jobs available in Turkana District.

In the 1970s emphasis in the development sector had been laid on water irrigation schemes. Beside the fact that most schemes are not economically effective, some schemes and settlements have brought even considerable setback:

- Land taken over by the schemes has deprived pastoralists of some of their urgently needed dry season pastures.[86]
- Concentration of people and animals in and around settlements results in overgrazing and desertification through extensive wood consumption for buildings and firewood.
- Clearing of riverine forests results in the desertification of fertile areas.
- Diseases (malaria, tuberculosis, venereal diseases, measles, diarrhoea etc.) previously almost unknown have become endemic.
- Traditional ceremonies cannot be carried out because of the lack of animals.
- Traditional marriages are increasingly replaced by concubinate which leads to the destabilization of family structures.

The list could be continued, but as I do not only want to paint an apocalyptic scenario I choose to finish this chapter with Brown's more mischievous view:

> While the schemes are in one respect ... decreasing dependence on the pastoralists' own resources, they are, on the other hand, reinforcing the traditional economy which enables reciprocity to continue, for they provide the means whereby the pastoralists can rebuild their herds more quickly and thus re-establish social relationships. The schemes offer the Turkana a golden opportunity for profit; they save them the expense of providing for poor relations; moreover they too can benefit as the Government has no means of knowing who is really poor. Pleading poverty while keeping wealth hidden is not difficult for Turkana habitually used to hiding possessions and denying their existence in order to protect themselves from the perpetual begging in which all indulge - even the wealthiest among them. (Brown 1980:39)

4. AGE AND GENERATION

With the background information in mind as presented in the previous chapters we are now able to proceed towards the description and analysis of the Toposa and Turkana generation-set systems.

As a first step, however, some theoretical tools must be made available. The relevant sources do not assist us much in this respect, 'for rare is the author ... who demonstrates an understanding of the difference between sets based on genealogical principles and those rooted in chronological age' (Kertzer 1978:369).

Chapter 4.4 will then provide more ethnographic material on the Toposa and Turkana, related to their generation-set systems which then, in chapter 4.5, will be analytically reconsidered.

4.1. TERMINOLOGY AND ABBREVIATIONS

Anthropological literature has created some confusion regarding terminology of generation- and age-set systems. In his pioneering contribution, Radcliffe-Brown (1929) made clear that a proper distinction must be made between what he called age-grades and age-sets, and he proposed to dismiss the 'ambiguous' term "class". His terminology has generally been adopted, but the terms class and group are still used by some authors. Furthermore, there is often a failure to properly distinguish between age-sets and generation-sets, which are sometimes subsumed together under terms such as age-group systems[1], age-systems[2] or age class systems[3]. Therefore, I propose to use the following terminology:

AGE-GRADES (AG): 'Recognised divisions of the life of an individual as he passes from infancy to old age - infant, boy, youth, young married man, elder, or whatever it may be' (Radcliffe-Brown's definition, 1929).

In the context of age-set systems the above definition must be further specified, as we are dealing with **formalised age-grades** where **an institutionalised, comprehensive system of statuses and roles are connected with each age-grade**.

AGE-SET (AS): 'A recognised group consisting of persons who are of the same age.' (Radcliffe-Brown's definition, 1929)

Radcliffe-Brown's comment that 'in East Africa ... each age-set normally passes from one grade to another as a whole' must be regarded with some reserve, as in generation-set systems of the Toposa/Turkana type this is not the case, at least not in this strict sense.

GENERATION-SET (GS): A recognised group consisting of persons who are of the same generation. (A group of brothers may be the first generation, their sons would then be the second generation, and the sons of the sons would be the third generation.)

Occasionally and when no misinterpretation is possible, I shall use the more handy terms 'generation' in place of 'generation-set' (i.e. whenever a Toposa or Turkana 'generation' is mentioned it is quite clear that a 'generation-set' is meant).

AGE-SET SYSTEM (ASS): A social or socio-political system based on age-sets.

GENERATION-SET SYSTEM (GSS): A social or socio-political system based on generation-sets.

As in most cases generation-sets are sub-divided into age-sets, a generation-set system normally also comprises age-sets.

Throughout this text, the following abbreviations may be used:

AG = age-grade

AS = age-set

GS = generation-set

ASS = age-set system

GSS = generation-set system

4.2. GENERATION, AGE AND SYSTEMS OF ACTION

In this study the dynamic character of generation- and age- set systems will be stressed. But while many elements of these systems will vary, certain underlying notions like that of age-grades or that of generations, or given data, for example the demographic features of the society in question can be fruitfully first considered in isolation. In this way we are able to distinguish:
(1) external factors from those internal to the model,
(2) specific factors in any one such system from their general features, and
(3) what is constant in such systems from what is variable.
Only then we are able to show in which way and to what extent people are able to manipulate the 'system' or to see how the system is put together from basic constituent factors, outside influences and the people's own notions and actions.

Age and generation are basic concepts of human life, and 'grading by relative age, even between siblings, the grouping of approximate coevals and distinguishing between generations are probably basic models of social categorisation, like distinctions by sex' (Baxter/Almagor 1978:1).

Biological and social development of each human individual is linked to her or his age, and some transition points like physical maturity and menopause are particularly conspicuous. These transition points come at different ages in different individuals or between different cultures, and need not necessarily correspond identically to the social setting; for instance physical maturity often precedes social maturity. The notion of age-grades is common to all societies but their definition varies and also the degree to which they are formalised. Age-sets may exist alongside age-grades, but they are not the same. How the two are related to each other as well as to generation-sets will be shown below.

4.2.1. THE GENERATION CONCEPT

Compared with the notion of age and age-grades, the concept of generations is even more diffuse, and the question 'what is a generation?' is not as simple to answer as it might seem to be. With good reason Mannheim entitled his 1928 essay 'The Problem of Generations' ('Das Problem der Genera-

tionen'). The problem starts with the definition. We may either define a generation biologically, as Pinder (1926) does it, where he calls it:

- the totality of approximate coevals which is determined by the intervals between the birth strata[1]

or we may adapt a definition as given by Buchhofer et al.:

- [a] set of age groups, whose characteristic ways of orientation and action are different from those of other age groups at a time t_i (1970:308)

The latter definition must be restricted as not all the potential members of a generation in fact belong to it:

> Individuals of the same age ... are, however, only united as an actual generation in so far as they participate in the characteristic social and intellectual currents of their society and period, and in so far as they have an active or passive experience of the interaction of forces which made up the new situation. (Mannheim 1952:304)

Both definitions are typical for their respective points of view, and both have their inadequacies. A 'birth stratum' is composed apparently of all the people born within a given time span. But what sets the limits to this time span? How are the birth strata related to each other? Is one birth stratum composed of the children of the previous one? If it is, are its members really approximate coevals? It will be shown below that they are not. The second definition evades the problem of setting biological limits to a generation (- when does it begin? When does it end?) but neglects the fact that there are certain underlying demographic factors which influence the succession of generations, and that a generation distance (time interval between two consecutive generations) is a calculable demographic constant resulting from the reproduction habits of a given population (see below.)

Mannheim states the problem:

> Even more difficult is it to find the natural beginning of the generation series, because birth and death in society as a whole follow continuously one upon the other, and full intervals exist only in the individual family where there is a definite period before children attain marriageable age. (1952:278f.)

Already before Mannheim, in 1875, Rümelin had argued in a similar way[2], and he also emphasises the question of the generation distance. According to him, Herodot had already dealt with the problem in assuming a generation distance of 33 years. Rümelin takes the generation distance as being 'the mean age difference between fathers and children for a given period of time'[3]. He is aware that procreation habits (in his case, for men) differ through time and throughout the world. For Central Europe at the time in which he lived he assumes a generation distance of 35 to 36 years. (In East

Africa, the generation distance is much higher - see below). Again, he is aware of another problem, namely the fact that there might be a considerable spread of ages within any one generation as the interval between the birth of a man's first and last child could in an extreme case be as much as 50 years, which would cause an age overlap between consecutive generations.[4] (Terms like 'generation distance', 'time span of a generation', 'age overlap' and their numerical values will be dealt with in detail in ch.4.2.3.)

The above considerations seem to confuse more than they explain. But it becomes quite obvious that:

(1) The time span of a generation (Pinder's 'birth stratum' and Rümelins 'given period of time') considered as a biological entity cannot be the same as the generation distance: the generation distance in Central Europe, for example, may be 35 years, but the time span of one generation may be as much as 50 years, and it may be even more in the following generations.

(2) The concept of generations where a generation consists of the children of the previous generation and the notion that members of a generation are approximately the same age ("coevality") do not go together. Either a generation produces the next one which means that the next generation, and thus generations in general, do not consist of coevals, or generations consist of coevals and are therefore only loosely connected to procreation.

Because of the limitations of the generation concept, the social sciences have in general abandoned it for the concept of "cohorts", i.e. proper age-groups (cf. Ryder 1965). This discussion of the term 'generation' has nonetheless been necessary, as it is essential to lay bare our common sense thoughts on the subject, to show how inconsistent they are, and ensure that they do not intrude into our understanding of generation-sets.

Societies with generation-sets differ profoundly from others in the way they precisely delimit each generation. Each generation-set has its own name and is composed of real or classificatory brothers, and all their sons constitute the following generation-set (at least in the 'basic model'; see below). From this it can be inferred that generation-sets are basically not composed of coevals, and that the ages of consecutive generations' members will overlap. Exactly this is the main reason why generation-set systems cause such headaches for their theorists, and we shall work on this problem in great detail.

From all the questions connected with the term 'generation' (some of them, like 'generation conflict' will appear in the course of this study) only two more shall be raised here: the 'non-contemporaneity of the contemporaneous', and 'change and continuity'.

The first aspect has been lucidly expressed by Pinder, as Mannheim (1952:283) quotes him:

> 'The non-contemporaneity of the contemporaneous' is what interests Pinder most in relation to generations. Different generations live at the same time. But since experienced time is the only real time, they must all in fact be living in qualitatively quite different subjective eras. 'Everyone lives with people of the same and of different ages, with a variety of possibilities of experience facing them all alike. But for each the "same time" is a different time - that is, it represents a different period of his self, which he can only share with people of his own age.'
>
> (Pinder 1926:21, Pinder's italics. See also Tornay 1987:157f.)

Whenever the word 'generation' is mentioned in sociological texts, it is connected with 'change' and/or 'continuity'. One disputed issue is: does the succession of generations provoke change, be it cultural, social or political? Or does change create a new generation? (We can exclude the latter, however, when dealing with generation-sets.) Mannheim puts it thus:

> (a) New participants in the cultural process are emerging, whilst
> (b) former participants in that process are continually disappearing:
> (c) members of any one generation can participate only in a temporally limited section of the historical process, and
> (d) it is therefore necessary continually to transmit the accumulated cultural heritage;
> (e) the transition from generation to generation is a continuous process. (1952:292)

The existence of generations has to be viewed under the aspects of both continuity and change. Continuity and change are complementary factors of culture: transmission of the cultural heritage from one generation to the next plus its possible changes at that point make up the dynamics of culture. As Mannheim puts it:

> The phenomenon of generations is one of the basic factors contributing to the genesis of the dynamic of historical development. (1952:320)

But:

> Natural factors, including the succession of generations, provide the basic range of potentialities for the historical and social process. *But precisely because they are constant and therefore always present in any situation, the particular features of a given process of modification cannot be explained by reference to them.* (1952:312, italics by Mannheim)

In societies with generation-sets, the limits between generations are more marked than in our societies, and so is the changeover from one generation to the next which is often accentuated by collective ceremonies. Thus, the succession of generations is not 'always present in any situation' and therefore not a general background phenomenon, but an identifiable, specific one, to which specific changes may be casually attributed. But before we explore this and other questions, we have, in the next few chapters, to acquire some more basic knowledge regarding generalities of age-grades, age-sets and generation-sets.

4.2.2. UNDERLYING STRUCTURAL PRINCIPLES OF GENERATION- AND AGE-SET SET SYSTEMS

In all cultures, human life is divided into consecutive stages, from birth to death, which we call age-grades. In our own culture we distinguish infancy, adolescence, adulthood and old age. Each of these categories may be subdivided, they may be more or less formalised (see ch.4.1) and transition from one grade to the next may be more or less marked by "rites de passage" (transition rites; entrance into school, graduation, wedding, etc.).

Toposa and Turkana distinguish the following age-grades:[5]

ikoku	= baby boy	/	*ikoku nipese*	= baby girl
edia or *esapat*	= boy	/	*apese*	= girl
ekile	= man	/	*aberu*	= woman
ekasikaout	= elder	/	*akimat*	= old woman

Since Radcliffe-Brown's (1929) statement that 'in East Africa ... each age-set normally passes from one grade to another as a whole' this strong correlation between ag-esets and age-grades has often been emphasised (cf. Bernardi 1985). But at least for Toposa and Turkana (and for the other Ateker groups), this is mistaken, since transition from one age-grade to the next is little formalised and related only incidentally to the generation- and age-set system. Although initiation may be regarded as the point where formal access to the generation- set system occurs, a young man (only males are initiated) does not acquire on this occasion full adulthood status; entrance into adulthood is connected with marriage (for a woman with the birth of her first child)[6]. Nevertheless an older unmarried man is called *ekile* (and an older married but childless woman *aberu*). An uninitiated man may be called *ekile*, and a boy who has been initiated very early (which sometimes happens, see below) may still be called *edia*.

The entire male population of the society is grouped into consecutive age-sets (AS). (As already mentioned, we will refrain from dealing with female age-sets as the only material available on this topic is rather scanty.) Each age-sets contains members of approximately the same age. The duration of age-sets varies in different societies and may vary between different age-sets of the same society, if no fixed time intervals are prescribed. The duration of age- sets among Toposa and Turkana varies approximately between 7 and 10 years, but is most commonly closer to 10 years.

Whatever functions age-set systems may have in different societies and what their raison d'être might be under the given circumstances of an ethnic group, they all have one thing in common: Coevals are combined into groups, and there is a consecutive hierarchy of these groups. The relative

order of the age-sets does not change, but the absolute rank of each age-set increases in time; any given age-set passes through each level of seniority during the life-time of its members. Inside each group there is a strong feeling of solidarity, and between age-sets there is competition and conflict as the older sets tend to emphasise their position of seniority towards the younger ones and these resist the authority of the older ones.

Age-sets are one structuring feature of Toposa and Turkana society, and generation-sets are another one. They are related to each other as will be shown below. First, however, the basic structural principles of generation-set systems in general and of the Toposa/Turkana system in particular will need to be identified.

In all generation-set systems, there is at any one time a group of grandfathers, a group of fathers and a group of sons, maybe also a group of grandsons. These are mainly classificatory terms, as it is, for example, difficult to say, what sons are. Every male person is a son, and he might also be a father and a grandfather. But, if there is a fixed group of men who can, as a group, be called the grandfathers, then all their sons are the fathers, and all the sons of the fathers are the sons. Generation-sets (GS) are groups of brothers, and each generation-set produces the next one, consecutive GS being always in a father-son relationship.

As with age-sets, generation-sets are lined up, one after the other, like beads on a string, and there is a hierarchy between them. But whereas members of one age-set are coevals, this is not necessarily the case for members of one generation-set (GS). This has already been shown for generations in general in ch.4.2.1. Under the specific conditions of Toposa and Turkana societies, the age distance between sons and their fathers (patres) can be as much as 50 years (see ch.4.2.3). - The consequences:
- Grandfathers and fathers may both produce children at the same time, as may fathers and sons. As a result, there may be fathers and sons of equal age or even sons who are older than fathers.
- Sons of older fathers may be of equal age or even older than the youngest fathers.

This illustrates in a simple way how intricate generation- set systems (GSS) are: there will be a wide distribution of ages within any one generation-set, with the result that researchers dealing with GSS have always found a considerable overlap in the age of the members of successive groups, and generation-sets seem to be a cradle of confusion. Fortunately, things become clearer if a graphic model is applied (see Müller 1985 and next chapter).

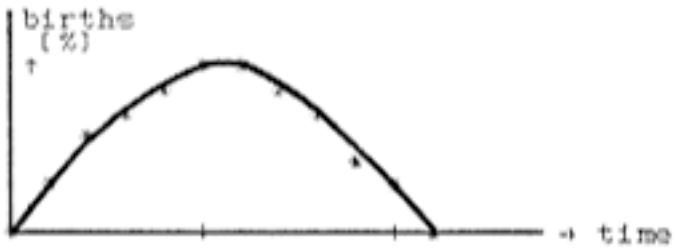


Fig. 4 Age distribution of a generation

For demographic reasons, age distributions of generation-sets take always the form of bell-shaped curves as shown in Fig.4. Most members of one GS (i.e. the middle part of the curve) are more or less coevals, but there are quite a few "overaged" as well as "underaged" members.

Two successive generations can be depicted:

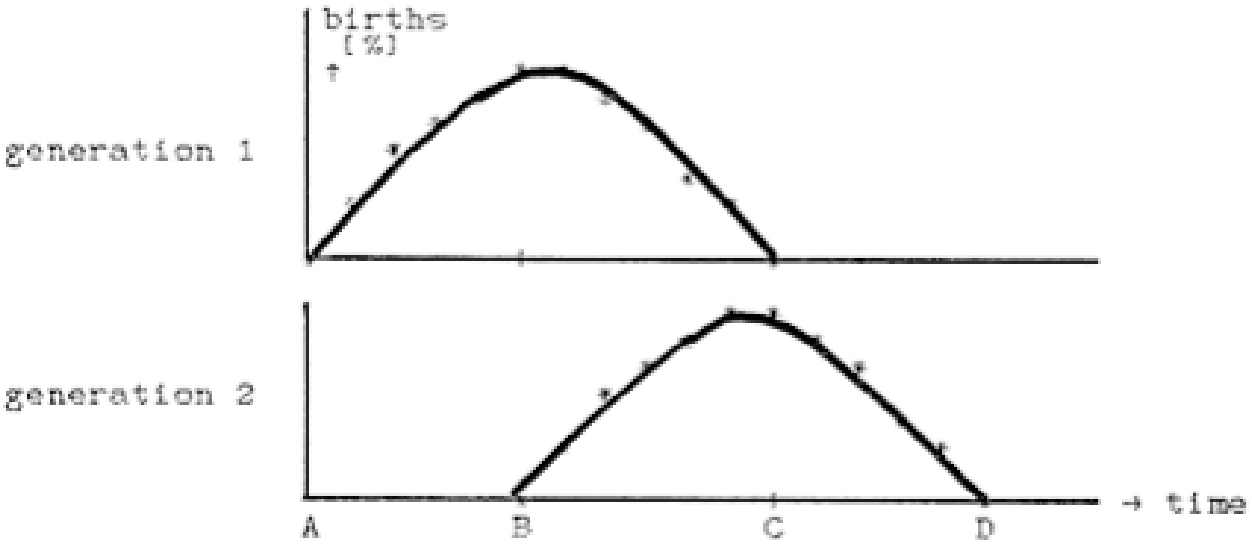


Fig. 5 Age distribution of two successive generations

Time A to B: Only members of generation 1 are born. These are the old men of generation 1.

Time B to C: Both members of generation 1 and 2 are born; the young ones of generation 1 and the old ones of generation 2.
Transition of power from one generation to the next, whether it be formally marked or not, will take place as a result of frictions between these two groups.

Time C to D: Only members of generation 2 are born, i.e. its younger members.

In general, generation-sets are divided into age-sets. The reason is quite clear: within any generation-set, there is a broad spread of ages, with very old and very young members alive at any one time. For everyday life, they assemble themselves into groups of coevals, i.e. age-sets. As the generations overlap in age, men of the same age are in both generation-sets (dotted parts in Fig.6). As a result there might be, for example, two age-sets of men aged about 40: one in GS 1 and one in GS 2. This can be shown schematically as follows (age-sets a,b,c... are indicated by vertical lines):

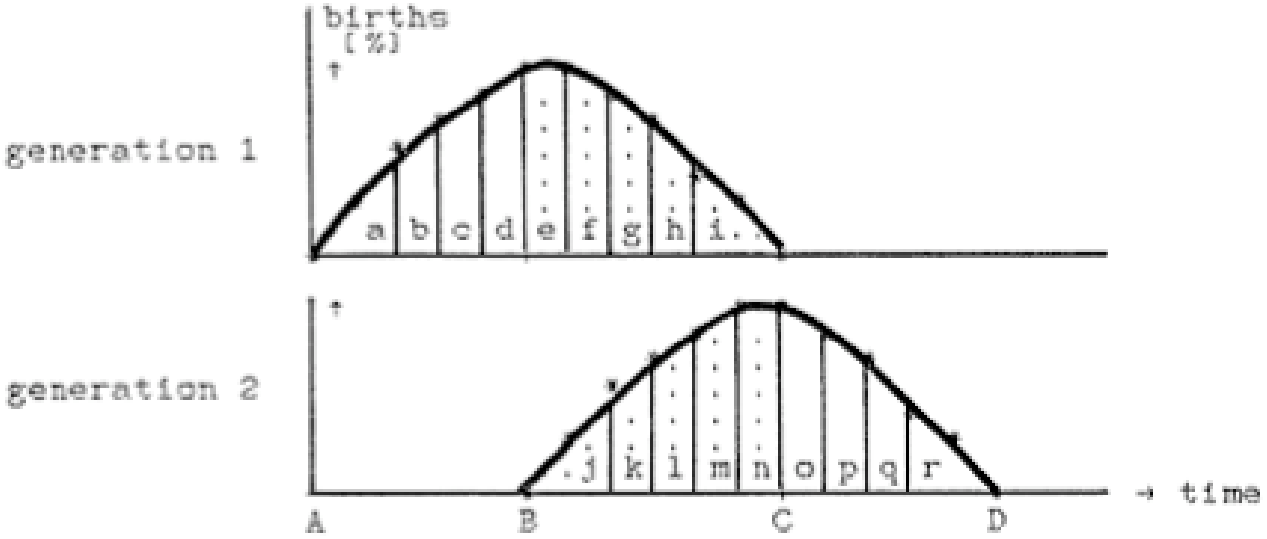


Fig. 6 Age-sets inside generation-sets

It should be mentioned, however, that the limits between age- sets are not as clear-cut as they might seem to be in this model. Age-set membership is not exclusively a matter of age, as will be shown below, and thus there may be some overlap in the age of members of adjacent age-sets.

The model displayed here (which shall be developed further in the next chapter) may be taken as describing a basic type of GSS. It is not merely an academic reduction but can be found in societies in East Africa like Toposa, Dodos, Jie, Turkana, etc. The traditional political system of these societies is decentralised, i.e. there is no fixed leader, and power is shared amongst the group of elders of the leading GS.

There are other societies in East Africa with GSS, where there is hereditary political leadership, as in the "Gada" systems. Their GSS display considerable variation from the basic type outlined here. They could also be explained in terms of our model, but that would lead us beyond the limitations of this study.

4.2.3. COMPUTER SIMULATION OF GENERATIONS

A computer programme has been developed which can simulate the demography of consecutive generations in the male line. The results are graphically depicted. Details can be obtained from Müller (1985). Here, only the main features shall be explained.

For any demographic simulation a set of basic data is needed. These are easy to obtain for industrialised societies, but they are not available, or available only in an unreliable form, for illiterate societies of the Toposa/Turkana kind. Here, years are not counted, and although people's relative ages are important for matters of seniority, nobody cares about absolute age. Collection of demographic data is thus a time consuming and exhausting process, and even if the researcher proceeds with the utmost care, he can never be sure about the accuracy of his results[7] - or alternatively he spends months in the field to the exclusion of all his other work. For this computation, I have collected two basic data sets which correspond surprisingly well with each other (see Appendix 4), but still I am not able to state what the margin of error is. Fortunately this does not matter too much, since the main point is to show trends, and the results are more of a qualitative than of a quantitative kind.

The model simulates successive generations in their normal growth and withering away, i.e. catastrophic events such as droughts and periods of hunger which affect the demograhic situation are only a part of it insofar as they occur regularly and become, through their regularity, part of the basic demographic data. When, for example, I simulated the Turkana generation-set system for the first time, it became obvious that some major irregularities must have occurred, and this drew my attention on the times of the Ngiputiro generation-set and the Labur Patrol (see ch.4.5.2).

One main advantage of model simulation of this kind seems to me to be that demographic processes of generation-set systems in general can be made visible and thus more intelligible.

The basic data set used in the computation is called Patri- Filiation Curve[8] (see Appendix 4) and shows the difference in age between fathers and sons, i.e. how old men are statistically when their sons are born. The Patri-Filiation Curve is different for each society in the same way as marriage and other patterns influencing procreation are different. As an example, Fig.7 shows the different Patri- Filiation Curves for Toposa/Turkana and the Federal Republic of Germany (for sources see Appendix 4).

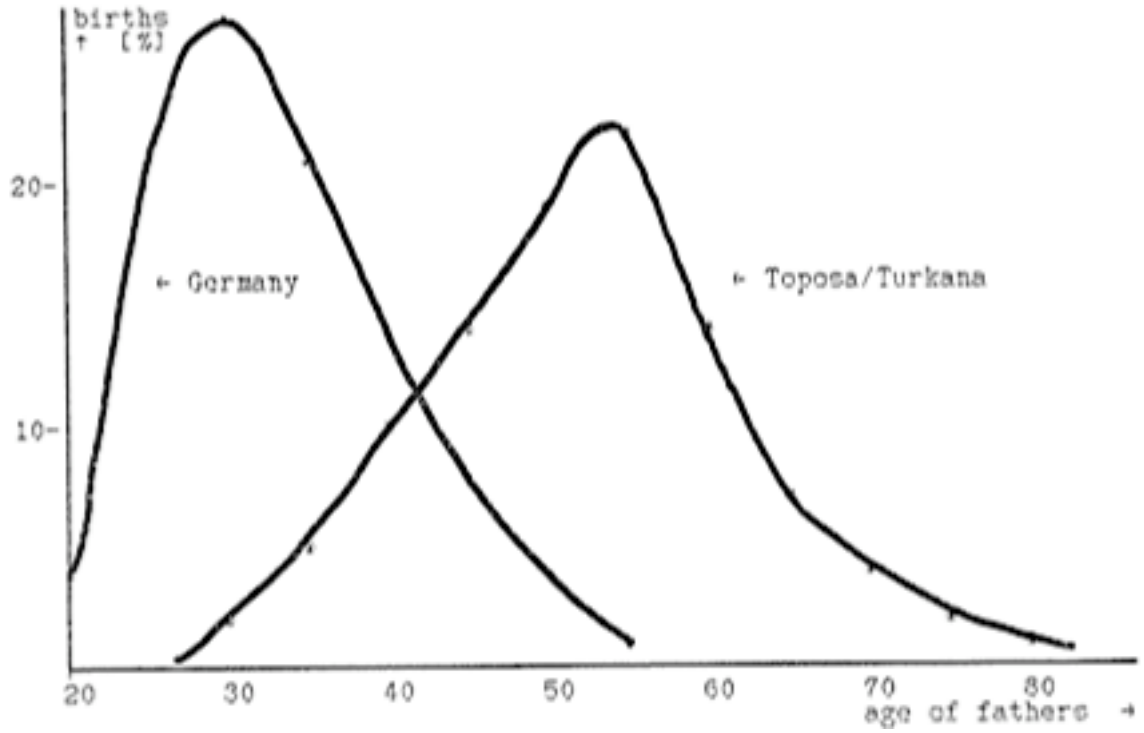


Fig. 7 Patri-Filiation Curve: Federal Republic of Germany and Toposa/Turkana

In East African societies of the Toposa/Turkana type procreation is not considered as a purely biological phenomenon. Actually, it is not the genitor but the *pater*, the social father, who counts. In most cases genitor and *pater* are the same person, but often they are not, as in cases of illegitimate children or levirate (see ch.3.3.6.3). Thus, the Patri-Filiation Curve correlates the ages of social fathers and their sons (who may continue to be born after the social fathers are dead).

Fig.7 shows the different procreation patterns of Europeans and Toposa/Turkana. Europeans marry early, most children are born when the fathers are aged about 30, and only a few men have children beyond 50. Toposa and Turkana marry late, and children are generally not born before fathers reach 30. Most children are born when their fathers are aged around 50, as this is the time when a man normally has acquired enough wealth to sustain a bigger family and to marry more young wives. If he becomes too old to fulfil his marital duties, he may call in a relative or tolerate a lover. By the institution of levirate, procreation continues up to the age, or rather in case the social father is already dead, up to the 'age distance' between social father and son of 80 years.

The simulation model requires two inputs: The Patri-Filiation Curve and, as a starting point, the demographic composition of the first generation. Their exact age distribution (as long as it is bell shaped; see below) is not of much importance as it is soon (after a few generations) outweighed by the impact of the Patri-Filiation Curve. The simulation itself is quite simple: the first generation

procreates in the form of the Patri-Filiation Curve thereby creating the second generation, which again procreates in the form of the Patri-Filiation Curve, and so on.

All Patri-Filiation Curves are bell shaped, and so too are the birth curves of male generations. Various generation sequences have been computed (see Müller 1985), and in principle they all look the same:

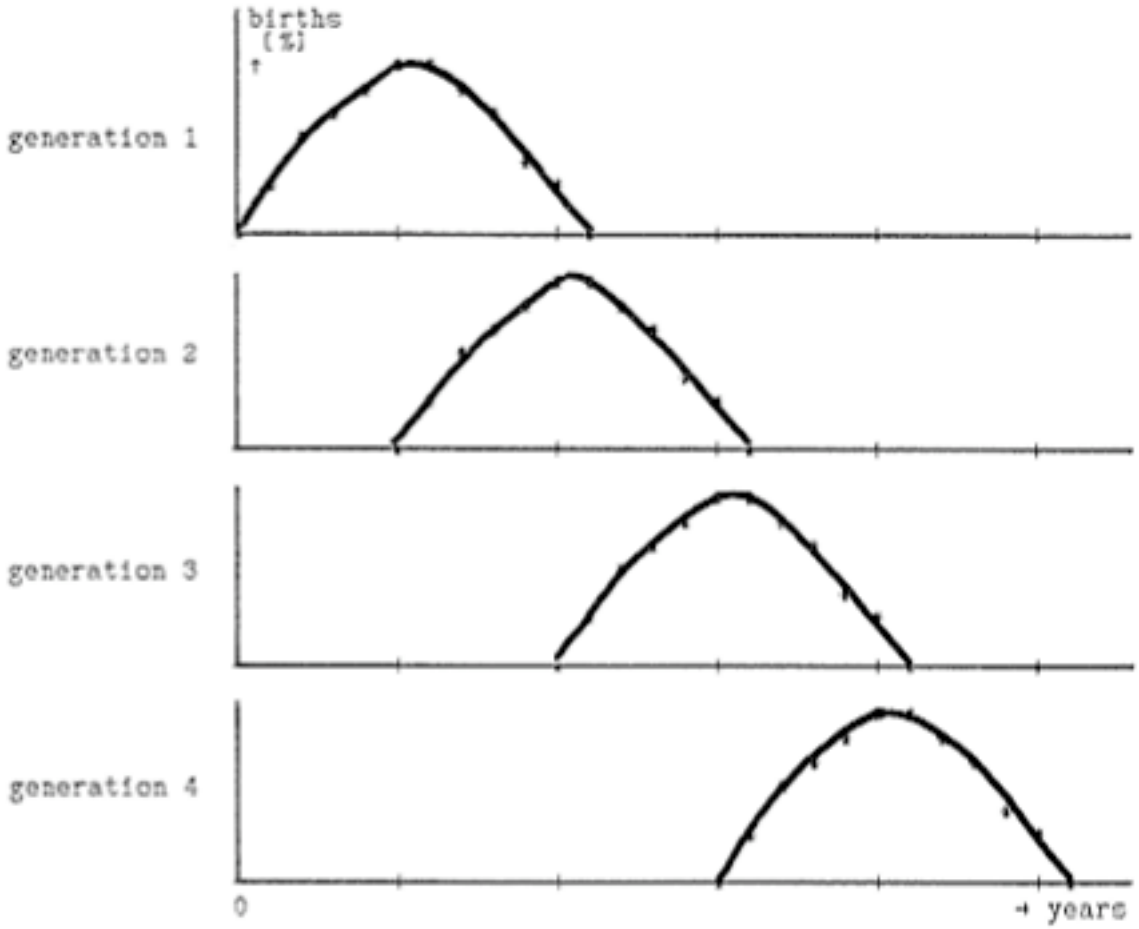


Fig. 8 Computer simulation of consecutive generation (births)

What varies the most between generation sequences of different societies is (1) the duration of generations, depicted in the breadth of each curve at its base and (2) the extent of overlap in ages between adjacent generations, seen in the overlap of curves on the time axis.

A detailed description of results specific to the Toposa and Turkana generation-set systems will be given later, after their ethnographic description. Two results of general relevance are:

1) The distance between consecutive generations, i.e. the mean age distance between fathers and sons, is about 30 years in European societies but about 50 years in societies like Toposa and Turkana. This can be seen without further computation in the Patri-Filiation Curves. The generation

distance is the mean value of the respective Patri-Filiation Curve. The generation distance can also be seen in the birth curves where it is the distance between equivalent points in each curve, e.g. the distance between the respective maxima.

2) Consecutive generations overlap each other and this overlap increases over the years, though rather slowly (for details see Müller 1985). Generation-set systems tend to be stable in this respect, and they do **not** automatically break down because of demographic inadequacies.

As an example, the simulation of Toposa generations (births) shall be shown which in this respect is representative for all other generation sequences. All generations have been combined into one diagram.

The above diagram covers a period of 400 years. Within this period the duration of generations and their age overlap increases, but rather slowly. In the first generation, members are born throughout a period of 110 years, while the births of the sixth generation cover a time span of 130 years. This increase is not insignificant and may lead to consequences, but certainly not to the general breakdown of the system.

(In the diagram above, the first births of each generation occur approximately 50 years after the first births of the preceding one. According to the Patri-Filiation Curve, births can already be expected after 30 years, which is a correct assumption; there are, however, only a few cases of this sort, they are statistically irrelevant and thus do not appear in the diagrams.)

Until now, only the births of a generation have been computed and shown. Some useful information can be extracted from this kind of display, such as the extent of overlap of generations, the generation distance etc. But no information can be obtained about the state of the system at a particular point in time; e.g. how many people in each generation are actually alive and how the ages are distributed within each generation.

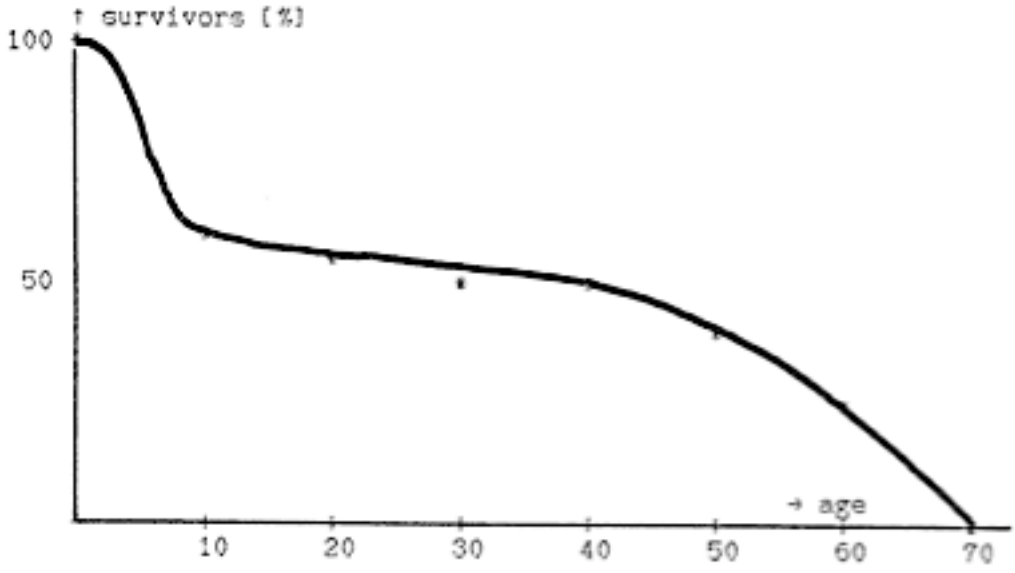


Fig. 9 Survival rate Toposa/Turkana

By introducing the relevant survival rate (Fig.9), this information can also be computed. The result in Fig.10 below shows, in a schematic example, the age distribution of living members of 4 consecutive generations at time T (left column) and time T+i (right column).

At time T, A has only a few old members, B is strong and has plenty of old members, C is even stronger but its members are younger than B, and D has only a few members who are all very young.

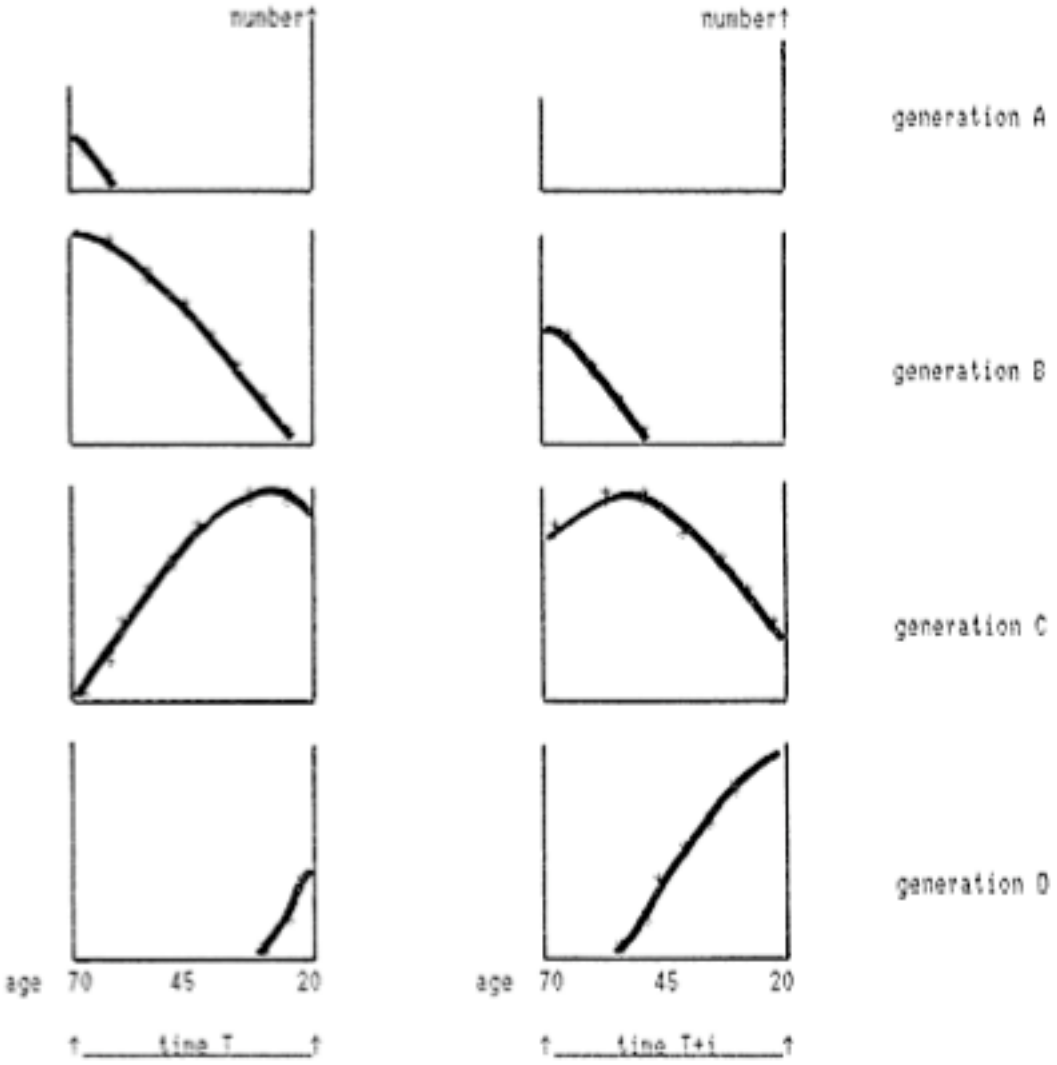


Fig. 10 Generation-set model: living members at T, t+i

At time T+i, the picture has changed: A is extinct, B has been reduced to a handful of old people, C is now very strong and with plenty of old members, and D has also grown stronger.

When consecutive time sequences like T, T+10years, T+20years, T+30years etc. are computed and shown graphically, the dynamics of the computed generation-set system become quite clear. (See relevant chapters.)

4.2.4. MODIFICATIONS OF THE BASIC GENERATIONAL PRINCIPLE

Until now, only the very basic feature of all generation-set systems (GSS) has been laid out:

Every man is a member of the generation-set (GS) which directly follows the one of his father.

There are other basic features and secondary rules contributing to the variety and the complexities of existing GSS which will be dealt with in later chapters. But with regard to the above feature, I am adamant in asserting that this is basic to all GSS even if it might occur in a slightly modified and thus hidden form.

As an example, we may consider the GSS of the Dasanec of southwestern Ethiopia as described by Almagor (1979). Here, every man is always three groups behind his father. The groups succeed each other in time thus (the real names being substituted for by systematic abstract terms):

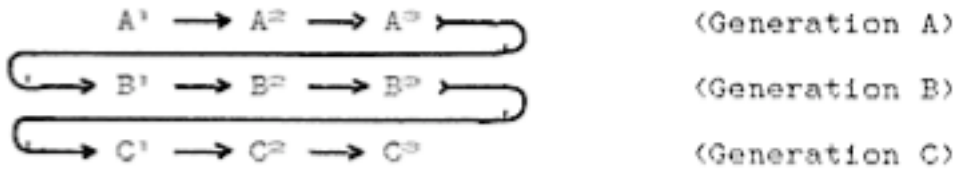
$A^1A^2A^3$ $B^1B^2B^3$ $C^1C^2C^3$ ...

Every man is always three groups behind his father,i.e.:

sons of A^1 are B^1
sons of A^2 are B^2
sons of A^3 are B^3
sons of B^1 are C^1
sons of B^2 are C^2
sons of B^3 are C^3
etc.

There are three consecutive generations here - A, B and C - each subdivided into three groups indexed 1,2,3. If we disregard the subdivision of the generations, the basic rule still applies: every man is a member of the generation which directly follows the one of his father.

The sucession of groups might be better displayed using what Baxter (1978) terms a "time worm":



The sons of the first group of generation A are the first group in generation B, and their sons are the first group in generation C. The same applies for the respective sets of second and third groups. From a reproductional point of view, each of the three sets can be regarded as an independent entity which we may call a generation-set line.

Thus, the succession of groups $A^1A^2A^3$ $B^1B^2B^3$ $C^1C^2C^3$ may be seen as consisting of 3 interlocked generation-set lines (vertical columns in the above figure)

A^1 B^1 C^1 (generation-set line 1),
A^2 B^2 C^2 (generation-set line 2),
A^3 B^3 C^3 (generation-set line 3).

As a result, it can be said that the Dasanec GSS is composed of three interlocked generation-set lines. Each generation-set line can be regarded as an independent sub-GSS in which our basic feature continues to apply.

In this way also extremely complicated GSS like the "Gada" systems of East Africa can be broken down into analysable segments (e.g. Gada: 5 generation-set lines). This model of GSS could even be employed to compare different GSS, or to analyse changes within one system, the changes being often reducible to a variation in the number of GS lines. For example, below will be shown how the Toposa have changed their GSS system from a one-generation-set-line to a two-generation-set-line system.

4.2.5. GENERATION, AGE AND SYSTEMS OF ACTION: EAST AFRICA

(Generation- and age-sets in East Africa - Basic features of age-sets - Generation- and age-sets and the kinship system - Reasons for the existence of generation- and age-sets - Functions of generation- and age-sets - The "dysfunction" of the generation aspect - Change - The dynamic character of generation- and age-sets)

Map 6 Generation- and age-sets in East Africa
(selected societies / approximate locations)

Generation- and age-sets in East Africa. In one form or another, grouping by categories of age and/or generation is a world-wide phenomenon. In most cases it is little formalised and institution-alised. East Africa however is prominent for a cluster of ethnic groups with relatively formalised generation-sets (GS) and/or age-sets (AS). Some of these groups can be seen on the map above (Map 6).

Basic features of age-sets. The socio-political systems of these societies display considerable variation, but they all have several features in common:

1) Each mature male member of the society belongs to an AS.
2) Each AS consists of approximate coevals.
3) AS recruit their members through initiation ceremonies, or AS come into informal existence as cliques of boys or young men which then become formally recognised through initiation ceremonies.
4) All AS are ranked according to seniority, and older AS have the right to give orders to the younger ones.
5) The relative rank of AS does not change.
6) The absolute rank of each AS increases in time, and each AS passes through each level of seniority (which is not necessarily connected with defined age-grades - see Toposa and Turkana) during the life-time of its members.
7) In relations with other AS, members of an AS will show solidarity towards one another. Internally, AS may also be structured hierarchically with more and less senior members.
8) The relation between AS is one of competition and conflict.
9) Ritual leadership and, to varying degrees, political power, is vested in the most senior AS.
10) AS are an integrating socio-political factor.
11) In some cases: AS are imbedded in a frame of consecutive generation-sets (GS).

The above list gives the main points but is by no means exhaustive, and each feature should also be seen in relative terms, e.g. activity in an AS organisation may, in some societies, cease in older age.

Although AS (and GS) are outstanding features of many East African societies, even there they are only one factor among others in the organisation of society, and their importance should not be ex-aggerated. I would thus object to Fleming's (1965) use of the term 'age-grading cultures'.

Generation and age-sets and the kinship system. The notion of age-sets and generation-sets is in many ways connected to the kinship system. Radcliffe-Brown has defined three basic principles of classificatory kinship systems: (1) the unity of the sibling group, (2) the generation principle, and (3) the unity of the lineage group.[9]

Members of one GS or AS address each other as brothers, and in a generation-set system one GS is always made up of fathers and the following one of sons. In this way, kinship principles like the

'unity of the sibling group' and the generation principle are extended to society as a whole. The notion of lineage, however, is opposed to the notion of GS. A lineage brings together consecutive ages and generations while GS divide them. And in fact, wherever lineage plays a predominant role in the organisation of a society, GS have little relevance. This allows the refinement of Eisenstadt's statement that in a given society the importance of the kinship system and age-sets (he does not distinguish AS from GS) is inversely related (1954:103). Another of Eisenstadt's arguments needs little explanation, namely his thesis that membership in an AS (i.e. support from the age-mates) allows the individual a greater degree of independence from the kinship system (1954:101). Thus, in the normal course of events a young man emancipates himself from his family through his age-set activities. But the reverse is also true: young men may be exploited by their fathers, brothers and other relatives using the argument of their higher age-set rank.

After a man has married and has become preoccupied with the demands of his own family, his age-set activities will in most cases decrease or even cease altogether. Then, after a few years when he has raised grown-up sons capable of running the family's economy, he will (in most of the societies mentioned above) return to his age-mates and be an elder for the rest of his life.

Abrahams tries to establish another connection between family structures and generation-sets (1978:55ff.). He points to societies like the Jie, where, even after the death of their father, brothers tend to stay together in one household. This for him tends to suggest that generation- sets must play a powerful role in the society. If however, as among the Turkana, brothers tend to separate as soon as possible, he would rate much lower the importance of generation-sets. To me, this argument does not seem entirely conclusive as the generation principle is involved not merely in the co-habitation of brothers, but much more widely applicable, affecting for example the structure of neighbourhoods as shown later in this chapter.

Reasons for the existence of generation- and age-sets. There has been much speculation about the *raison d'être* of generation- and age-sets. What can we contribute to this question? - Surely it is 'gerontocracy which encourages age- setting' (Baxter/Almagor 1978:14)... but then there are plenty of gerontocratic societies without formalized age-setting. And although AS and GS are mainly to be found in 'pastoral' (i.e.predominantly pastoral) societies, no exact correlation between pastoralism and AS/GS can be made: there are pastoralists without AS on the one hand and, on the other hand, there are also agriculturists like the Konso with elaborate generation- and age-set systems. The military aspect of age-sets (c.f. Beattie 1970:147) has often been overstressed. In fact it is not particularly significant as there are other means of organisation for war which are equally or even more effective.

There is one historical explanation which claims that all East African age- and generation-set systems stem from the Boran gada system (cf. Driberg 1929, Huntingford 1968). It is highly speculative and was rejected in as early as 1968 by Sanders (1968:43ff.) who instead presents much better arguments:

> It has been demonstrated that the age-grade system evolved as a response to the ecological relations of the area; that the East African pastoralists practise mixed economy, relying as much on garden produce as on cattle for their subsistence diet; that shifting cultivation and transhumance in a harsh environment keep the size of settlements small and their composition unstable; that seasonal fragmentation of the basic family unit and the core of incipient lineages was due to the demands of necessary labor specialization. Finally, because of the combination of the factors listed, no corporate unilineal descent groups emerged which could articulate the function of government. (1968:267)

Sanders is right in saying that a combination of factors should be seen responsible for the existence of generation- and age-sets, and also in stressing the role of history .

Reasons for the existence of GS and/or AS under a set of given circumstances are complex, and even if we assume that it might be possible to find the formula: "A given ethnic group will be equipped with GS and/or AS if factors F_1 to F_n apply" , we must admit that for the time being not all these factors are known and that more research on this topic is required. As one contribution towards this, I shall describe briefly how GS and AS emerge in a concrete situation and explain why this process is plausible (but maybe not necessary) under the given circumstances. Paradigms for this study are Toposa and Turkana where the process is very similar, and the example is from the Ngikwatela territorial section of north-eastern Turkanaland where traditional structures are still comparatively strong.

I met a group of Ngikwatela Turkana in 1987 in the plains north of Kaikor. Ngikwatela are mainly cattle pastoralists, and their migration cycle is a transhumant movement from the plains (rainy season) to the Lorionetom mountains north of the plains (dry season). The unpredictability of rains and the resulting availability of animal forage, necessitates a high degree of flexibility on the part of the migration groups, giving an advantage to smaller groups. On the other hand, as the area is highly insecure because of frequent cattle raids by neighbouring people (Nyangatom and Dasanec), migration groups must, for protection, have a certain size. This has led to the institution of *ngadakarin* (sg. *adakar*), neighbourhoods as described above with a temporarily stable membership composition. As mentioned above, these *ngadakarin* consist of several family units. A rather common recruiting principle for *ngadakarin* seems to be that their family heads be of similar age, often expressed in their name ("*adakar* of the so-and-so age-set"). In these *ngadakarin* we have thus a stratification of generations as fathers (family heads) and sons. In an *adakar*, generation grouping is a real phenomenon which is clearly visible to any observer. The emergence of age groups becomes quite plausible: children band together when they play, and youths must co-operate when they herd the cattle.[10] The fracturing into consecutive age-groups is also natural: there is always tension between older and younger brothers; the principle of seniority gives the older brothers the chance to harass the younger ones, and there is competition between brothers over their share of the family herd, both in general and for their bridewealth. Thus age- groups emerge. I saw different "gangs" of youngsters of one *adakar* as they were roaming around the neighbouring *ngadakarin* looking for milk and food. These 'gangs' were age-groups, and in each of them their members' average age was quite different. Gangs of youths bearing names are a common phenomenon world-wide, but generally they fade away when their members reach adulthood. Here, these gangs become formalised as

age-sets. It is possible to speculate as to why this should be - maybe the simple answer is that other forms of social organisation just do not work under the given circumstances: mobility of the people and a sufficient availability of land prevents any centralised leadership from becoming effective (at least in pre-colonial times). A kinship organisation, for example on a lineage basis, is also very unlikely to emerge or to subsist, given both the prevailing environmental and historical conditions (see ch.3.3.6) and given the permanent competition for the animals within the family. Some form of social organisation, however, is always required, if it only be for the sake of security. In this manner what was once the obvious organisational principle of an *adakar*, namely grouping in generation- and age-groups, may become institutionalised as the blueprint for the socio-political organisation of an entire ethnic group or a cultural area.

The way in which this approach differs from others should be evident: a specific cultural trait is tracked not on a 'tribal' nor even on a broader level. Rather it is sought after in the acts of daily life. Not all the complexities of an institution can be explained in this simple way, of course. Institutionalised systems develop their own dynamics, but it is still in daily action that they are shaped and kept alive.

Functions of generation- and age-sets. Serge Tornay has, for the Nyangatom, tried to separate generation-sets (GS) and age-sets (AS). According to him, GS are "religious and unquestionably superstructural" (1979a: 307), whereas AS "play an important role in establishing communal economic relations" (1979a:307). Intellectually distinguishing between GS and AS is certainly most valuable, but observing a practical difference between the two is much harder as they are often not different cognitive entities in the minds of the actors; and there must be a reason why Toposa and Turkana do not distinguish between GS and AS linguistically (see ch.3.2). I would insist rather on maintaining the cognitive unity of AS and GS but distinguish between their functions at different societal levels: on the level of *adakar*, the GS and AS serve primarily practical purposes while on the level of the tribe as a whole, both operate more as superstructural phenomena.

What then are the 'functions' attributed to generation- and age-sets by the different authors? There are an enormous number of texts dealing with the problem, and for the sake of brevity I shall only quote a selection of them.

A) Abstract societal level:

1) Perpetuation of society (Abrahams 1978:62, Turton 1978:123, Dyson-Hudson 1963:397ff.), and provision of a coherent society (Prins 1953:126).
2) Preservation of the 'tribal culture' (Prins 1953:126).
3) Identification of the individual with society (Eisenstadt 1954:107), and incorporation of the individual into society (Fortes 1984:118).
4) Provision of a 'folk model' of political theory and philosophy (Baxter 1978:154, for 'Gada').
5) Provision for the ritual and transcendental aspects of life (Gulliver 1953b:166,165).

B) Concrete societal level:

6) Cohesion of society (Gulliver 1953b:165, Beattie 1970).

7) Transmission of the cultural and social heritage, for social continuity (Eisenstadt 1956:321, Kuper 1983:61).

8) Socialization of new members of the society (Kuper 1983:61, Baxter 1979:92).

9) Education through which the common values of the society are inculcated in its members. (Prins 1953:126, Eisenstadt 1954:110).

10) Integration of the members of society (Bernardi 1952: 325f.).

11) Provision of judicial procedures for rectifying breaches of tribal law (Prins 1953:126, opposed by Gulliver 1958, for the Turkana).

12) Provision of political authority (Beattie 1970).

13) Decentralization of political functions and authority (Bernardi 1952:322).

14) Selection and preparation of leaders (Eisenstadt 1954: 110, Winter/Johansen 1977), or rather provision of leaders under any given circumstances but without their possessing fixed leader ship (Gulliver 1958).

15) For quick mustering of armed warriors (Kuper 1963:54, Beattie 1970:147). Disputed by Almagor (1979:120), Lamphear (n.d.), myself and others. Rather:

16) Temporary limitation of warriors' power (Almagor 1979:121,140f.).

C) Group level:

17) For balancing different group interests (Prins 1953:126).

18) For channelling the generation conflict (Fortes 1984:118, Eisenstadt 1954:107).

19) For channnelling the aggressive potential of youths (Baxter 1978:14, Winter/Johansen 1977).

20) Allocation of important tasks and (public) roles (Eisenstadt 1954:107).

21) Distribution of power (Bernardi 1985:28ff.).

22) Stratification of society (Prins 1953: 123).

23) 23) Allocation of tasks according to age-sets/age-grades (Eisenstadt 1954:110, Beattie 1970). But: "The ritual events tend only to set a seal on an already achieved change" (Gulliver 1963:46, for the Turkana).

24) Provision of work gangs (Kuper 1963a:55).

25) Enforcement of the principles of seniority and gerontocracy (Bernardi 1952:322, Beattie 1970:145), control and monopolisation of 'scarce resources' (land, women) (Spencer 1965:12, 1976:156 etc.).

D) Family level:

26) Emancipation of the individual from the pressures of family and kin (Eisenstadt 1956:46ff., Tornay 1987:157).

27) Diversion into the ASS of rivalry between brothers, potentially disruptive in the family (Spencer 1965:134, Fortes 1984:116).

E) Individual level:

28) Allocation of statuses and roles (Prins 1953:124, Gulliver 1958).

29) Definition of status in a mobile society (Bernardi 1952:322).
30) Provision of social connections and contact under circumstances of weak ties both of kinship and of political, legal and territorial organisation (Gulliver 1958, Beattie 1970).
31) Provision of networks of co-operation and solidarity (Eisenstadt 1954:110, Baxter 1978:16, 1979:77).
32) Material benefits (e.g. meat at ceremonies) (Baxter 1978:14).
33) Provision of a complete social and ritual career (Prins 1953:126, Baxter 1978:149,178).

This collection of "functions" shall not be discussed in detail. It is meant only to give a general impression of various approaches to the subject, which tend to deal more with the societal sphere than with individual action. In addition, functions attributed to specific systems will also not necessarily be generally applicable to GS and AS as such. All the societies examined in the texts have age-sets, but the importance of the generation aspect varies, and so does the rigidity of structures; some systems like *gada* operate within a rigid time frame while others, like Toposa and Turkana, are highly flexible and well adapted to the demographic process.

There is a dispute among the different authors as to whether generation- and age-sets have ritual or socio-political and economic functions, or both. Tornay tries to separate the two spheres of ritual and economic activity (see above). But just as it is impossible in practice to artificially distinguish between generation-sets and age-sets, so ritual cannot be separated from the economy when, as among the Ateker and others, the main activity in most ceremonies is the distribution of meat. Inseparable also in (traditional) Africa are politics and ritual, as pointed out by Fortes and Evans-Pritchard as early as in 1940[11]. Thus, the conclusion of Baxter/Almagor (1978:25) that the key to the understanding of age-systems lies only in their ritual functions, does not seem to be convincing.

An examination of the above 33 points shows that most of the specified tasks can also be fulfilled by other social structures like kinship organisation.[12] What seems to be especially remarkable for generation- and age-set systems of the Toposa/Turkana type, is the limitation placed on power: through the shifting dynamics of the systems, power cannot be monopolised forever by any one group or in any one office. We shall return to this point later.

The "dysfunction" of the generation aspect. In generation- and age-set systems, the age-sets are the institution by which men are grouped into sets of coevals, while generation-sets emphasise the socio-biological aspect of generations and thus each GS contains a spread of ages. But what for me is the basic constituent factor of the generational aspect, is for most other authors a most puzzling feature of the system. Somewhat representative is N. Dyson Hudson's assumption:

> Given the recruiting principles, the demographic and reproductive facts, and the social institutions pertaining to marriage and reproduction among Karimojong, the age- system has a degree of built-in malfunctioning. (1966:202)

Spencer takes a better point of view when he argues:

> The symptoms of disorder, delay and innovation which Dyson-Hudson regarded as indications of eventual breakdown of the total system under modern pressures might in reality be indicative of the way in which the traditional system actually works. (1978:142f.)

But still he assumes an inevitable breakdown of the GSS as a result of its demographic background (1978:134), while Baxter/Almagor speak of a 'gap between the cognitive order and the social reality' (1978:6). However, when in 1982 I made my first field stay among the Toposa, I was surprised to find their system operating well, and I could not discover any signs of break-down. This gave me the incentive to take a closer look at the 'break-down theories'. By means of a computer simulation I was able to show that the Toposa type of generation-set system is stable with regard to its demographic background (see Müller 1985, 1986). GSS of the Toposa type do not break down through 'built-in malfunctioning'. The spread of ages within each generation exists but remains constant. If GSS change, the reason is not that there is a dysfunction in the system itself. This forms the premise of this study:

Generation-set systems are not hampered by built-in demographic malfunctions. Changes are caused internally by the actors themselves or are caused by outside forces or by a combination of both.

Change. Almost every author dealing with generation- and age-set systems describes the way in which they change under modern influences. This is not the place to join in the discussion as to why some systems have "continued to flourish even into the seventies, whereas others have collapsed at the first colonial puff" (Baxter/Almagor 1978:20), or why and how the various systems have changed. Here, change in a society is seen as an inherent and ongoing process, and changes in the generation- and age-set systems are seen as the result of a combination of both external influences and internal forces, and it will be shown below why and how these processes of change came about in Toposa and Turkana societies.

The dynamic character of generation- and age-sets. Another major lesson which I learned in the field was that the information obtained on generation- and age-sets is seldom coherent and often contradictory. This does not necessarily mean that one informant is 'right' and the other 'wrong'. Procedures and 'rules' are not codified, and thus always subject to interpretation which allows a considerable margin for variation and change. There are *ngikasikaou*, elders with an authority of knowledge who are consulted; this ensures a certain degree of continuity. Nevertheless, things do not always run so smoothly; some of these elders are quite senile and mix things up, sometimes an expert is not in reach when needed, and sometimes the 'consensus principle' described above changes 'wrong' into 'right'.

In some group interviews the following happened: Person A stated fact X which was objectively right and confirmed by several other sources of information. But for one reason or another, the majority of the group did not accept A's point of view, and they stated Y which was objectively

wrong. As A was not an opinion leader of the group he was not able to defend his point, and he became convinced that Y was right. 'Wrong' had changed into 'right'.

I could never find the miraculous 'well-informed old man' who was able to give me a comprehensive description of his generation-set system - this is simply because it cannot be described in this way by a single person who himself is an actor in the system. When, once in while, I had problems recording consistent statements on a certain point, this was neither my own nor the informants' fault but reflected local variations and the system's general dynamism and disposition towards change. The generation-set systems under consideration look chaotic only to an observer who is clinging to a set of rules, for even if these rules were stated by informants, they are not exclusively determining factors in what people do - which is the problem with most rules. Finally it seems to me that generation-set systems are also arenas of conflict; that they provide a means of canalising conflicts between groups, between old and young and between generations, and that the very structure of such systems may be an outcome of certain conflicts - the change in the Toposa system will be presented as an example of this.

The absence of codification and the wide margin for interpretation contribute in making possible the high flexibility and dynamism of the Toposa/Turkana type generation-set system. Precisely because things are often not so well-defined, individuals have the opportunity of manipulating the system to their own advantage.

With the background information available and the analytic tools of the previous chapters at hand, we are almost ready to begin the examination of the ethnographic field material. First however, the set of theses underlying this study shall be presented. Some of them have already been touched on, while others will only become comprehensible after the analysis of the field material.

4.3. THESES

Below, 9 theses are listed which constitute the conceptual framework of this study. They will be later tested on the basis of empirical data collected among the Toposa and Turkana. Some of them may only apply in the Toposa/Turkana case, while others, after examination, may prove to be more widely generalisable.

(1) Generation-set systems are stable institutions from the demographic point of view. They do not break down or change as a result of built-in demographic malfunctions.

(2) Generation-set systems are flexible and dynamic. Changes in a generation-set system are brought about by actors reacting to forces internal or external to the society.

(3) Generation-set systems are linked to the kinship system. Disruption of the kinship system affects the generation-set system.

(4) The degree to which generation-sets and age-sets can be conceptually separated depends on the level on which they are analysed.

(5) Generation-set systems are effective both on a collective and an individual level.

(6) Generation-set systems are not purely conceptual systems: they are systems of action.

(7) Generation-set systems are able to control conflicts between groups and individuals, and they are shaped by these conflicts.

(8) Generation-set systems produce conflict between age-mates belonging to adjacent generations, and the dynamic of such systems is partly based on this conflict.

(9) Generation-set systems are a means of limiting and decentralising power.

The theses apply only to a limited sector of the generation- and age-set complex. This conforms to the basic idea of this study, which is to show people as actors and not as victims of a 'system'. An impression of how they act will be given in the following chapters.

4.4. SYSTEMS OBSERVED

In these next two chapters ethnographic documentation of the Toposa and Turkana generation-set systems will be presented. The way in which the GSS manifests itself both in people's daily life and at special events will be shown. Although the account will be mixed with some analytic remarks, these chapters will remain primarily descriptive.

4.4.1. THE TOPOSA GENERATION-SET SYSTEM

(Basic layout - Overaged and underaged - Shade trees - Marriage - Meat feast - Formation of generation- and age- sets - Nyepeyo - Generation-set ceremonies - Succession ceremonies - Initiation - The sacred stone)

Basic layout of the Toposa generation-set-system. The fundamental outline of the Toposa generation-set-system is quite simple:

1) Every male Toposa is a member of a generation-set. Everyone belongs to the GS following that of his father.

2) Generation-sets are subdivided into age-sets.

3) The GSS does not regulate marriage or procreation in any way. A man may marry and rear children whenever his personal circumstances allow, regardless of the status of his GS/AS at that time.

4) At any given time there are (according to the the model and also to the situation I observed) four consecutive generations A,B,C,D in existence, with any consecutive pair standing in a father-son relationship. B and C are the "central" GS. B are the leading generation vested with political authority, C are their sons who, though they to a large extent run the tribal economy, are still bound to respect their fathers' authority. A are very old men with outstanding ritual authority who have ceased to participate in daily affairs, and D are still children.

In the specific case of Bunio and Riwoto (territorial sections) where the Toposa GSS could be observed in action, the old "retired" generation (A) was the Nguwana, the leading generation (B) were the Ngikaleso, their sons (C) were Ngingoletyang, and Ngitaamo were the "children" (D).

This correlation between generation-sets and status is a typical one which is generally given by informants and which applies to the majority of men. It forms part of the static element of the GSS. There are however deviations from this ideal case which contribute to the dynamic aspect of the GSS; these can be captured in the concepts overaged and underaged.

Overaged and underaged. What overaged and underaged are, can best be shown in a graphic display. As we have seen, birth curves of generations are bell-shaped, and overlap. We can divide each generation into 3 parts: the central main part, which is not overlapped by the main parts of the generations coming before or after it, the underaged (U) and the overaged (O), both of which overlap the main parts of earlier or later generations.

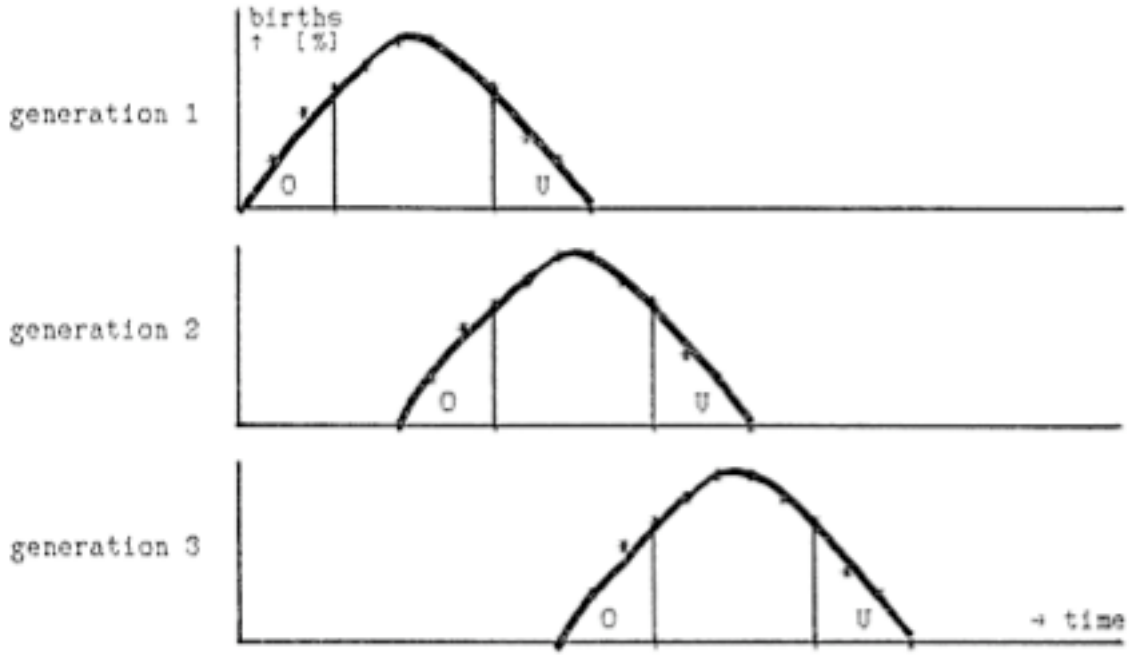
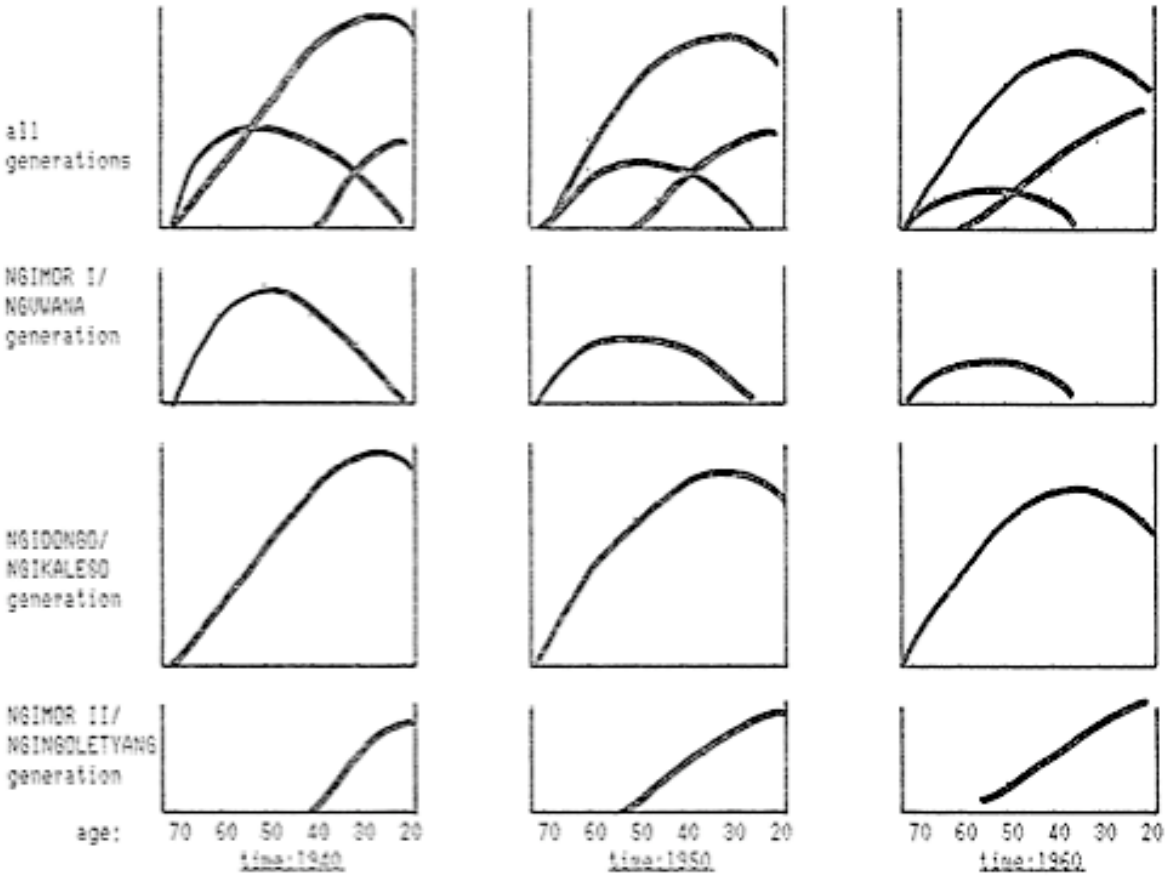


Fig. 11 Overaged and underaged

Transmission of power from the leading GS to the next is always a critical moment in societies of the Toposa/Turkana type where the moment of succession is not laid down. This can also be put the other way round: no fixed time intervals after which succession takes place need be laid down as the transmission of power is regulated by the changing demographic balance between the two groups. In my opinion, the overlap in age between consecutive generation-sets, i.e. the existence of

overaged and underaged, is the dynamic force which ensures that the succession of power takes place at an appropriate moment. At the same time, the overlap in ages ensures a smooth transmission of the society's cultural heritage (see ch.4.2.1).

The way this shift in the demographic balance between generation-sets takes place, and the transmission of power which accompanies it, can be simulated using the model already developed in this study. Let us consider, as an example, the process which led to the transmission of power from the Toposa generation-set Ngimor/Nguwana to their successors Ngidongo/Ngikaleso (extract of Fig.16, below):



In 1940 the Ngidongo/Ngikaleso were already strong in numbers and also had plenty of old men. The Ngi- mor I/Nguwana, however, could still hold their position. By 1960 the number of Ngimor I/Nguwana had dwindled away and the relative strength in numbers of the Ngidongo/Ngikaleso, especially among their old men, had increased. Thus, we would expect the transmission of power to have taken place sometime after 1950 - which is actually what happened.

Shade trees. Toposa settlements are scattered along the major watercourses where even in the dry season water can be found by digging shallow wells in the sandy riverbeds. At first sight, it seems

amazing that settlements should be built mostly out in the open field, under the burning sun, away from the riverine forests whose trees would provide perfect shade, but apparently the Toposa are mindful not to disturb the fragile ecology of their small forests; and besides that prefer to keep away from irksome insects such as mosquitoes which congregate under the trees. But although they do not settle there, the Toposa make use of their shade. Thus, by the time the sun reaches its zenith, at about 10 or 11 a.m., groups of men can be seen gathered under the trees. Most of these men are elders, as the young men are usually away with the herds to some distant spot.

Each cluster of settlements which we may call area has its shade trees, one for each generation. Sometimes these will be quite spread out, sometimes they will be within shouting distance, as in Kopoe, a village-like cluster of settlements in Bunio (a territorial section). Here, the few remaining Nguwana had their own tree, close by were the Ngikaleso, and the tree of the "young ones", the Ngingoletyang, was approximately 30 metres away from the other two.

The general word for tree in Toposa is *nyekitoe* (pl. *ngikitoe*), which also carries the specific meaning of shade tree. Thus, when a Toposa would talk of a meeting about to take place, he would always say "We shall go to the tree".

Outside his family affairs, the “tree” is the centre of communication and activity in a man's daily life. He may walk to distant places once in a while to see his herds, his distant friends and relatives, and he may be seen at ceremonies and other special events, but in general, during the day, he can be found at his tree. He may just sit there and relax, or he may sleep, his head leaning on his headrest (*nyekicolong*), which also serves him as a stool and without which, alongside spear and stick, a Toposa man will never be seen. He may smoke tobacco from a pipe, he may discuss matters with a friend or in a group, he may gossip or tell jokes, or he may play *ngikiles*, a game common all over Africa in one form or another. Here, four rows, each of 12 holes, are dug in the ground, and "cows" in the shape of little stones wander between the holes according to the rules. As in reality, the herds are raided and counterraided and of course the winner is the one who ends up with all the stock.

There is a certain easy atmosphere under the tree which reflects the men's independent-mindedness. Each does as his mood takes him, and no-one can attract the attention of others if they are not in the mood for listening. We saw, for example, an old man holding a furious speech on the declining moral standards of the young generation, and nobody seemed to care much about it. But far from being only a place of leisure, the tree is also the place for communication and when controversial discussions take place, can become a centre buzzing with activity.

For the individual herd owner, the tree is his source of news and information. Whenever a man travels (Toposa travel a lot, on foot and over long distances) he will report on arrival (and also dur-

ing his stops on the way) to the tree where he will be asked about his origin and destination about events taking place in his area and about the news he has collected en route. Thus, the trees are the knots in the Toposa information network, the relay stations in a highly effective and astonishingly quick communication system. The herd owner's management decisions rely heavily on such pieces of information; information as to where it has rained, i.e. where there is grass for the animals; where areas are insecure, i.e. where there has been raiding activity from neighbouring enemies; or where an outbreak of animal disease might have taken place. Whenever activities need to be co-ordinated over a wider area, the elders send messengers to neighbouring trees, and once in a while a tree may be selected for a sectional or even tribal meeting.

Whenever quarrels arise which go beyond family level, the parties involved are brought to the tree, and the dispute is discussed and settled by the elders concerned. Even government chiefs are well advised to settle their court cases in co-operation with the traditional elders under the tree.

Marriage. Marriage involves several stages, from the initial courting through to the final ceremony *akidur* whereby with the slaughtering of an ox the union of the couple and their families is sealed. Altogether the process may last as long as a couple of years. Neither the bridegroom nor the bride's father act as isolated individuals, but always together with their respective age-sets.

Before they marry, however, young men and girls will also have love affairs, and the "parties" where they meet, are the dances arranged by age-sets.

The first marriage of a man is technically arranged by his parents, but within a certain margin, the young people, boys and girls, may be able to influence their parents' decision. Courting takes place continuously, and here too the young men tend to stick together in groups of age-mates.

Nyalema is an age-set dance where the brides "choose" their husbands. (In general, this choice has been previously approved by the two parties concerned.) The age-set dances and then forms as a row, singing to the girls opposite: "Whom do you like? Come into our group to live with us!" Then the girls dance towards their future husbands and choose them by placing their hands on the young men's shoulders. The ceremony continues but here shall not be further described. What is important in our context is the sentence: "Come into our group to live with us". This is not a mere phrase: a woman is indeed seen as belonging to the whole group of her husband's age-mates, and she may also turn to this group for support. If, for example, her husband mistreats her, she may seek assistance from his age-mates who might take him to task or even beat him up. Even though the generation-set system does not fix the moment when a man marries, marriage itself is in a wider sense a generation- or age-set matter.

Thus among the Toposa the family is intimately linked to the generation- and age-set system. Some more examples of marriage ceremonies will illustrate this briefly.

Nyakamus takes place after the first instalment of the bridewealth has been handed over. Here the bridegroom, accompanied by his age-set brings the *nyakamus* ox to the home of his new father-in-law. Also present is the father-in-law's age-set which had previously been witness to the handing over of the bridewealth. Bridegroom and age-mates slaughter and roast the ox, after which it is eaten by the father-in-law, together with his age-set.

At *nyakirimo*, the bridegroom supplies an ox for his bride and her age-mates, and he brings it, accompanied by his age-set, to her home where it is slaughtered and eaten by the bride's family and her age-mates.

After the bridewealth has been handed over completely,[13] the nyakidur ox is killed (nyakidur = door, gateway ; the image is a closing door). This ceremony sets the final seal on the marriage, and here again, age-sets from both families are present. As before it is the bridegroom, who, accompanied by his AS, brings the ox and spears it, to be eaten by the father-in-law together with his family and AS.

Meat feast (*nyakiriket*). One central component in Toposa culture is the *nyakiriket*[14], the meat feast of a generation-set. Goats and sheep, but preferably oxen, are speared and roasted on these occasions which always have a ceremonial character. Almost every ritual is centred around a *nyakiriket*, and certain procedures have always to be observed. A *nyakiriket* is held by the GS or by one of its age-sets in a particular area. In theory, all members of the GS present have the right to participate, even if they do not come from the area.

Every man is expected by his age-set to supply on ox for a *nyakiriket* once in a while. A rich man will have to do this more frequently than his poorer age-mates, and in this way transforms his wealth into prestige as he comes to be seen as a generous man; a rich man who is a miser is not well respected. (It should be mentioned, however, that too much generosity is also considered a weakness.) Honoured along with the donor of the ox is also the "killer" (*ekiaran*), the one who spears it. The latter 'compensates' the former with a heifer which initially remains in the donor's herd. After she has given birth to a female calf and after this calf has been weaned, she is returned to her original owner.

In the dry season when milk and grain become scarce, *nyakiriket* is held more frequently. All year round though occasions are found for the event - it forms the central part of almost every ceremony: those to celebrate marriages, to make rain, to compensate for an offence like adultery, to cleanse in case of sickness or after an enemy has been killed, or when a visitor is being welcomed. Again, this shows how every aspect of Toposa life, be it public or private, is connected with the GSS: *nyakiriket*, the central part of every ritual and ceremony, is through and through a generation-set affair.

A *nyakiriket* always takes place "in the bush" i.e. at some distance from the settlements, always under a tree and often close to a river. Each generation-set has its own special spots where it holds

nyakiriket. The participants sit down on the ground in a semi-circle, and fresh green branches are laid out before them. Eriksen (1978:25ff.) describes the ceremony:

> After the beast is killed ... it is cut up unskinned and very formally presented to the oldest members of the group. Then each piece of meat is taken to the fire and roasted, before it is brought back in front of the consumers who are sitting along the half circle of branches. The oldest and most respected members are sitting at one extreme end, with the middle aged at the centre, and the youngest at the other extreme end. The latter will do all the work of firewood collecting, cutting, roasting and so on.
>
> Each part of the animal is allocated to the different sub-sets according to the customary rules. First it is brought to the oldest for inspection, and then passed on to the sub-sets in question. Visitors ... sit outside the semicircle, behind the attendants. They are given part of the forelegs, but will usually receive a share from any other part of the meat. ...
>
> Particularly, if few age-mates are present, there is a fair chance for members of younger subsets to taste the relished meat which is normally allocated to the older. The youngest members, however, doing all the work, will always have the poorest parts of meat and will often end up crushing the bones to eat the marrow <which is most delicious, H.K.M.>.

After the meat is eaten (a portion may be reserved for the following day or to be taken home later by the participants) the ceremonial part of the *nyakiriket* starts. First, speeches are held. Toposa are great orators, and *nyakiriket* is one of the occasions on which they can display their rhetoric abilities. The speakers take turns to talk, and each speech is complemented by prayers to the High God Nyakuj: "May He bless the giver of the ox, the killer of the ox, their families, may they become rich, may they have many cattle, may they have many children, may there be peace, may there be rain, may there be grain ...", and each sentence is accentuated by the chorus of all men present who join in a sonorous repetition of its last words.

A *nyakiriket* thus presents an opportunity for a Toposa man to increase his prestige and respect. He may do so by giving or by killing the ox, or he may distinguish himself by his brilliant intellect and rhetoric skills, and qualify himself to be a "speaker" of his group at other, official occasions.

Formation of generation- and age-sets. Outwardly and towards other groups each generation- and age-set displays an "ethos of equality"[15], but within each group relations are governed by the same principle of seniority as in society as a whole. This can be clearly seen at a *nyakiriket* where the young ones have to do all the work but receive only the poorest parts of the meat. There are always tensions within a generation or age-set, and the older often harass the younger members, even though they are supposed to be "age-mates". This conflict is in my opinion[16] one of the dynamic forces leading to the formation of age-sets.

This process of fission is a long one, and although I was often told that a certain age-set had broken away from their older brothers, I was never able to record the full story surrounding the break. As other factors (such as droughts and resulting gaps in the population; see ch.3.3.2) also contribute to this process of fission, the following example can only be fictitious.

Jackals are the leading generation-set. They have agreed that the GS of their sons is to be called Zebras. At first, the Zebras form a common group, and there is no subdivision into age-sets. In the

course of time, the group of Zebras increases, and so does the spread of ages within the group. Trouble arises as older Zebras begin harassing the younger ones. The only chance for an individual young Zebra to protect himself from mistreatment by the older ones is to seek support amongst his coevals, and thus a "group within the group" comes into existence. The young rebels try to defy the authority of their older "brothers" but are beaten up and forced to remain loyal, as the older ones do not want to lose their "servants". After a while however, when the group of young ones has increased in age, number and physical force, they are able to resist the pressure of their superiors, and break away to form a group of their own, which is accepted as a "fait accompli"[17] by the whole community. The new group takes its own name, say "Giraffes". Only now can the category of age-sets be applied in talking about the Zebra generation. The GS of Zebras is divided into two age-sets, the first also called Zebras and the second named Giraffes. After a few years, the Giraffes will themselves split in the way described, and another age-set, the "Brown Goats", will come into existence, and so the process goes on. A comment often puzzling to the ethnographer, now becomes clear: "Giraffes are the same as Brown Goats" actually means: "Giraffes and Brown Goats were one group before they split into two".

We can now picture a GS sub-divided into age-sets:

generation-set: **Zebras**
1. age-set: Zebras
2. age-set: Giraffes
3. age-set: Brown goats

etc.

As a generation-set comes into existence, there is no distinction between GS and AS. Thus, the generation-set is not "named after its first age-set" (Gulliver 1953b:149, for the Jie), rather the first age-set retains the name of the generation-set.

There is a considerable degree of flexibility as regards the naming of sets, and the above basic scheme may be later modified, for example:

1) The age-set of Zebras decides to take an age-set name of its own, say "Spotted Oxen". Here the ethnographer would collect the folllowing list of names:

generation-set: **Zebras**
1. age-set: Spotted Oxen
2. age-set: Giraffes
3. age-set: Brown goats

etc.

2) The age-set of Giraffes has distinguished itself by some outstanding action, and the whole generation-set becomes known by this name. In this case, the list of names would change as follows:

generation-set: **Giraffes**
1. age-set: Zebras
2. age-set: Giraffes
3. age-set: Brown goats

etc.

Nyepeyo. *Nyepeyo* is a special type of meat feast in which a younger generation- or age-set offers an ox to an older set and in return receives their blessings. It has been mentioned above (ch.3.3.6.5.) that ritual power in Toposa society largely depends on the ability to bless and curse, which in turn depends on the individual having accumulated the blessing of others (elders). Thus every man is dependent on the elders' goodwill, and *nyepeyo* is a means whereby the members of an entire generation- or age-set may increase their ritual ability and proceed on their way towards elderhood.

The following example of a *nyepeyo* was witnessed in the Nangoletirae area of the Toposa Riwoto territorial section in 1983. The *nyepeyo* was prepared by the Ngikosowa age-set of the Ngingoletyang generation for their fathers Ngikaleso, represented by their Ngimeriseget age-set.

For a *nyepeyo*, the ox has to be begged from the donor in a formal ceremony. (The donor will be compensated by the "killer" in the way described above.) For this occasion, the Ngikosowa were not able to find a suitable (a fat) ox in their own herds, and thus arose the somewhat paradoxical situation whereby the rich man Akilim from whom they begged the ox was simultaneously to be one of its recipients, belonging, as he did, to the Ngikaleso generation-set. The Ngikosowa (Buffaloes) made known their wish, and on a prearranged day came to Akilim's settlement where they danced and sang their age-set songs, such as:

You are here in your home, and there is no quarrel.
You are here in your home, and there is peace.
We are coming from the west, and we need a fat ox.
We have killed the white cow, and that was a gift.
You are here in your home, and there is no quarrel.
You are here in your home, and there is peace.
Buffalo!
He will eat you, he will not leave you, he will eat you!
He will eat you, he will not leave you, he will eat you!
He will eat you, he will not leave you, he will eat you!
Buffalo!
etc. (recorded 13.12.1982, transl. by Cyriakos Lolinga)

Akilim's prestige, already considerable, was increased by this event, and generously he told the Ngikosowa that a certain fat ox would be selected from his herd for their *nyepeyo*.

Each *nyepeyo* presents the elders with an opportunity to exert discipline on the young ones, as they are able to refuse the ox and thus withhold their blessing until the young ones have fulfilled certain

conditions. Here too this must have been a reason for delay as it took almost three months until the *nyepeyo* finally took place.

On the day of the *nyepeyo*, the ox was brought early in the morning to the place where the Ngimeriseget customarily held their *nyakiriket*. The Ngimeriseget were sitting in a semicircle as described above, and the Ngikosowa speared, cut and roasted the meat for the old men. The oldest men then distributed the meat which was eaten by the Ngimeriseget age-set sitting in their semicircle and by the Ngikosowa sitting further away in the bush. After the meal, the real ceremony began. The Ngikosowa returned from where they had gone to eat and sat down inside the semicircle. Some old men now held speeches, one after the other, in the way speeches are normally performed at a *nyakiriket*: they rose to their feet, took their spear, untied the leather strip which protects the blade and spoke, walking up and down in front of the semicircle, pointing with their spearhead. Matters raised were, as usual, the welfare of the Toposa community in general and in particular of those present as well as the need to preserve traditional customs and moral standards. I had been previously told that the speeches would soon develop into *nyagata*, the blessings, and was thus rather surprised when, instead, I was confronted with loud shouting and quarrelling.

Nyepeyo is one of the few occasions when older and younger generations meet as groups, and it is almost the only occasion when existing tensions can be articulated. In this case, the elders blamed the young men for having raided against their will (i.e. increased their raiding activity beyond reasonable limit to a point where heavy retaliation had to be expected). The Ngikosowa then aggressively defended their position. But eventually the tense situation was settled by some level-headed men who took away the spear from the loudest agitator, thus interrupting his flow of accusations, and the *nyagata* part of the ceremony started. Several of the very oldest men stood up, one after the other and in the same way as the others had done uncovered the blades of their spears and, pointing with their spearheads, prayed to Nyakuj and asked for their sons to be blessed. After this, the Ngikosowa went home, and the elders continued with what was left of their meal.

Nyepeyo is one of the central ceremonies in Toposa society: it gives the older generation a weapon in the hand with which they can exert direct control over the younger generation, and it also has great value for the younger ones: their powers are enhanced and they come closer to the day where they will take over the leading position from their fathers and themselves become real elders.

> **Excursion: The leading age-set.** Until now, I have always referred to the 'leading generation-set'. This must be expressed more precisely: specifically, power is in the hands of the oldest age-set of the leading generation-set, as long as it holds enough living members in its ranks. Thus, the problem of succession of power does not lie only between generations but also, to a somewhat lesser extent, between age-sets within a generation.

Generation-set ceremonies: *nyakidamadam* and *nyekimwomor*. Alongside all the various activities and ceremonies where generation- and age-sets turn out as groups, there are two major occasions specifically for sets to display their strength and power: *nyakidamadam* and *nyekimwomor*. As the following shows, both events are related to the dynamic aspect of the Toposa generation-set system.

There are no time intervals fixing when the takeover of power by the new set takes place. There are succession ceremonies in which the former leading set relinquishes its position to the next set, but the decision lies with the old men as to when these ceremonies should take place. Typically, the following situation arises: the members of the leading generation-set become older and older and their number dwindles away. Their sons - the subsequent GS - become able men with families, property, wealth and influence of their own. They press to take over the position as leading generation; their fathers remain reluctant to part with power. Between the leading age-set and their younger brothers within the same generation the problem comes about in a similar way. The question which arises is: how is this competition decided? What is the scale for weighing and comparing the strength of the competing generations? The whole process of succession of power in societies like the Toposa is still not well understood, but it seems clear that *nyakidamadam* and *nyekimwomor* are two events playing a key role in this process among the Toposa.

Nyakidamadam is what could be called the Toposa war-dance. Whenever a single Toposa dances, jumps and shouts, pretends to fling his spear at an imaginary enemy and hides behind his shield, this is called *nyakidamadam*. A 'proper' *nyakidamadam* however, takes place on a sectional level, with people from other sections often present as visitors. *Nyakidamadam* is the dance of a generation-set, represented by one of its age-sets, and is an opportunity for this generation-set/age-set to display its power and strength. There may be various reasons for dancing a *nyakidamadam*; when we witnessed such an event, it was connected to the killing of a man's favourite ox.[18]

Every man has his favourite ox. He identifies himself with the beauty and strength of this animal. He composes songs in praise of it, and when he dances he holds his arms in the shape of its horns. Animals are named according to their colour and the form of their horns (which are often artificially shaped by their owner), and a man takes one of his names from his favourite ox. As the favourite ox is the symbol of a man's strength it is killed before it becomes old and weak. This is done by the man's age-set at the homestead of his mother-in-law, and afterwards a ceremony is held by the man's generation-set on a sectional basis which includes dancing around, and in, the man's cattle enclosure, *nyakidamadam*, speeches and prayers, singing and dancing of both sexes (*nyekorot*) and feasting on meat (*nyakiriket*). Only *nyakidamadam* shall be described here.

Nyakidamadam is always performed in six stages:[19]

1) From a position about hundred metres off, the dancers rush onto the dancing ground.
2) They scatter across the territory and perform individual mock attacks with shield and spear (and automatic weapons if available) on the visitors sitting at the periphery of the place.
3) Each sequence of two or three mock attacks ends in a declaration of praise for the individual's favourite ox in a strained voice raised to the audience.

4) Spontaneously the dancers gather and, standing round in a circle, sing their particular generation-set song.
5) Finally, this formation begins to reshape, and the men, still singing, stamp rhythmically moving en bloc back and forth across the dancing ground, while the trumpet (*nyarupepe*) is blown.
6) The whole sequence may be repeated once or twice, and when the men begin to get thirsty and tired, they all sit down together in the centre of the dancing ground to rest, drink water, smoke, talk, and sing their age-set songs.[20]

The men are all dressed up in leopard and monkey skins, their heads are covered with white ostrich feathers and their bodies painted with clay. The men dance vigorously, and even the oldest participants jump and shout as though they were still young. After the dance, speeches and prayers are held, much in the way described above for the *nyepeyo*.

Every man takes pride in running as fast and jumping as high as he can until he is completely exhausted. This is not only a matter of individual pride however; the dance is also a display of the strength and capability of the entire group. This particularly applies to *nyekimwomor*, the dance of the leading age-set, one of the few occasions when all the members of the leading age-set of a section meet, and is a demonstration of strength, in much the same way as an army holds a roll call or a military parade.

Nyekimwomor is held every few years, and sooner or later the leading AS will have to face the fact that their number is becoming too low to permit effective control of their section, and that the next *neyekimwomor* will be their last. In this case, *nyekimwomor* is both a 'roll call' and a succession ceremony.

Nyekimwomor is a great *nyakidamadam* dance which is sandwiched between other ceremonies and events. The *nyekimwomor* in Nyangea (a territorial section) which marked the retirement of the Ngukurono age-set in 1984 took place in the following stages, as described by Schröder (1987:31ff.):

1) Several preparatory meetings were held; oxen were speared and eaten in *nyakiriket*.
2) Two weeks before *nyekimwomor* most of the Ngukurono arrived and prepared a campground under a big shade tree close to the dancing ground. The men remained here until the *nyekimwomor* was over, and were fed by Ngukurono women living nearby. Some of the Ngukurono were still away borrowing adornments for the ceremony from relatives and friends and came only later.
3) Four days before the event, a last preparatory meeting was held, and a check was taken to see that all the Ngukurono had their adornments ready.
4) Three days before the event, the *nyemuron* (diviner/fortune teller) performed two sacrifices, in order to avert misfortune during the dance. The main elements of the sacrifices were *nyakiriket* and prayers (*nyagata*).

5) On the last day before the event, another *nyakiriket* was held by the Ngukurono, together with a *nyakidamadam*. It was formally announced that *nyekimwomor* would be held on the following day.
6) As the day of the event arrived, the first thing to happen was the killing of the *nyekimwomoret* ox, followed by speeches and prayers. Then the Ngukurono performed a great *nyakidamadam*, again followed by speeches. In the evening the *nyekimwomoret* ox which had been previously speared, was roasted and eaten in *nyakiriket*.
7) The day after *nyekimwomor*, another *nyakidamadam* was held , followed by speeches. After the speeches, all present started the *nyekorot* dance which involves both sexes and consists of singing, hand clapping and dancing in circles. At noontime people scattered, and the celebrations had come to an end (although what I experienced suggests they might just as well have continued late into the night).

Succession ceremonies. Transmission of responsibility and power is an important issue in the public life of any society, and it seems reasonable to expect that this moment of transition be marked by ceremonies. Dyson-Hudson has described such succession ceremonies for the Karimojong (1963:367ff.). Gulliver on the other hand reports for the Jie that 'there is no formal handing over of ritual authority by one set to the succeeding one' and that 'there is no fixed time when a generation obtains senior status in the whole system' (1953b:157), while Lamphear, also for the Jie, mentions a 'promotion ceremony' (1976a:154) but also points out that this is not 'real' retirement of the older generation as they are still considered the 'true elders' (1976a:153f.). This sounds somewhat paradoxical but is not when we take into consideration the two levels at which power can be effective: as ritual and as political power. The highest ritual power always remains in the hands of the most senior men, and as political power always depends on ritual ability, they remain, theoretically, the political leaders. But at some point or other the old men retire from day-to-day affairs, and officially hand on the 'executive power' to their successors, although this only really confirms an already achieved status quo, as described by Gulliver for the Jie:

> As the men of a senior set dwindle in number, the men of the next set gradually come to take on leadership, first at settlement level and then in district affairs, and ultimately in the whole tribe. (1953b:157)

This applies to the Jie as well as to the Toposa and Turkana, and explains why succession ceremonies among these three ethnic groups seem to be so little formalised. The Jie promotion ceremony mentioned by Lamphear is obviously nothing more than a big *nyakiriket*, while among the Turkana there does not seem to be any succession ceremony at all.

We have seen above how in Toposaland the transition of power from one set to the next is marked by the the old set's last *nyekimwomor*. Whether there is a formal 'handing over ceremony' is still not clear - I was not able to collect sufficient information on this point. I was told that power is handed from one GS to the next and within a GS from one AS to the next. For this, the old men would organize a big *nyakidamadam*, and on this occasion the oldest of them would call the succeeding set and hold a speech in this way:

"I am tired of oldness. I am old enough. I want to give you all the authority <*akuro* = power, also supernatural, maybe connected with *akukur* = to bewitch, H.K.M.> since I am still alive now. It is good, when I become old and when I die, when I disappear, that you know everything. Everything of the *ngitalio* (customs) that I did in front of you, you should know them all. You do everything which concerns the home. You should be knowing the words when I die, so that you know you have been told already. So you shall know that your father has fulfilled all of that speech and told you everything before. ... When I die, you can inherit my seat (*ekicolong*), because you are the sons and you are still young. When things are brought in front of you, you can act as we did. I am now old. You inherit my seat and do what I did before." ... He will spit (as a blessing) on all those things that are there. He will address the eldest (of the succeeding set) and tell him to do it the same way. The old man hands over his (ceremonial) spear and says: "Use this spear. Even if there is a play, just use this spear. Even if some visitors come, or if something else is happening, use this spear. I have given you everything. When I die, everything is all right now. I have given you all the authority, all. When I die, do not say: 'My father has not given me any power'. All of you people, you have to hear these words. This is the ekapolon (big one) who has become old in front of the people - this is the one. It is alright now. I have given you the authority. It is O.K. - you work that way. ... All right, you different people from all areas, you are witnessing it, so as you will not say later on: 'Somebody died, and he did not give the authority to his sons.' Is there now anything which I have not given to you?" His sons will now reply: "Father, you have given us all. It is finished now." (Zakaria Kuria, 10.7.1987 in Lokichokio, transl. by Peter Muzee)

Initiation. The Toposa initiation ceremony is called *nyasapan*. As with all other aspects of a Toposa man's life (e.g. marriage as shown above) a Toposa has his *nyasapan* together with his age-set of his home area. A young man cannot be initiated without his AS - initiation is a group ceremony, not an individual event. The young men have to wait until their AS is admitted to *nyasapan*. This has some interesting consequences which will be discussed below, after the description of the ceremony itself.

"We had *nyasapan* when we were young. We begged a bull (*nyemong*). <actually *nyemong* means 'ox', but whenever Toposa or Turkana speak English, they translate *nyemong* as as 'bull', H.K.M.> We called all the people, even the small children, we told them 'Come, come for *nyasapan'*. We gathered all the people. We went to the homestead of the old man, the oldest, who makes people to have *nyasapan*. Then we said, it is finished now, all the people have gathered together. We brought the bull. ... We speared it, with one spear. The oldest (of our group) speared first, and then he handed the spear to the second one, and this one speared the bull, then the next one, and so on, because in the way we have *nyasapan*, the people follow each other this way, following each other in one line. He spears, he gives the spear to the second, this one spears, then this one hands the spear to the next one, and so on ... all the people in that line do it that way. They will all spear the bull. ... Then, the old men take nyakujit (stomach contents), they smear the people with it, one after the other, and they go. ... When we had speared the bull and after we had been smeared with *nyakujit*, the elders told us to go, and when we were a bit away, the elders beat us with branches , while we were running away. But the young ones who just had nyasapan, would not say 'No, don't beat me', they would be laughing while they are beaten. ... Then they take the bull and roast it in the fire. The elders will eat, only the elders." (Donato Lokidur, 9.7.1987 in Lokichokio, transl. by Peter Muzee)

Lokidur describes the central parts of the *nyasapan* ceremony: the spearing of the ox, the smearing of the candidates with the ox's stomach contents, their beating and the *nyakiriket* of the elders.

Although 'it is the fathers who give *nyasapan* to their sons'[21], the ceremony is normally performed under the supervision of the candidates' grandfathers, and some informants even stated that without living grandfathers the *nyasapan* is not a 'proper' one.

The ceremony takes place on the *nyere* (homestead) of the *nyekapolon* (most senior man) of the area or on the *nyere* of the father of the most senior initiate, and by the tree where this man normally performs *nyakiriket*. The day before *nyasapan* the candidates arrive at the *nyere* of the initiation leader; they bring with them the utensils required for the ceremony and hand them over to the initiation leader. These are an *ekicolong* (stool/head-rest), a spear, two fighting sticks, a cloth, a man's wooden spoon, ostrich feathers, ochre, beads, milk, sorghum, tobacco. They also bring the ox, ideally one begged from the initiation leader. That night they will spend on his homestead.

Each of the candidates has his patron *apa ka nyasapan*, his 'initiation father' who is normally a good friend of the initiate's father and with whom the youngster establishes a close relationship. In Kuya's words: "He is your real father now, just like your father. You will have now two fathers: your real father and the father of *nyasapan*."[22] The relation is practically a kinship relation: the homestead of the apa ka *nyasapan* becomes the initiate's 'second home', his daughters become unmarriable and a portion of their dowry will be received by the initiate when they marry. The relation is formally established, as usual, by the patron's handing over of an animal, preferably an ox. After the young man is initiated he will remain for a few days on his apa ka *nyasapan's* homestead where he will also be formally introduced to his new 'mother'.

The following morning, all men of the area gather at the tree. The initiates bring their ox, the most senior of them is given the old man's spear, and he spears the ox, followed by his age-mates in order of seniority as described above. The initiates are assisted by their "fathers of *nyasapan*" who guide their hand.

The carcass of the animal is cut open, and the initiates are smeared with the stomach contents (*nyakujit*); this is a cleansing and blessing process. Then the ox is cut up and roasted over a fire; only the elders will eat the meat. While this happens the ceremony continues.

The next thing which happens is the 'beating'.[23] First the initiates all run a mile or so eastwards, and then come back again. None of my informants gave me an explanation as to why the initiates are beaten, but probably it is their fathers' way of expressing that their sons, though they may now be adults, still come under their authority.

After the beating, the initiates' hair is shaved. The hair which grows back will later be cut and backcombed in a man's fashion. Then milk is brought and the initiates, one after the other, take a sip and spit a little, first up in the air, then to the right, then to the left and then to the ground; the same procedure is repeated with *nyatap* (sorghum porridge).

At this point, the initiates still remain in a marginal state. Of all the things they had given over to the *nyasapan* leader, they are handed back only the fighting sticks which they smear with ochre.[24] They are not yet allowed to sit on a man's stool (*ekicolong*) - they must continue to sit on the ground, with one leg stretched out, the other parallel but bent so that the body rests on the foot.

In the following weeks the initiates band together in small groups and roam the homesteads of their families and friends where they are fed. They eat with their hands as they are not yet allowed to use a man's spoon, and they must always sit in the way described above. They are not supposed to work and are not allowed to dance during this time.

The final stage of *nyasapan* is reached a month or so later when the youths return to the homestead of their initiation leader. They bring another animal for the old men, and in return they are presented with the utensils symbolising manliness which they had earlier surrendered: *ekicolong*, spear, wooden spoon and cloth. They are cleansed and blessed again, with water and *nyakujit*. After this they leave the place and celebrate their newly achieved status with a joyful *akiriket*.

Only members of one generation can be initiated at a time. As the members of the generations overlap in age, the first ('overaged') of any generation have to wait until their father's generation has been initiated. After a while however, when the overaged become too many and too old (and, correspondingly, the 'underaged' in the older generation are too few) it is considered time that initiations for the new generation begin. With this the older generation is 'closed'; that season their last *nyasapan* will take place, and in the next season it will be the turn of the new generation. In this last *nyasapan* of a generation, children and even babies are initiated. The few children of this generation who are born later will be 'downgraded' by one generation.

The 'overaged' of a generation do not suffer socially from the fact that they are not yet admitted to *nyasapan*. They may still marry and rear children and even undergo a sort of 'informal initiation' which normally takes place in their father's homestead: the killing of their first ox.

If a father is reluctant to let his son spear his first ox, the young man may do it in a surprise coup. He goes to a *nyakiriket* while it is still in its opening stage. At this point the ox is still alive and the men are walking around it, discussing who the killer should be (and thus who should compensate the donor). Before they reach a decision, the young man, all excited and almost in a trance, grabs a spear and kills the ox. The men will realise what is going on, and assuming they know the young man and his father, will also know that compensation to the donor of the ox is guaranteed. They thus bless the young man, send him home and continue with their *nyakiriket*. At home, the young man reports his coup to his father. His deed considered an act of bravery, the father is sure to be proud of his son, and will give him a heifer to bring to the donor of the ox, in compensation for the killing.

In this 'first killing of an ox', a boy has shown that he has become a man. He 'initiates himself'[25], and henceforth is seen as a true member of his age-set.

The sacred stone. Ritual centres in the form of sacred stones are not unusual in this area. Hallpike for example (1972:4) reports one for the Konso in Ethiopia, and also the Jie, ancestors of the Toposa in a wider sense, have a sacred stone in their ritual grove. When the Toposa migrated to where they presently live, they carried with them a black stone (approximately 70cms high, 30cms in diameter at the base and conically shaped[26]), which they deposited at their destination, the river which they then named Loyoro (after the river they had departed from). It was actually the Ngikor, now a territorial section of the Toposa who carried the stone, and as its custodians they still enjoy outstanding prestige among all other Toposa.

The stone is simply called 'stone' (*nyamoru*) or 'black stone' (*nyamoru lokirion*) or 'stone of custom' (*nyamoru ka nyetal*). It is the ritual centre for all Toposa, and whenever Toposa are asked about their most important *nyetal* (custom, sacred thing), they will answer: the sacred stone. An air of mystery surrounds the stone, and no foreigners are supposed to see it, on risk of death.

The sacred stone is the most powerful mediator between the Toposa and their God Nyakuj. To prevent evil befalling the Toposa, or to spirit away misfortune already afflicting them, almost once a year a ceremony is performed at the sacred stone, with participants from all Toposa sections. No foreigner has ever seen the ceremony, and information on the stone is difficult to obtain, even for an ethnographer. The following description is an extract from a group interview held in Lokichokio on the 11.7.1987.

> The stone is a sacred thing for all Toposa. The stone helps people, together with Nyakuj (God). This stone will become like Nyakuj. Nyakuj will hear our words and what we are doing. And people will feel good, there will be no disease, livestock will be good and plenty, people will become plenty, the area will be good, the grains will be good. If the ceremony is not held, however, evil may befall the people and the country. If now drought and starvation comes, the animals die and the grains do not grow, the elders may say 'We better go to the stone', and we will go to the stone. Then we will find the stone turned over and cracked which means that the stone has become annoyed. We say now 'Let us go and find food for the stone', and we bring animals, and all people come to the place of the stone. Oxen are speared, and part of the meat, together with *nyakujit* (stomach contents), ghee (butterfat), milk and *nyatap* (sorghum porridge) are placed at the stone. It will become upright now, by itself, and the crack will disappear.
>
> (transl. by Peter Muzee)

No interpretation of the ceremony can be made unless further information is available. One thing, however, is clear and important in the context of this study: the Toposa ritual centre serves to unite all their territorial sections, and the ceremony at the stone calls for co-ordinated action on a tribal level.

4.4.2 THE TURKANA GENERATION-SET SYSTEM

(Difference and variety - Basic layout of the Turkana generation-set system - Relevance of the Turkana GSS - Shade trees - *Akiriket* - *Asapan* - The fight for *asapan* leadership in Kading - Marriage - Raiding - Other age-set activities)

Difference and variety. Although the Toposa and Turkana generation-set systems have the same historical origin, their structure nowadays is quite different. It has already been pointed out that cultural differences between northern and southern Turkana may be greater than those between Toposa and their neighbouring (northern) Turkana; this also applies when considering the diversification within the Turkana GSS. (We shall later discuss how far these differences can be related to differences in the nature of outside influence in the northern and southern parts of the country.)

Thus a systematic problem arises: how can "the" Turkana GSS whose characteristics change as we move from north to south be described? I have chosen to group the various forms under three categories:
1) features common throughout Turkanaland,
2) features typical for northern Turkanaland,
3) features typical for southern Turkanaland.
Whenever characteristics are mentioned without being further specified, they apply throughout Turkanaland; otherwise it will be stated whether they are typical for the northern or for the southern model. Variations of the GSS appearing in central Turkanaland involve combinations of all three components.

Basic layout of the Turkana generation-set system. The basic layout of the Turkana generation-set system is quite similar to that of the Toposa:

1) Every male Turkana is member of a generation-set. Everyone belongs to the GS following that of his father.

2) Generation-sets are subdivided into age-sets.

3) The GSS imposes no regulations concerning marriage or procreation. A man may marry and rear children whenever his personal circumstances allow, and provided he has undergone initiation, regardless of the status of his GS/AS at that time.

4) At any given time there are (according to the model and also to the situation I observed) four consecutive generations A, B, C, D in existence, with any consecutive pair standing in a father-son relationship. The highest ritual authority always lies with the oldest members of generation A. The

execution of political authority, however, is shared with members of B. Generation C is still young, and D are children. - In southern Turkana, generations are no longer as strictly separated (see below).

The main differences to the Toposa GSS:

- initiation is relatively more important,
- the GSS carry little political authority, and
- GS A and B share their political and to a certain extent their ritual authority.

We will later compare the Toposa and Turkana GSS in more detail, but until then should bear these differences in mind.

Relevance of the Turkana GSS. As early as 1958 Gulliver wrote that "the Turkana age-group system plays only a marginal part in the politico-legal system of the tribe today" (1958:918).

Whereas the Sudan Government has little effect or influence in Toposa territory, the Kenyan Government and connected organisations in Turkana District are much better organised, and via roads and settlement schemes, directly control and administer more than a third of the Turkana population; there remains little opportunity for the rest to run their affairs contrary to government will. The details of the events which have led to the submission of the Turkana to administrative control (such as the Labur Patrol in 1918), might be almost forgotten or repressed; nonetheless a deep resentment against government institutions and their representatives seems to have survived. Nowadays the Turkana GSS has little political power left and the lingering distrust of Government and Westerners is difficult to break through in order to discover what remains of the traditions which are normally hidden from outsiders. It seems probable, however, that the GSS in Turkanaland was never as strong an institution as it was among the Toposa, due to their more individual lifestyle and the 'atomistic' shape of their society (see ch.3.3.6).

For whatever the reasons may be: manifestations of the Turkana GSS can be seen today on only few occasions, and even these events pale alongside an average but comparatively magnificient Toposa generation-set dance. But far from being 'dead', the Turkana GSS still plays a role in Turkana daily life, and in Northern Turkana this role is an important one. Its existence however is not as obvious as among the Toposa and other ethnic groups and is thus more likely not to be noticed or to be misinterpreted.

One of the more important functions of the Turkana GSS is as a 'stand-by' network for support and mutual assistance. This network is hidden to the outside observer until it is put into operation, and even then it is difficult to detect. Visible manifestations of the Turkana GSS are not as many and not as marked as among the Toposa, but they do exist, as the following accounts and descriptions show.

Shade trees. Generally, trees (*ekitoe*, pl. *ngikitoe*) serve the same purpose in Turkana District as in Toposaland: their shade provides shelter from the burning sun during the day, and in particular it

is the Turkana elders who are to be found under their shade tree. Due to the different settlement patterns, however, Turkana trees are not centres of sociability to the extent they are among the Toposa. Turkana settlements are more dispersed, and thus many family heads have a tree of their own where they spend the hot hours of the day. Neighbours and friends may come and visit them, or they themselves may go to a neighbouring tree; we often saw shade trees under which two or three men would sit in a group. When there was a cluster of settlements, larger groups could be found under a tree. Whenever I approached such a group and after a while started talking about generation and age-sets, invariably the same thing happened: the men regrouped themselves according to their generations (Ngimor to the left, Ngirisae to the right) and stated that this was the 'proper' way of sitting under the tree - it would seem that in informal daily life the separation between generation-sets is not observed as it is in formal situations.

It is probably true to say that in Turkana daily life the tree as a centre of social intercourse is less institutionalised than it is among the Toposa, and in the newly established settlements has lost this function almost completely. When for example I asked people in Lotubae (a former food distribution centre in southeastern Turkana district) whether there were still trees around, the answer was a plain 'no'.

When I started work in Kotome (northern Turkana, Ngikamatak section) where things were said to be (and indeed are) more 'traditional' than in central and southern parts of the country. I tried to find a tree as this is normally the best place to approach people. The plain was scattered with homesteads, but nowhere could I see a tree. Thus, deciding to wait and see what would happen, I built my camp under a tree by a riverbed. After a while, people started visiting me, and 'my' tree became ad hoc a centre of social inter- course. My presence served as a catalyst for social contact; between three and a dozen men were constantly around, chatting, sleeping and playing *epeiarei* ('one-two', the same game as the Toposa *ngikiles*). Although initially it was my presence that had provided the impetus for establishing this tree, things had started to develop their own momentum, and I was by no means the men's main interest - sometimes I even had difficulties carrying out my interviews as the men had other, more important things in mind. Again, a mixture of generations were present, but when it came to formal interviews, the men regrouped themselves according to their generation and age-sets; and when I had *atap* (sorghum or maize porridge) cooked for them, different age-sets even refused to eat from the same pot.

The transformation of my camp tree into a meeting place took place on several other occasions as well, and may serve as an example for how trees continue to work as a focus of sociability among the Turkana. Their status is, however, not as fixed as it is among the Toposa, and a tree may be 'installed' when there is a call for it. There are also certain fixed trees for ceremonial occasions, like *asapan*, initiation, or for *akiriket*.

Akiriket. As among the Toposa, the slaughtering and roasting of an animal, be it goat, sheep, cow or camel, is always performed in the same way. This can be seen for most ritual events which are centred around an *akiriket*, but when meat is consumed in daily life it also takes place mostly in this form. Once for example I interviewed Lokwang in Kalapata (central Turkanaland) and after we had finished our talks, he decided that we all were hungry and that a goat had to be eaten. He sent his

son for a goat, and in the meantime the semicircle of fresh leaves was prepared, firewood was collected, and some of Lokwang's age-mates joined us. The goat was speared, the intestines were read, the meat was divided in the usual way, and during the meal a short *agata* (prayer) was held. Only part of the meat was eaten, another part was reserved for Lokwang's family at home, and I was offered the rest to take with me.

Turkana and Toposa perform their *akiriket* in the same way - a description was given in the last chapter. There is one great difference, however, and that concerns the question of who attends an *akiriket*. In Toposaland I never saw an *akiriket* where members of more than one generation-set were present (except Nyepeyo, and even there the younger generation went away to eat their meat in the bush), and it was strictly emphasised by all that I spoke to that each akiriket is held by one generation only. Amongst the Turkana, on certain occasions, all men who happen to be about at the time will be able to take part. At this point, we may just take this as a fact; why it should be so, will be explored later.

Excursion (preliminary remarks on the structure of the Turkana GSS): Turkana GS are named alternately Ngimor and Ngirisae. At any given time there are four generations in existence, and according to the relevant point in time they may be ranked in one of the two ways: Old Ngimor - Old Ngirisae - Young Ngimor - Young Ngirisae, or when the former Old Ngimor are dead and the system has moved up a rung: Old Ngirisae - Old Ngimor - Young Ngirisae - Young Ngimor. For the moment, we may assume that only the two 'old' generation-sets participate in an *akiriket*, and we should keep in mind that due to the overlap in ages between generations, equally aged men of both Ngimor and Ngirisae may be present.

When both Ngimor and Ngirisae are present at an *akiriket*, they sit together in a semicircle, Ngimor always on the left and Ngirisae always to the right; each generation ordered according to seniority, with the most senior man of each group meeting in the middle of the semicircle.

Excursion: The left/right ordering principle also exists among the Toposa. Generations are alternately 'left' and 'right', and the leader of a *nyakiriket* will always sit at his respective end. When Turkana hold an *akiriket* where only one generation is present, the most senior man will sit on the far left if he is of Ngimor and on the far right if he is of Ngirisae.

To avoid quarrels about the division of the meat between the two groups, rules have been fixed. They vary according to the kind of animal it is and according to which group provided it. Only one example shall be given, for the division of a goat provided by Ngirisae:

Ngimor:	*ngikalokoi*	(pelvic girdle)
	one *eseget*	(shoulder)
	one *asikonero*	(front lower leg)
	atenus	(fat stomach end)
Ngirisae:	*egur*	(backbone)
	emosiring	(head and neck)
	aboi	(stomach)
	ekipisit	(right hind lower leg)

The rest is shared equally among the two groups. If the animal is big enough, the men take part of the meat home to their families.

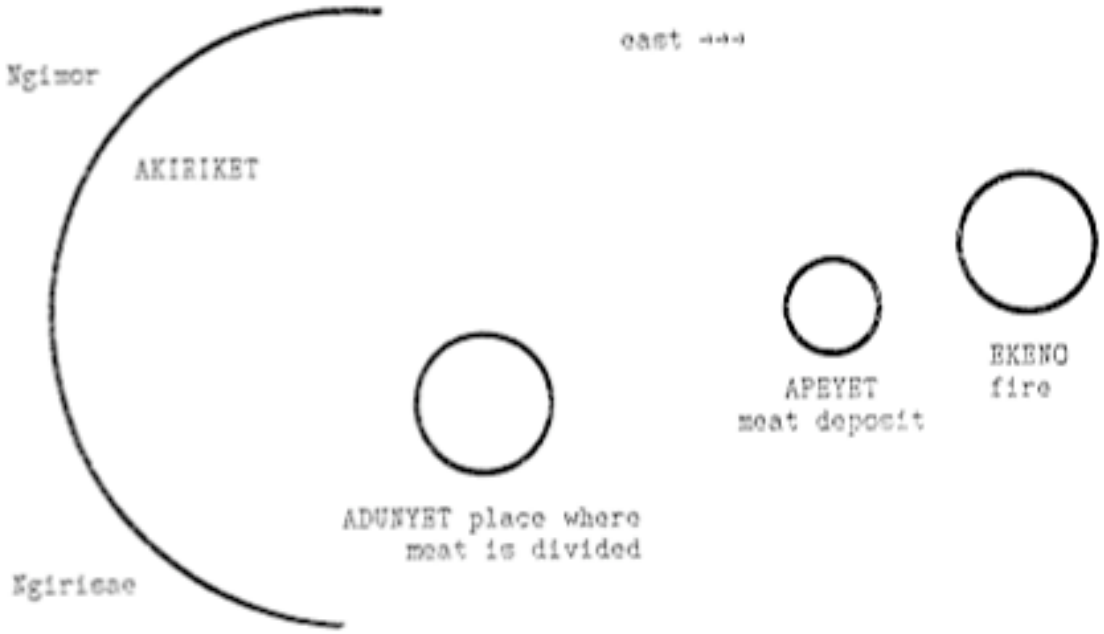


Fig. 12 Schematic arrangement of a Turkana *akiriket*

Asapan. *Asapan*[27] is held to be the most important traditional event in Turkana society. It is said (although this is often ignored in practice) that no Turkana man may marry before he is initiated by *asapan*. Even 'educated' Turkana, well dressed in western clothes and holding high ranks in government administration or in development projects, are generally careful to take part in the traditional ceremony performed in their home area when it is their turn in their brother's hierarchy. Even paupers (the victims of drought, living in the settlements, see ch.3.3.7) without a chance of acquiring the animals, beads etc. needed for an *asapan*, maintain the fiction that one day they too will have their *asapan*.

Turkana initiation is far more of an individual event than among the Toposa. At *nyasapan*, the Toposa initiates together spear an ox, while for the Turkana ceremony each initiate brings his own animal, in general a goat. Young Turkana men are usually initiated in groups of age-mates, as part of an *age*-set, but we also attended an *asapan* ceremony where only a single candidate was initiated.

The young men are initiated by their fathers, as happens amongst the Toposa.[28] The *akiriket* (which provides the ceremony with its formal frame) is also attended by their grandfathers who serve as the leaders and supervisors of the ceremony. The order in which *asapan* takes place corresponds to the order of the young men's seniority (see last chapter) - whoever is most senior, will be initiated first. Whenever within a group of men an order of seniority has to be established (at an *akiriket* for ex-

ample), the men will compare their initation dates. The 'standard' age for initiation is about 18 but it may be much higher if the initiate has to wait his turn in his brothers' hierarchy. A boy may also be initiated while still relatively young, in order to clear the way for his older but less senior halfbrothers pressing to have their *asapan*. The most extreme ages at initiation which we found were 60 (Lotoya) and 10 (Ewoi).

Asapan is held only after a good wet season when animals are well fed and food is plenty, because omens should be favourable; because the elders accept only fat animals for the *akiriket* of *asapan*, and also because the people 'cannot dance or rejoice on empty stomachs'.[29] The candidates themselves are also only able to fulfil their obligations for *asapan* when times are good, as *asapan* is an expensive event. Beside the animals, candidates must bring with them (amongst other things) expensive beads, cloth, ostrich feathers, large quantities of maize meal, sugar, ghee (butterfat), milk, tea leaves, tobacco, all of which goes to the elders and to the 'fathers of *asapan'*.

After it has been decided by the elders of an area that *asapan* should be held, the ground below the tree where this is to take place will be cleared by young men, and the elders will gather there to await the candidates. The whole event may take as long as a week, and different groups of initiates may be initiated on different days. During this time, the elders remain under the tree, and also sleep there. In many cases, the *ekitoe ka asapan*, the tree of *asapan*, is situated close to one of the bigger rivers so that drinking water can be fetched from a well there.

On the first day, the old men perform an *akiriket* and discuss matters, but no initiations are held yet. Sometime on the morning of the second day, the first candidates will arrive in a group. They may number up to 20, but on average are less than ten. They approach from the east, in a single file, each accompanied by his initiation patron and leading the animal (normally a castrated male goat, sometimes a ram) which he will spear. They are dressed in *shukas* (blankets wrapped around the shoulder), with beads round their necks, a single ostrich feather in their hair, and a stick in their hand. Their mothers (or sometimes their 'mothers of *asapan'* i.e. the first wives of their initiation patrons) accompany them, carrying containers and bags with milk, ghee, sugar and tobacco. They stay further off, however, outside the ceremonial place.

The initiates line up in a row, in order of seniority, holding their animals by the ears. One of the elders will now bring the spear belonging to the *ekapolon*, the most senior man of the area, who acts as the 'leader' of the *asapan*. He spits into the hands of the first candidate, to bless his act of spearing, hands him the weapon, the patron takes his hand, and together they spear the animal. This is repeated until all the candidates have speared their animals which are then, in a row, laid on the ground, heads pointing eastwards. After this, the initiates are led under the tree, behind the semicircle of elders. They are undressed by their initiation patrons and sit down in a row, legs stretched parallel. They remain in this position and are not supposed to speak. Their pre-initiation hairdo is untied by their 'fathers of *asapan'*.

In the meantime, the animals are cut open and the innards removed. The blood is collected in wooden bowls, and the stomach contents are put on a heap west of the *adunyet* (leaf-covered area in the centre of the semicircle where the animals are divided). Now the women bring the milk, ghee, sugar and tobacco, and then leave again. Milk, ghee and sugar will be later mixed with the blood and drunk by the elders.

The initiates are called together and then led, in a row, three times around the *adunyet*. They line up between the *adunyet* and the *akiriket*, all facing eastwards, and one after the other, the *ekapolon* (the most senior man) smears them with the stomach contents taken from their animal; over their fore-heads, chests and thighs, while blessing and admonishing them, saying things like: "May Akuj bless you with animals, may you get them from the Pokot, from the Karimojong, from the Toposa. May He bless you with children, with good women. Look after the animals, do not leave them and take jobs ...". The smearing is repeated by the young men's 'fathers of *asapan'*, and the initiates return to their places.

Meanwhile, the *akiriket* is proceeding as usual. When the liver is ready, it is brought to the *ekapolon* who divides it and offers a piece (called *emany loita*) to the first initiate. He bites off a small piece, chews it and spits it out onto his chest. The other candidates do likewise. The same is repeated with different pieces of meat.

The rest of the meat is distributed as soon as it is ready. From time to time, *agata* (prayers and speeches) are held.

Sometime later, the 'breaking of the bones' takes place. Each initiation patron takes a bony piece of meat to his 'son', and together they break the bone by hammering it with a stone. Then, a branch is broken symbolically, and the initiates leave the ceremony.

The elders remain under the tree for several days, waiting for other initiates. On some days, nothing will happen, and on others initiates in various sized groups will arrive and receive their *asapan*. Altogether the process may take over a week, and after all candidates of the area who were admitted to *asapan* in this season have been initiated, the elders leave the tree and return to their settlements.

After the *asapan* under the tree each initiate is taken to the home of his *apa ka asapan*. Here he is formally introduced to his new 'mother', and is symbolically incorporated into the family. His hair is cut - when it has grown back, he will wear it in a man's mudcap hairstyle. He hands over to his patron all his clothing and utensils, and he is given other articles in return - including the insignia of manhood: the spear and *ekicolong* (head rest/stool). For a few days he does all the daily duties in his new home. Finally, the patron will present him with a number of animals and he will be escorted to his real home. Here, he is not allowed to enter until his mother has sprinkled water on him (as a blessing). After this he enters and greets his family, and from now on is deemed to be initiated into manhood.

A detailed interpretation of the different parts of the ceremony would go beyond the limits of this study. The following points are however relevant to us:
- The decision, as to whether and when *asapan* should be performed, is made by the elders of a local area.
- Treatment of the initiates is very much on an individual level. It happens frequently that a man's initiation is delayed by his particular standing in his family, so that he is not able to undergo *asapan* together with his age-mates. He will then be initiated later, together with a different age-set.

Excursion: The fight for *asapan* leadership in Kading. When we attended an *asapan* in 1986, at a place in central Turkanaland called Kading[30], a quarrel arose, the description of which may serve to shed light on the role *asapan* and other ceremonies may play as a terrain on which conflict between different groups and individuals takes place.

The *asapan* was led by Losike, the most senior man of the Ngimor II generation-set in the area. As *asapan* is the most important ritual in Turkana society, its leader is - at least ritually - the most important man of the area, and performing the ritual will also increase secular influence. In theory, it is quite clear who the leader of the *asapan* is: the most senior man in the area, i.e. the most senior man of the oldest generation-set alive. This was not Losike but Areman of the Ngirisae I generation-set (who are the 'fathers' of Ngimor II and thus higher in rank, see ch.4.5.2), followed by a man called Amase. Both men were very old and weak, and Areman died a year afterwards. The most senior men of an area can always resign from their ritual duties, and if Areman had done so, Losike would have been his successor as Amase did not seem to be keen to take over the office. But at this time Areman was not yet willing to resign, and indeed a couple of weeks later he performed another *asapan* ceremony.

Obviously Losike was an extremely power-hungry man. Areman whom I met after the ceremony, even accused Losike of having killed his (Areman's) predecessor Locum by sorcery. In any case, Losike was at that time trying to replace Areman in his role as the *asapan* leader. Besides this the two men were already on bad terms. The previous year, Losike's sons had killed one of Areman's donkeys, and the two old men were still quarrelling over what the compensation for this should be.

The *asapan* we attended at Kading was actually led by Losike. It must have been difficult for him to convince the men to bring their sons to him for *asapan*; legally, the arguments were entirely on Areman's side: he was without doubt the most senior man and thus entitled to continue leading the *asapan* as long as he was willing to do so.

Losike brought forward arguments invoking the supernatural. This became clear to me on the first day of the *asapan*, when Losike held a furious speech against Areman. He accused Areman of having "divided the tree" by still initiating a few young men. According to the customary rules, initiations in an area should be held together at the same place. In reality, it was Losike who "divided the

tree", because the "legal" place for *asapan* was still Areman's. But Losike argued that evil had befallen Areman's tree, shown by the fact that some weeks ago a bird had died there - an extremely bad omen. (Some men in the area even suspected Losike of having sent the bird there). According to Losike the dead bird was a sign that Areman was no longer fit to lead initiations, and it seems most men in the area were convinced by his argument. Thus Losike came to hold initiations at his place while Areman continued to initiate under his tree. A year later, Losike's usurpation of power became unchallenged when his only competitor Areman died.

This example shows, (a) how ritual power, although normally ascribed by a man's position in the generation-set system, can, to a certain extent, also be attained through manipulation, and (b) how an individual man can try, and can succeed, in achieving his own personal aims within the frame of the generation-set system.

Marriage. Activities concerning courting and marriage are connected to age-sets in very much the same way among both Toposa and Turkana. Dances where young people meet are arranged by age-sets, and once in a while an AS organises an *emalase apese* ("girl greeting") where young men court their girl friends, accompanied by their age-mates. I was told that nowadays young Turkana men take a much more active part in looking for their bride, but that they still have to seek the approval of their parents who then will take up negotiations with the girl's parents.

> During efforts to gain the agreement of the girl's father to the marriage, and thereafter during bridewealth discussions, the suitor seeks the support of his locally resident age- mates. They may sometimes act as his spokesmen, and they are his best witnesses. If "marriage by seizure" occurs, the suitor obtains the assistance of his age-mates to abduct the girl and keep her hidden safely until her father accedes to the fait accompli. The physical support of as large a number of age-mates as possible is necessary at this time in order to protect the suitor from the wrath of the girl's agnates, and fights are not uncommon between the two parties. Whichever type of preliminary occurs, discussion or abduction, the wedding is similar and the groom arrives and moves about in the company of age-mates. They share with his close agnates the drive and final spearing of the marriage-ox in the homestead of the bride's father. (Gulliver 1958:915f.)

Raiding. In the past when Ewoi and other war leaders organised big armies, age-sets divisions served to organise them into tactical blocks. Nowadays raiding is a small-scale affair, and although age-sets take part in raiding parties, raiding groups are not exclusively composed on an age-set basis. I even met uninitiated young men who did not belong to a particular age-set and had joined a raiding party.

Other age-set activities. Great events like *nyakidamadam* or *nyekimwomor* rarely occur among the Turkana, and public manifestations of their GSS are less magnificent. There are, however, plenty of minor activities where age-sets are involved. In the account given earlier of Toposa generation and age-set activities these minor activities were omitted; the following description, based on Turkana information, more or less also applies to the Toposa.

I have already mentioned the dances (*edonga*, sg.) arranged by age-sets. Sometimes on these occasions young men will test their strength in stick fights (*etaparas*, sg.). Once a season they may show up at the home of an *emuron* (diviner), bringing presents: tobacco, goats or a cow, in return for which they will be smeared with ochre and blessed.

Sometimes age-sets of young men meet and roam about an area, dancing and searching for food and adventure - 'idling' as old men would say. The Turkana term for this is *alogeta*. In the north, age-sets can more often be seen on such a trip than in the south; on the occasions where I saw such groups roaming through the bush it was in the north. *Alogeta* usually takes place in the wet season, when food is sufficient, animals are fat and people are joyful. At this time of the year, the animals are kept in close vicinity to the settlements and only a few people are required to look after them. For the young herders it is their time of "vacation", they band together in their age-sets, and set off to indulge in *alogeta*.

Alogeta may also involve a certain degree of aggressiveness, and sometimes food and animals are extracted from people by force. It may also happen that, while on *alogeta*, the group beats up one of its own members if he is felt guilty of mistreating his wife, which is regarded as shameful for the entire age-set. The wrongdoer might however be able to escape punishment by pacifying his age-mates with a goat.

An *alogeta* party may also go hunting, or it may decide to challenge another age-set to a stick fight. Most evenings it would arrange a dance, and for some of the participants an *alogeta* trip may be a preliminary to marriage.

It might also happen that they by chance show up at a tree where a particular anthropologist has made his camp; there they might beg for tobacco and other food (tobacco is chewed and indeed regarded as food), and in return answer his questions and contribute pieces to the puzzle called "Analysis of the Toposa and Turkana generation-set system", the results of which can be found in the next two chapters.

4.5. SYSTEMS ANALYSED

It has been shown in the previous chapters how the generation-set system manifests itself in everyday life and at special events, and this description has already been mixed with some analytical remarks. We shall now proceed in the analysis, using historical data and 'systematic information' on both GSS collected in the field. The resulting account of the present layout of both GSS and of the changes in their history will be supported by the simulation model.

The 'systematic information' which is the basis for the following analysis is mainly a result of interviews in which generation- and age-set lists were collected and certain questions were posed as to when particular initiations took place, how the initiation-groups were composed, their relation to age-sets, the relative rank of sets and of individuals within sets, the significance of 'illegitimate sons' and so on. In this way, more than 150 informants supplied pieces of information for this analysis (see ch.2.2. and Appendix 1). How they contributed to each of the following conclusions cannot be detailed; only Lomorukai shall be individually mentioned, whose comprehensive age-set list turned out to be an important help in my research among the Turkana. First, however, we shall turn our attention to the Toposa generation-set system.

4.5.1. ANALYSIS OF THE TOPOSA GENERATION-SET SYSTEM

(Generation-set history - The computer model - Results of computations - Analysis)

Toposa recall their generation-sets as follows:

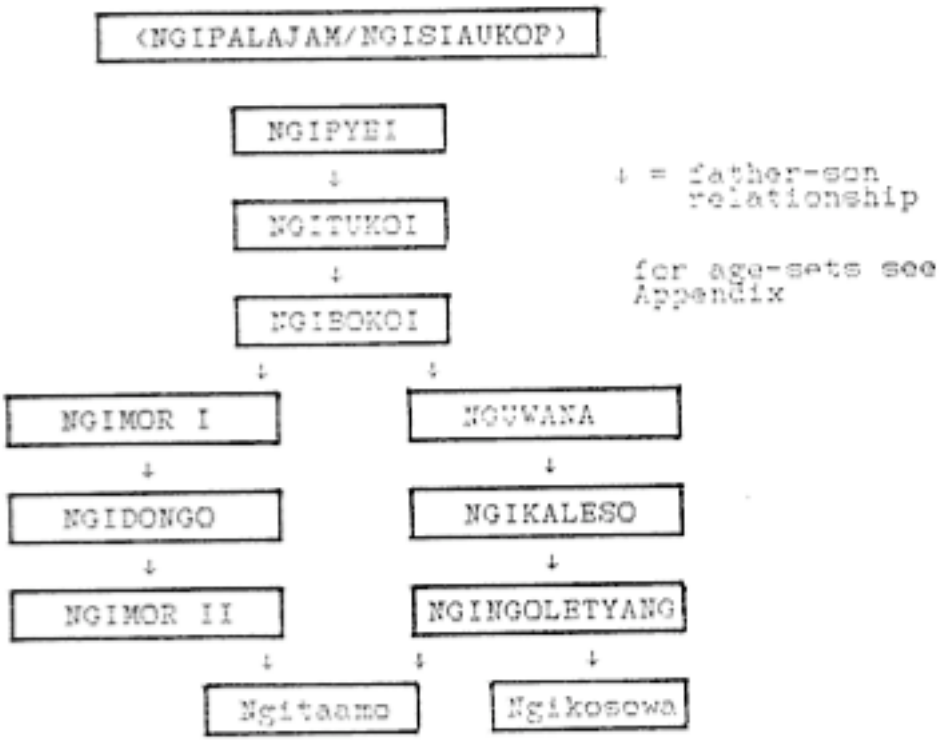


Fig. 13 Toposa generation-sets

Generation-set history. Ngipalajam (or Ngisiaukop) are said to be "the ones who started everything", "the founders of the Toposa" etc. This seems to be a sort of generic term for the Toposa ancestors as such (the Turkana talk in the same way of their forefathers). The Ngipalajam may or may not have been the fathers of Ngipyei who were probably the generation which first arrived in present Toposa territory. The dating of this arrival is bound by a certain degree of uncertainty. Lamphear (1976a) puts it at the beginning of the 19th century, but according to King's assumptions (1937:67) and my own computer simulation of the Toposa generation-set system, it would appear rather to have been sometime during the second half of the 18th century.

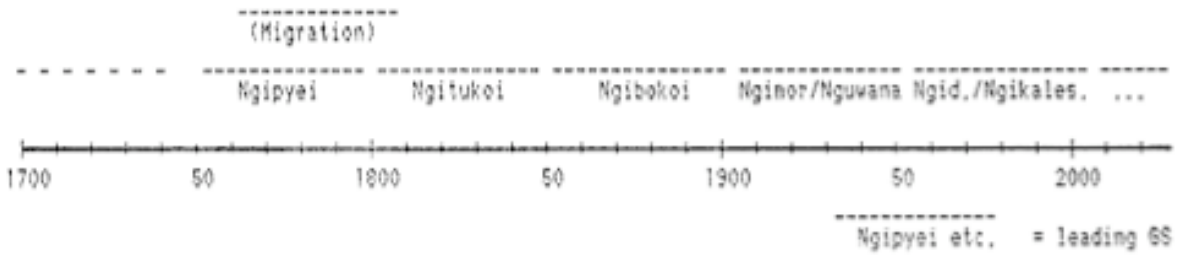


Fig. 14 Toposa generation-sets: time table

Fig. 14, showing the time table of the Toposa generation-set system, is based on available historical information (Lamphear 1976a, King 1937, own research) together with a computer simulation of the Toposa GSS which is described in the following pages.

At the beginning of the 19th century Ngitukoi became the leading generation, followed around the middle of the century by Ngibokoi. (The demographic background of these events is shown in Appendix 5.)

Around 1880 the generation of sons of Ngibokoi broke apart. Originally, they were all called Ngimor, but then the younger brothers broke away calling themselves Nguwana. The reason for this separation is still unclear - all I came across was the Ateker "standard explanation"[31] for internal quarrels - it was said that a fight over meat had taken place between the older and younger members of the set. In any case, whatever the real cause was, after heavy fighting between the two groups, the division established itself and was accepted by their fathers, the Ngibokoi. The friction between the two groups must have been much greater than the usual tensions which lead to an age-set of youngsters forming and breaking away from their older brothers. Ngimor (I) and Nguwana were still looked on as brothers but were so estranged from each other that they even gave their children's generation sets different names. The children of Ngimor (I) were called Ngidongo, while Nguwana called their children Ngikaleso. Thus two generation-set lines were created. The separation continued into the next generation: with Ngimor (II) on the one side, and Ngingoletyang on the other. At present, it is still not quite clear whether the separation of the two generation-set lines will be maintained. Ngimor (II) have named their children Ngitaamo, and Ngingoletyang, the younger brothers of Ngimor (II), seem yet undecided as to whether their children should also receive the name Ngitaamo or, continuing the break, Ngikosowa.

Shortly after 1950 Ngidongo/Ngikaleso became the leading generation-set which is currently represented by the Ngikaleso as their older brothers Ngidongo are almost all dead. Ngimor (II)/Ngingoletyang are trying hard to become the leading GS, but according to my calculations have still another 10-15 years to wait. (The demographic background for these events is shown in Appendix 5.)

The computer model. On the following pages, the computer simulation of the Turkana generation-set system is graphically depicted. First the birth curves of all generations are shown (Fig.15), and then the living members of all generations at different times are displayed, in time intervals of 20 years (Fig.16). In Figs. 15 and 16 Ngimor I/Nguwana, Ngidongo/Ngikaleso and Ngimor II/Ngingoletyang are each taken as being a common generation each, a justification for which will be given below. Then in Fig.17 is shown the demographic composition of their subdivisions.

The simulation of Toposa generation-sets is based on the following data and assumptions:

1) The Toposa migration involved the gradual migration of a whole population group (in contrast to the Turkana migration where the young people, only a segment of the population, migrated). Thus the age distribution for the first generation in the model is bell-shaped.

2) In absence of other information, the Patri-Filiation Curve is assumed to have remained unchanged throughout the period simulated. Although Toposa lifestyle does not allow a wide margin for a variation of procreation habits, the possibility of their having altered slightly within the last 250 years cannot be excluded, and in this case the dating of earlier generation-sets would have to be adjusted accordingly. (The Patri-Filiation Curve cannot account for short-time variations in procreation habits or other forms of filiation as they might occur between older and younger members of a generation. The curve reflects the life course of an "average", non-existent but statistically relevant man.)

3) The division of the Ngimor (I)/Nguwana generation took place around 1880 when the younger part of this generation had enough members to succeed in breaking away (see Fig. 16).

4) Reference points for the model are the years 1990 (information collected in 1987) and 1930 (King's information).

Appendix 5 shows in a more detailed way how information can be obtained from the computer model.

Results of computations. Although, excluding this study, generally little information is available on the Toposa and their generation-set system, we are in the fortunate position of having King's (1937:70f.) precise information on the composition of Toposa generation-sets in 1930. Together with the information collected by me in 1982/83 and 1987 this gives us the chance to check the computer simulation (which is based on the Patri-Filiation Curve) at two reference points. The result seems to be a satisfying correspondence between the simulation model and the information available. (The demographic background in these years according to the simulation model and the way in which it corresponds with the information available can be found in Fig.16 and is displayed in more detail in Appendix 5.)

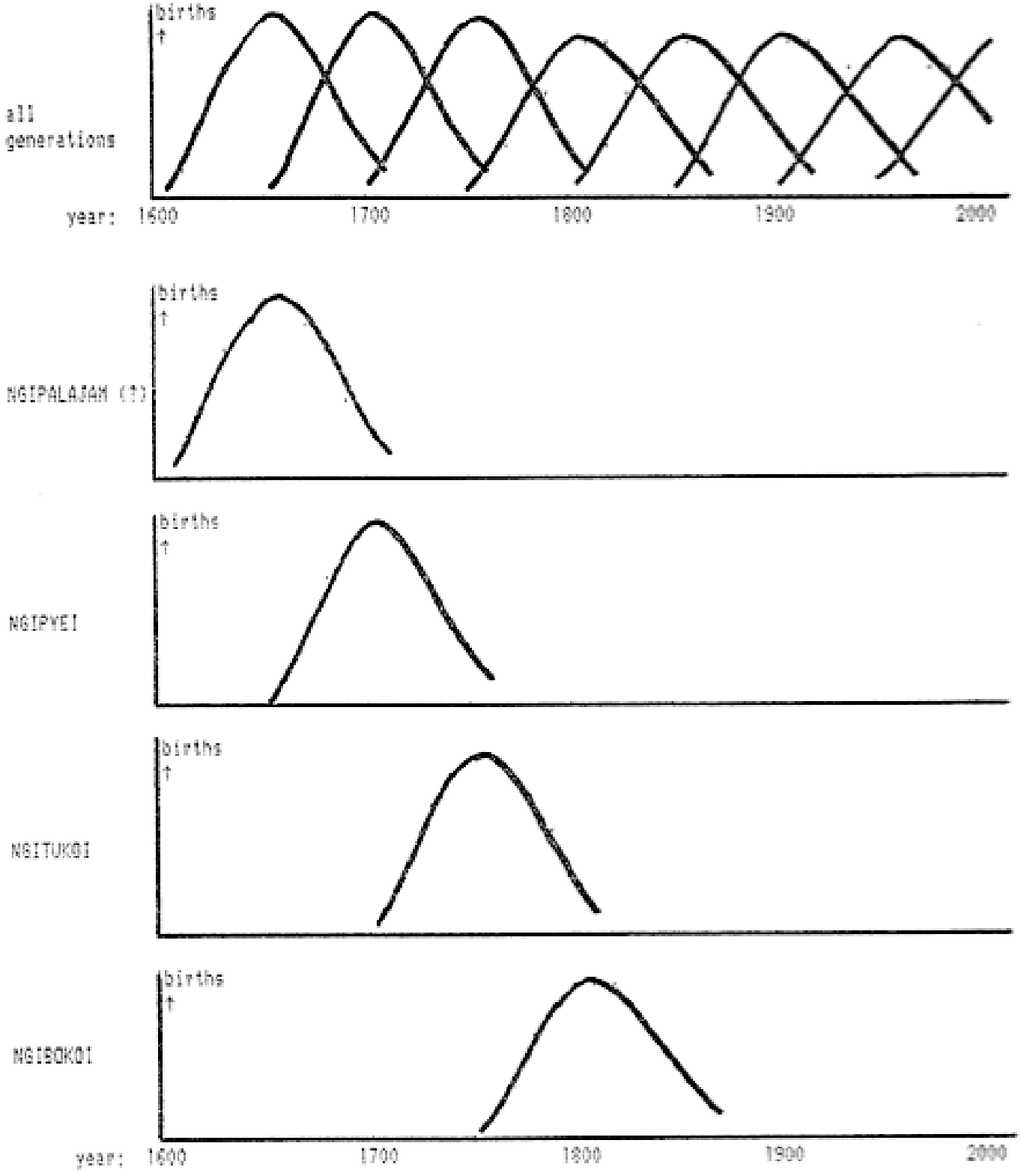
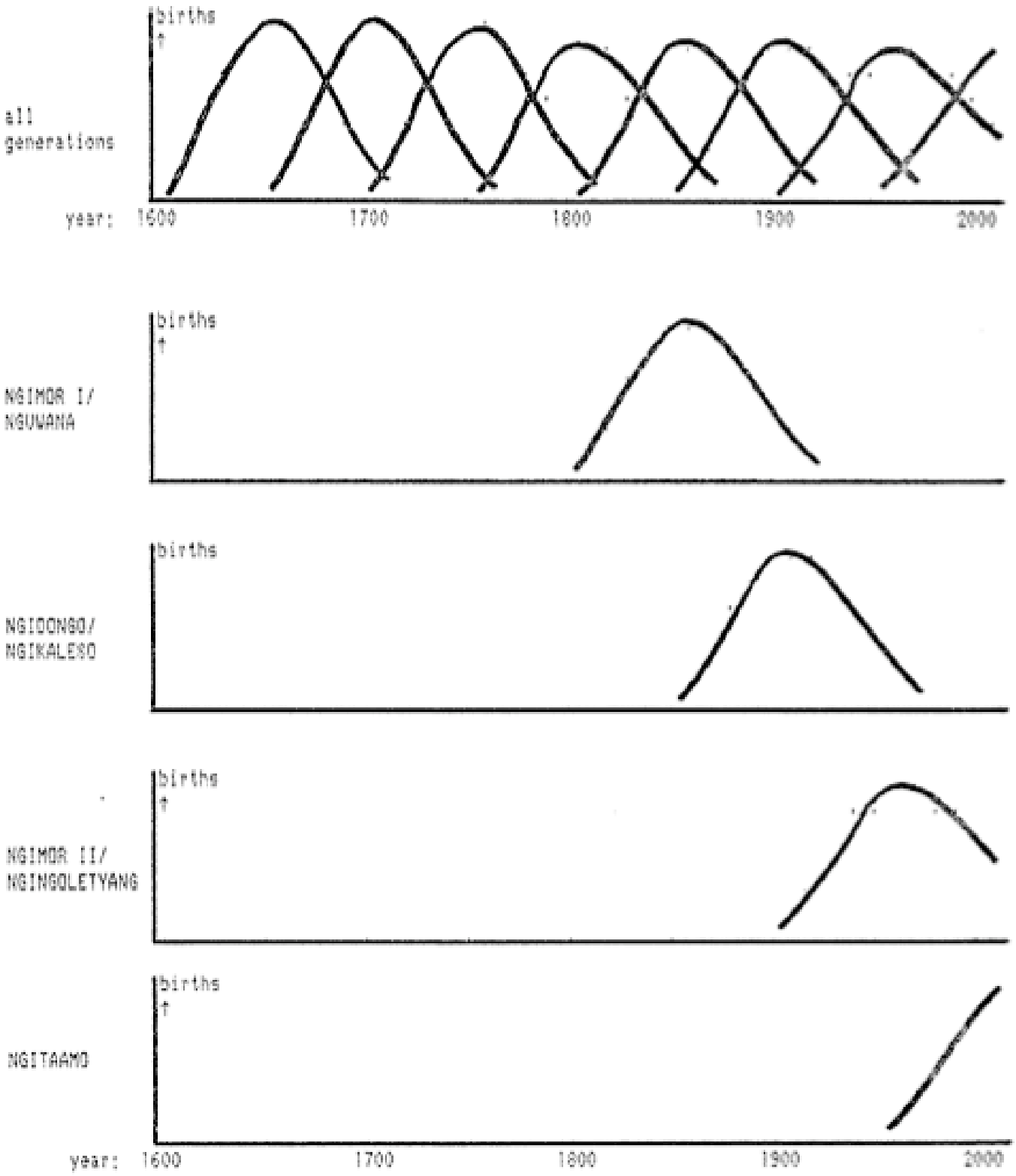


Fig. 15 Toposa generation-sets (births) - computer model



(Fig. 15 continued)

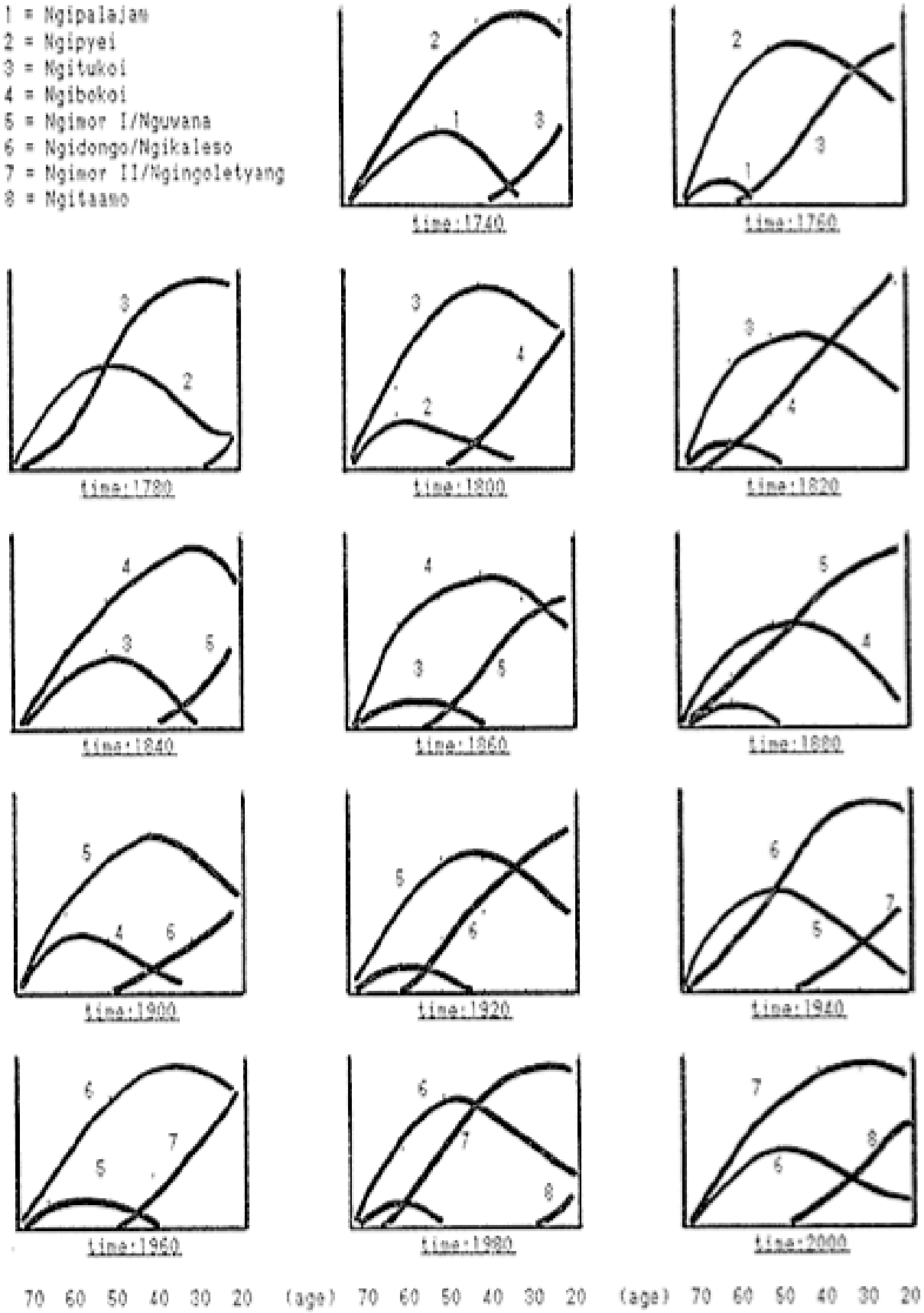


Fig. 16 Toposa generation-sets: 1740-2000

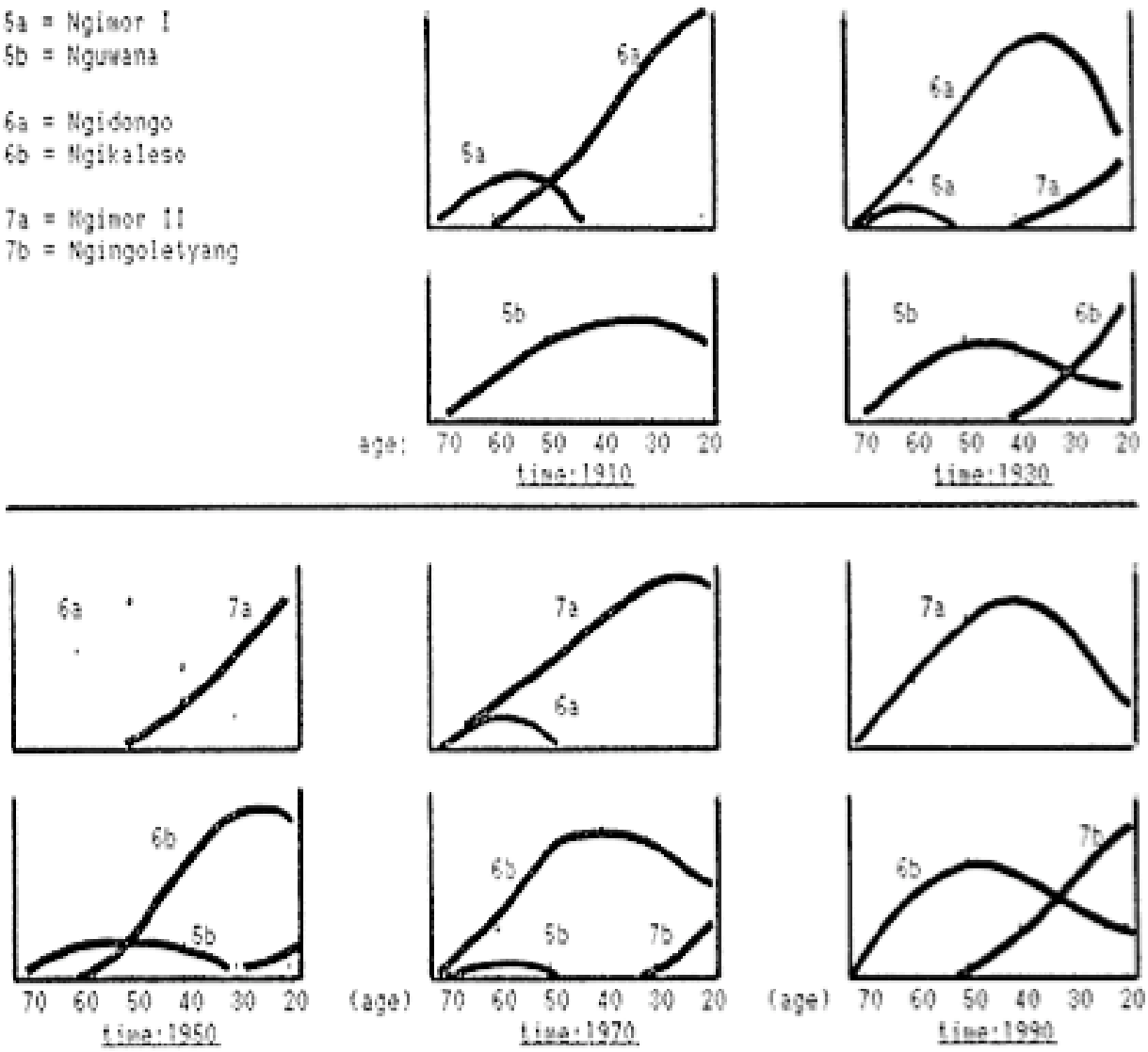


Fig. 17 Toposa generation-sets (divided): 1910-1990

Compared to the Turkana generation-set system, the Toposa GSS functions smoothly and undisturbed. Approximately every 50 years (see ch.4.2.3) a new GS comes to take over leadership. Even the generations' splitting has not yet led to any fundamental change in the system.

Should the Toposa decide to reunite the divided generation, this would be possible without major demographic problems. The lower part of Fig.18 shows that the age distribution of the combined sub-generations ("2+3") is still almost identical with what would have been the age distribution of this generation had it not divided two generations ago ("1").

Analysis. A summary of the main points provided by the historical data (H), contemporary ethnographic evidence (E) and the results of the computer simulation (S) can be presented as follows (category of source H/E/S in brackets):

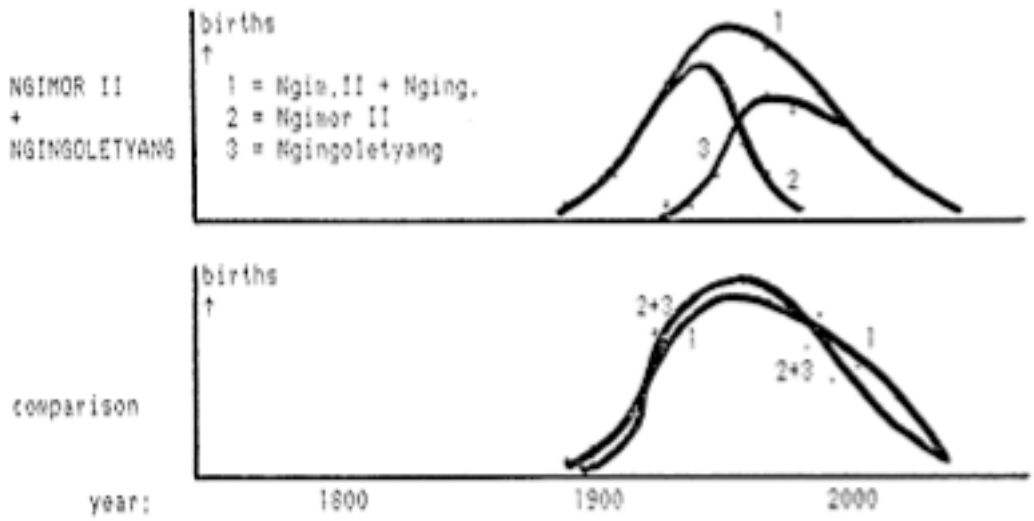


Fig. 18 Toposa: Ngimor II / Ngingoletyang

1) Every male Toposa is a member of a generation-set. Everyone belongs to the GS following that of his father. (E)

2) Generation-sets are subdivided into age-sets. (E)

3) The GSS imposes no regulations concerning marriage or procreation. A man may marry and rear children whenever his personal circumstances allow, regardless of the status of his GS/AS at that time. (E)

4) At any given time there are four consecutive generations A,B,C,D in existence, with any consecutive pair standing in a father-son relationship. (In the diagrams, often only three generations occur as men younger than 20 years are not shown.) B and C are the "central" GS. B are the leading generation vested with political authority, C are their sons who, though they to a large extent run the tribal economy, are still bound to respect their fathers' authority. A are very old men with outstanding ritual authority who have ceased to participate in daily affairs, and D are still children. - This correlation is the ideal case and applies to the majority of men. (E + S)

5) There is an overlap of ages between consecutive generations (E + S).

The first-born of each generation (the 'overaged') are disadvantaged in two respects:

6) Initiation ceremonies for the overaged can begin only after the last of their fathers' generation have been initiated; which naturally involves an unduly long wait. In this situation a decoupling of the initiation ceremony from an individual's life course occurs. (E)

7) The overaged have a long wait before they become the leading generation (some of them will even die before this happens). Although for the individuals concerned 'being overaged' is encountered as a problem, for the society as a whole the phenomenon can prove advantageous in two respects:
- Pressure from the overaged ensures that succession takes place in time, before the leading generation becomes paralysed by old age and dwindling membership.
- Overlap of ages between the retiring generation and their successors ensures continuity within society - the successors have had time to acquire the necessary knowledge, ritual ability, etc. (E)

As the overlap of ages between generations is even more marked among the Turkana, it will be discussed there (ch.4.5.2) in more detail, as well as again in chapter 5.2.

8) Succession of power from one generation to the next takes place at an interval of approximately 50 years. (H + S)

9) Except for the fact that each generation is split into two, the Toposa GSS seems to have run undisturbed and without any major changes since the arrival of the people in their present territory. Even the subdivision of generations could - and possibly will - be reversed. The pairs Ngimor I/Nguwana, Ngidongo/Ngikaleso and Ngimor II/Ngingoletyang can still each be regarded as individual generations. (H + E + S)

10) Generation and age-sets are present in all aspects of a Toposa man's life. (E)

11) Generation and age-sets are the main feature of Toposa political organisation. (E)

12) The GSS is organised mainly on a sectional level, but some cohesion is provided through the existence of a common ritual centre and by the ritual leadership of the Ngikor section. (H + E)

13) Toposa regard their system as a generation-set system. Whenever questioned about their GS/AS, Toposa mentioned first the name of their GS, and whenever asked which of AS or GS they saw as more important they always gave the latter. Age-sets are practical sub-divisions of generation- sets for day-to-day affairs. (E)

4.5.2. BEHIND A 'CONFUSED' SYSTEM: ANALYSIS OF THE TURKANA GENERATION-SET SYSTEM

(Two names for each generation-set - Generation-set history - Ngiputiro, the illegitimate sons - The computer model - The present state of the Turkana generation-set system - Formation of generation and age-sets - Merging of age-sets - Summary)

> The whole ... essence of (the Turkana) age-set organisation (is) the lack of formal shape. (Gulliver 1951:133)
>
> The age-set system of the Turkana, which forms the basis of their political organisation and of their closely interrelated religion, has never been closely studied and is therefore imperfectly understood, but the part it plays in the political and legal life of the tribe appears to have been underestimated. (Brown 1980:4)

Turkana recall their generation-sets as follows:

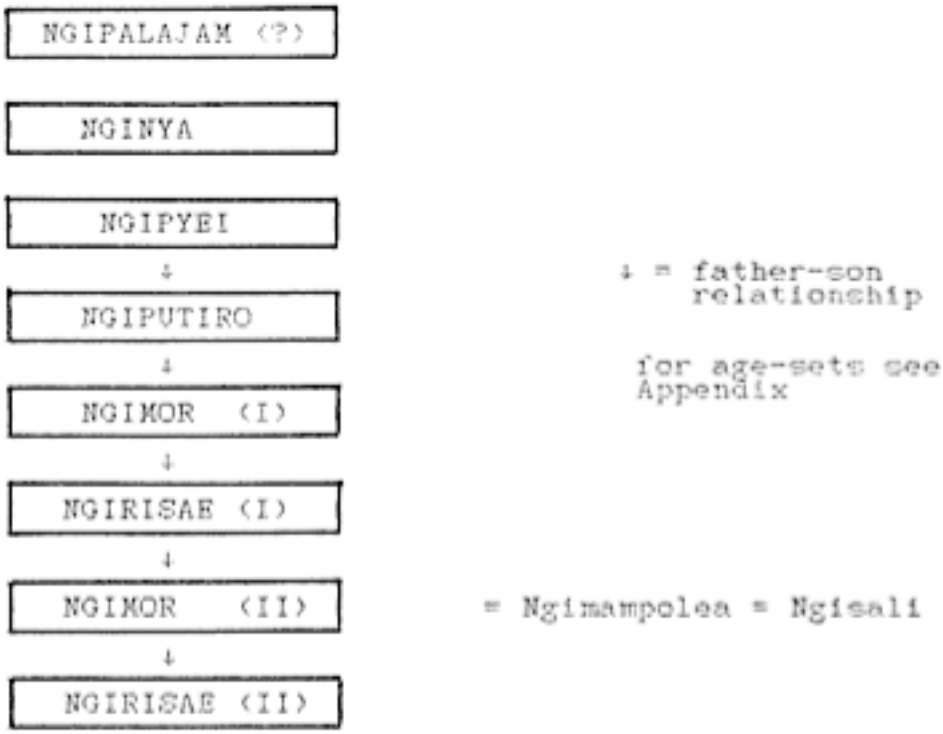


Fig. 19 Turkana generation-sets

Two names for each generation-set. The fact that the last four Turkana generation-sets have been named alternately Ngimor (Mountains) and Ngirisae (Leopards) has led to the Turkana GSS being widely misinterpreted. Gulliver for example takes the Turkana GSS to be a system of two alternations with Ngimor on the one hand and Ngirisae on the other. For him generation plays no signifi-

cant role in this whatsoever (1951:127, 1958:902). If we take a look at the Jie GSS however (reminder: Jie are, to some extent, forefathers of the Turkana), we can observe the same practice: Jie GS are named alternately Ngitome (Elephants) and Ngikoria (Giraffes)[32]. Turkana informants stated that the two systems of denomination are correlated in this way:
Ngikorio (Jie) = Ngimor (Turkana),
Ngitome (Jie) = Ngirisae (Turkana).

Lamphear (1976a:41ff.) reports that among the Jie, each GS has two names: its "real" or "official" name (alternately Ngikorio or Ngitome) and its own unique "nickname" like Ngikosowa, Ngimugeto, etc. Also Lamphear mentions that extinct GS are generally referred to by their "nickname". The youngest GS in Lamphear's GS/AS list (1976a:37) is still referred to solely as Ngitome, so far without its own specific "nickname". All this can be put systematically as follows:

1) Every GS is known by two names: a classificatory name, taken alternately from a pair of names, and a distinctive specific name. Pairs of names are:
Ngitome/Ngikorio (Jie); Ngimor/Ngirisae (Turkana).

2) When a GS comes into existence, it is first known only by its classificatory name. Later, it may also acquire a specific name. Often this specific name will be identical with the name of one of its age-sets, especially the first one.

3) Extinct GS are normally referred to only by their specific names.

From the data available at present it is not clear if these points apply to the Toposa GSS as well. The existence of a left/right complex and the double occurrence of the GS name Ngimor suggests this possibility however. For the Turkana at any rate, their generation-sets exactly fit the pattern described.

classificatory name	**specific name**	**remarks**
Ngimor	**NGIPYEI**	extinct
Ngirisae	**NIPUTIRO**	extinct
NGIMOR	-	(I),
extinct		
NGIRISAE	-	(I), alive
NGIMOR	**NGIMAMPOLEA, NGISALI**	(II), alive
NGIRISAE	-	(II), young

Table 9 Turkana generation-sets, classificatory names and specific names

Table 9 corresponds to Fig.19, with the difference that in Table 9 both the classificatory names and specific names are shown, and Ngipalajam and Nginya are omitted as little information is available regarding these generations. Fig.19 displays only the names of generation-sets which are normally used. In Table 9 these names are emphasised by capital letters.

It was stated that Ngipyei were also Ngimor and Ngiputiro were also Ngirisae. As these GS are extinct, their classificatory (alternating) names are not used any more.

For reasons which are not known, Ngimor (I) and Ngirisae (I) do not seem to have acquired an additional specific name.

Ngimor (II) have two different specific names, depending on the region: they are called Ngimampolea in the south and Ngisali in the north. These specific names are not always used.

Ngirisae (II) are still young and have thus not had the time to acquire a specific name of their own.

There are three generation-sets with living members:
Ngirisae (I)
Ngimor (II)
Ngirisae (II)
(Some Ngimor (III) have already been born, but they are not yet significant as active members of public life.)

When today a Turkana speaks about Ngimor without further specification, he is referring to the living Ngimor (II). To refer to the extinct Ngimor (I) he will then specify "sons of Ngiputiro". "Ngirisae" means the living Ngirisae (I), and if necessary he would specify Ngirisae (II) as "young Ngirisae".

Generation-set history. In contrast to the Toposa generation-set system, the Turkana GSS has undergone major changes within the last hundred years. Furthermore, while the shape of the Toposa system is rather uniform throughout the country, the Turkana GSS displays a considerable amount of local variation which, in my opinion, reflects the differing social and historical conditions in these regions.

Little is known about the first two generations in Fig.19. The term Ngipalajam may be generic for the Turkana forefathers - as in the case of the Toposa term Ngisiaukop/Ngipalajam. Surprisingly enough, I was not able to obtain coherent information on the name of the GS who came to Moru a Nayece and thus founded the Turkana society as it is presently composed. Actually it must have been an age-set (the "young men" in the story of Moru a Nayece) rather than an entire generation-set which moved down the escarpment.

The time table of the Turkana generation-set system is based on available historical information (Lamphear's publications and own data) and a computer simulation which is explained in more detail below.

At the beginning of the 18th century, young Jie migrated down the Rift Valley escarpment, as told in the story of Moru a Nayece. They were probably called Nginya. One informant[33] put it this way: "One adakar of one age-set moved in. They were Ngirisae." This (Nyinya = Ngirisae) would also fit chronologically with the alternation between Ngimor and Ngirisae. Apparently the migrants had

taken animals from their fathers without consent, and had been cursed by the Jie elders, a curse whose effects are said to linger on today.[34] Initially the people remained in the area around the headwaters of River Tarach.

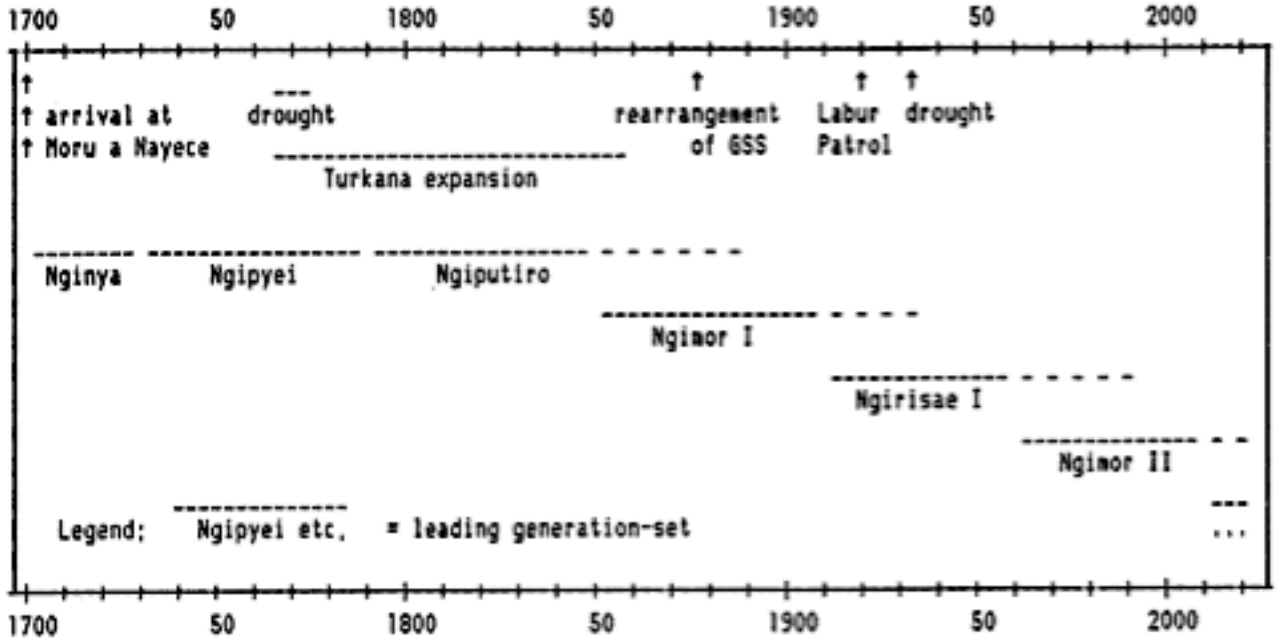


Fig. 20 Turkana generation-sets: time table

The next generation, called Ngipyei, started to expand their territory outwards:

> "Ngipyei are the ones who moved to the lake region. The animals had been finished in Nayece. So, Lokerio (a famous diviner) moved with the people, Ngipyei, to the lake region. When they reached there, they gave birth to Ngiputiro. Ngipyei went to the other side of the lake and got camels there. Then, Ngiputiro went to different directions, towards Lokitaung, Moru Eris, Kataboi, Lowarengak, Kalokol and so on, and southwards along the lake. ... When the Ngipyei went to the lake, they had no animals, they were just surviving on fish. ... The animals were finished because of drought. ... They got the camels at the other side of the lake. So, the Ngiputiro now grew, they started moving with their animals. So, they became rich."
>
> (Lomorukai, 18.6.1987 in Kotela, transl. by Lucy Lokwale)

Ngiputiro, the illegitimate sons. Driven by a devastating drought, part of the Ngipyei moved eastwards to the lake region, evicting and incorporating other ethnic groups (see above, ch.3.3.5.2.) and acquiring camels, most probably from the Rendille. They were able to build up their herds again, but this process must have taken a long time, during which most households could not afford to give away animals for bridewealth. (We have seen above how essential the distribution of bridewealth animals is to enable a man to build up his support network. For this reason, it would not have made sense to lower the bridewealth.) This particularly affected the young Ngiputiro who were reaching the age where they would otherwise have been getting married and establishing their own families. The women were still there though, and in this situation many Ngiputiro established "illegal" families and had children without waiting until a bridewealth was ready.[35]

We have seen above (ch.3.3.6.3.) that in the societies under consideration each child always has a social father, even if the physical father is not known. If a child is born outside a legal marriage, the social father is held to be the mother's father, that is, the child's biological grandfather.

When the *ikoku ka apese angabus*, i.e. "child of an unmarried woman" is a boy, he takes his generation-set membership from his social father, which means that he joins the GS succeeeding the latter's.[36]

For the Ngiputiro who illegally set up family with the daughters of Ngipyei, the somewhat paradoxical situation arose, that the sons born were counted as sons of Ngipyei - thus Ngiputiro had produced Ngiputiro; in Eipa's words: "The sons of *ngapesur angabus* went into their father's *anaket* (GS) which was Ngiputiro."[37] After things had recovered, and bridewealth animals were again available and legal marriages were possible, legitimate sons of Ngiputiro were born which then became a new GS called Ngimor (I). This may be better illustrated by a diagram:

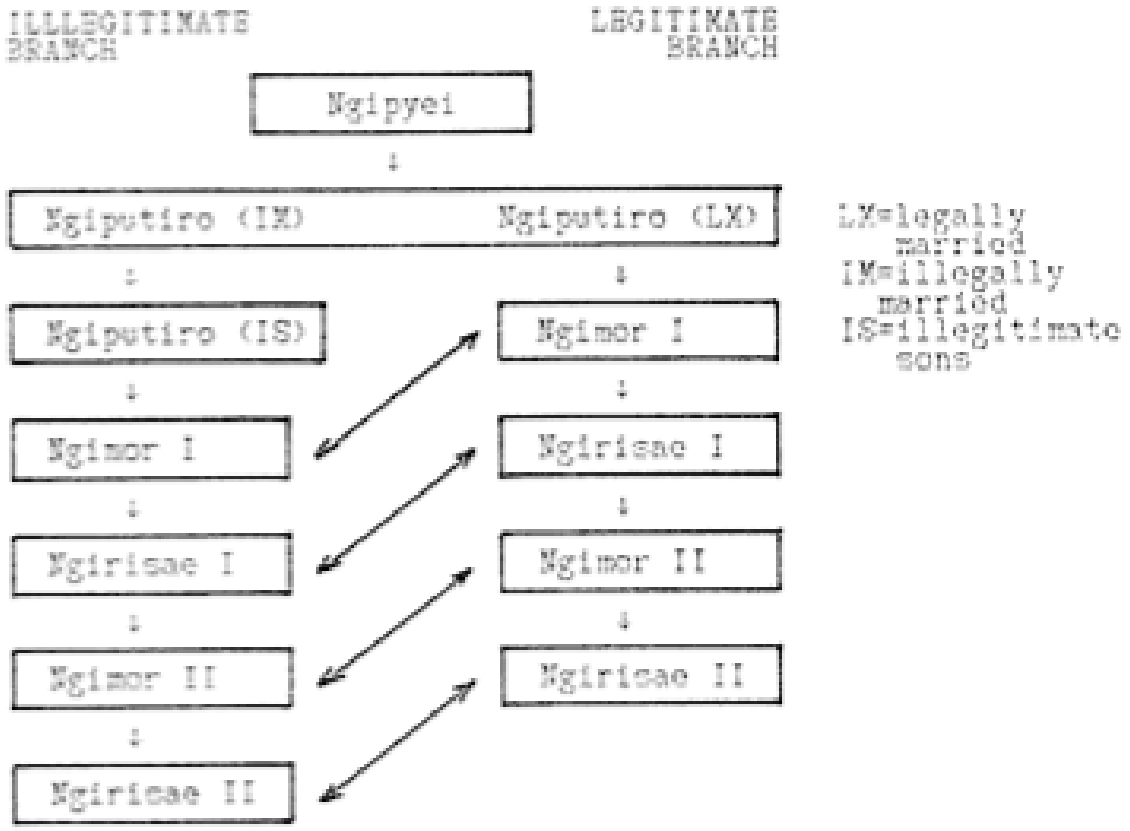


Fig. 21 Turkana generation-sets, legitimate and illegitimate branches

The first of the Ngiputiro[38] were illegally married, and their sons were also called Ngiputiro. The Ngiputiro who married legally had sons who were called Ngimor (I). Biologically Ngiputiro (IS) and Ngimor (I) were on the same genealogical level, but their status in the GSS was different: Ngiputiro (IS) were one step higher than Ngimor (I). This paradox continued into the following generations. The result was a considerable overlap in age between members of consecutive generation-sets.

By some point, around 1850, as can be inferred from the simulation model (see Fig.23 below), all the "original" Ngiputiro, i.e. the sons of Ngipyei, had died out, but the Ngiputiro who were physical sons of the original Ngiputiro, were, although old, still about in large numbers. At the same time the generation-set of Ngimor (I) had reached the status where it would, under normal circumstances, have become the leading GS. The remaining Ngiputiro however, although illegitimate, were still strong and, holding the higher status in the GSS, blocked their way. Physically, Ngimor (I) were 'brothers' of Ngiputiro (IS), but they were deprived of the elders' privileges by a rule which in this case gave the privileges to the illegitimate.

Eventually this situation must have become unbearable, resulting sometime around 1870 to 1880 in the the remaining Ngiputiro deciding to share their privileges and ritual power with Ngimor (I). The most common manifestation of the GSS was altered accordingly: the Ngiputiro decided that they would have their akiriket (meat feast) together with Ngimor (I), in Angatani's words:

> "Things were mixed up before Ngiputiro, and then they (re)organized it. ... The Ngiputiro, who are Ngirisae, are the ones who divided and shared the meat in akiriket, and (from this time on) this meat used to be together in one place for both Ngimor and Ngirisae".[39]

Two factors had changed the Turkana GSS considerably: first, the increased overlap between generations caused by the large numbers of illegitimate sons in the Ngiputiro generation. Second, and in reaction to this, the experience of two nominally successive generation-sets sharing power, diminished the importance of generation-sets generally: all elders now had access to power and meat, regardless of their GS. This also had an effect as regards the initiation of the men which was and still is governed by two rules:
1) Young men are initiated by their fathers.
2) Only 'leading elders' (i.e. senior elders of the leading GS) have the ritual authority to perform initiations.

Previously, this had required that only members of one generation-set be initiated at one time, and that the next wait until their fathers become the leading GS. Since now the leading elders belonged both to the Ngimor and to Ngirisae, initiations of consecutive generations could also be held concurrently.

The time when the Ngiputiro were the leading generation was also the time of rapid Turkana expansion as described in ch. 3.3.5.2. There, Lamphear was cited as attributing the change in the Turkana GSS to the circumstances of Turkana expansion. This is certainly true; the more the Turkana dispersed, the more de-centralized became their GSS, both spatially and structurally. As, in face of the warlike circumstances of expansion, it became necessary for the small and dispersed local communities to re-affirm their solidarity, the decision of the Ngiputiro to share their power and thereby avoid intertribal quarrel becomes even more intelligible.

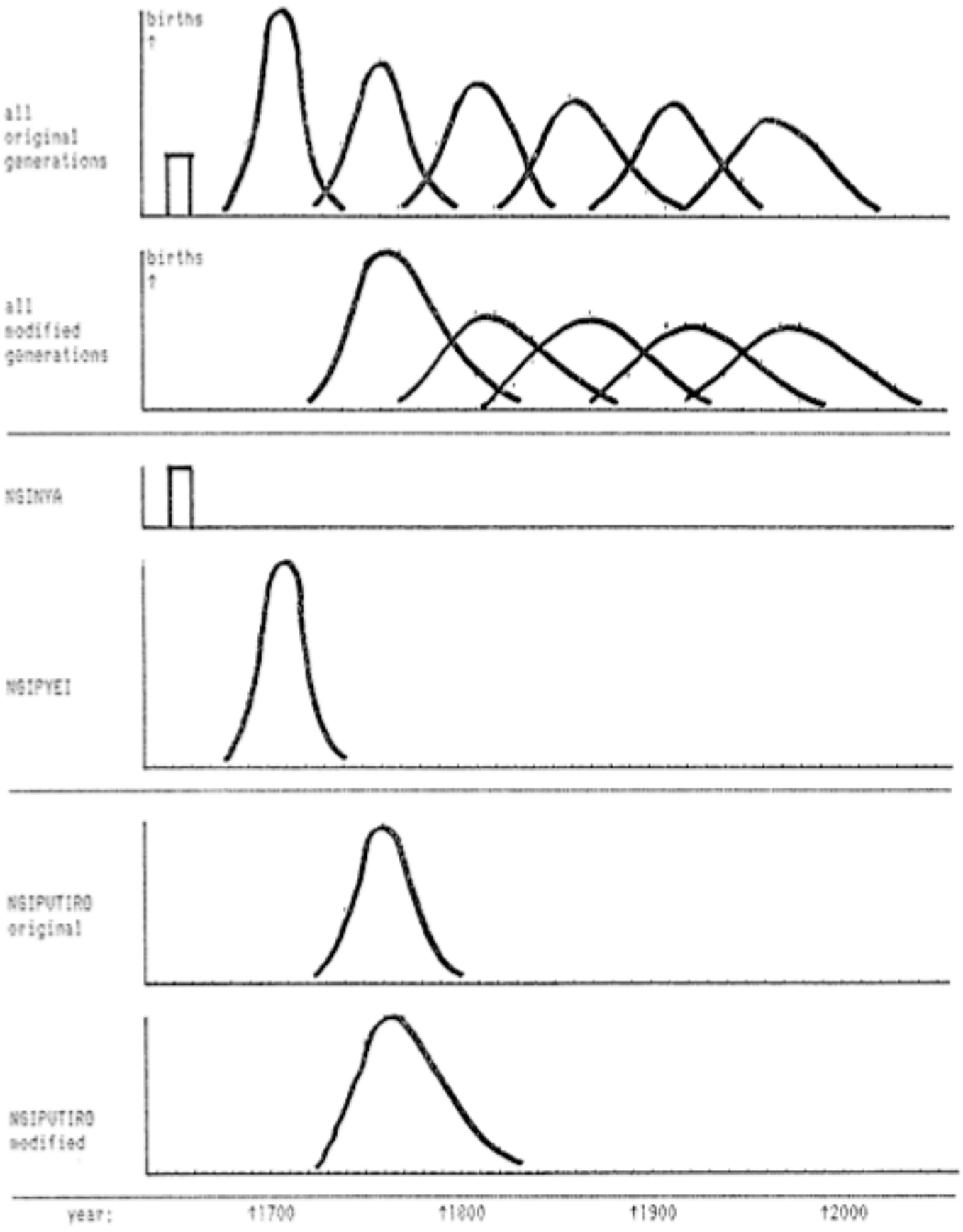
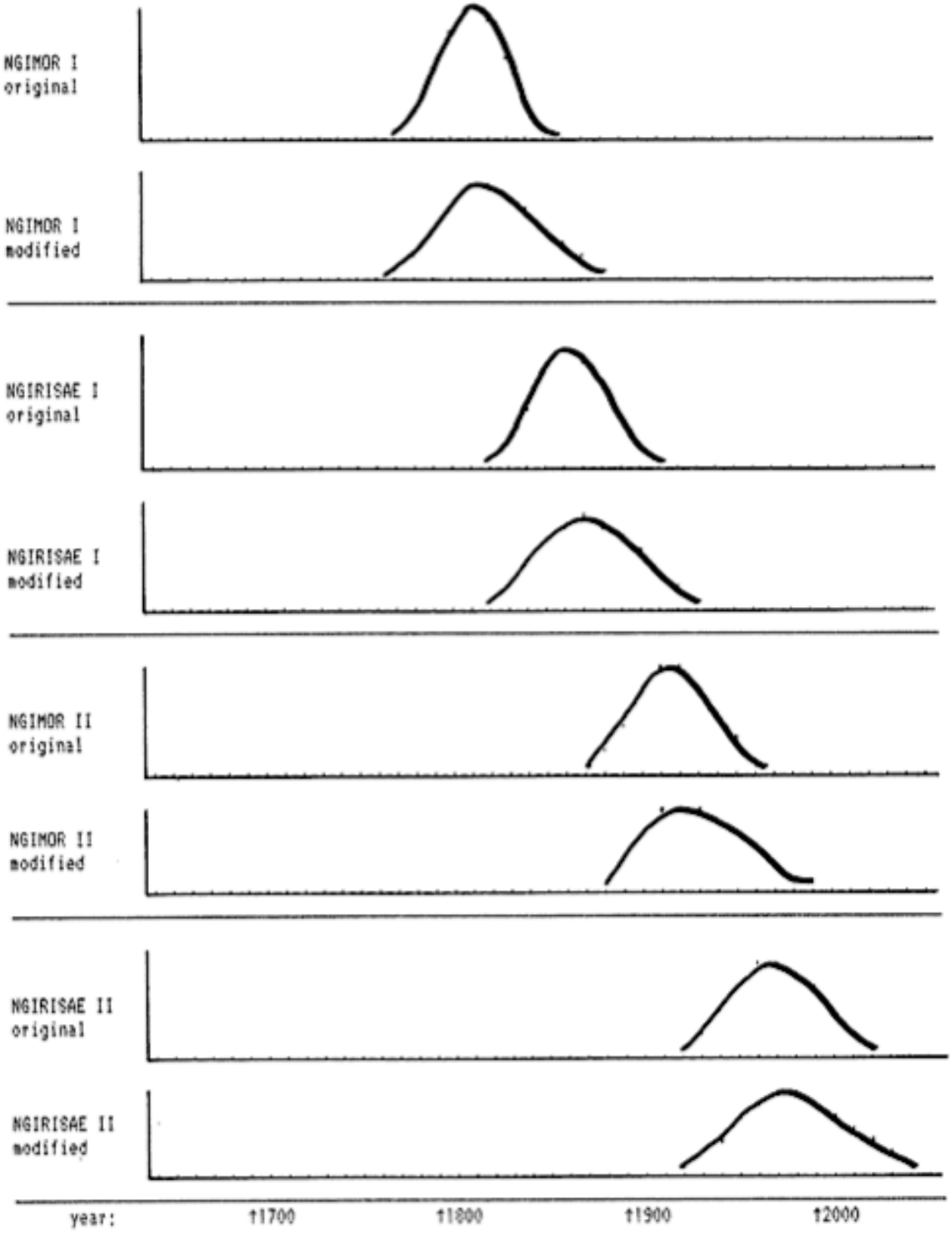


Fig. 22 Turkana generation-sets (births) - computer model



(Fig. 22 continued)

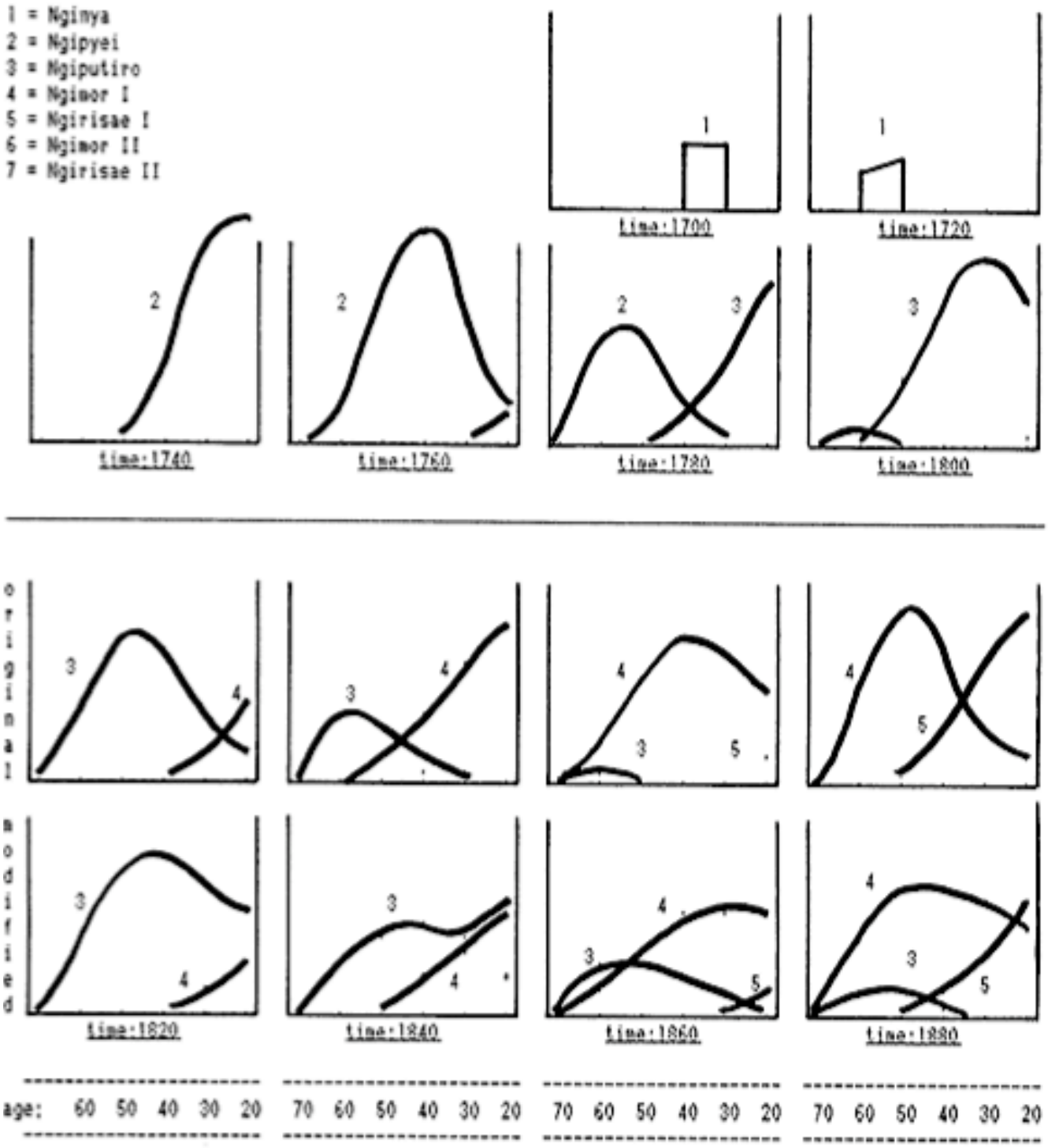
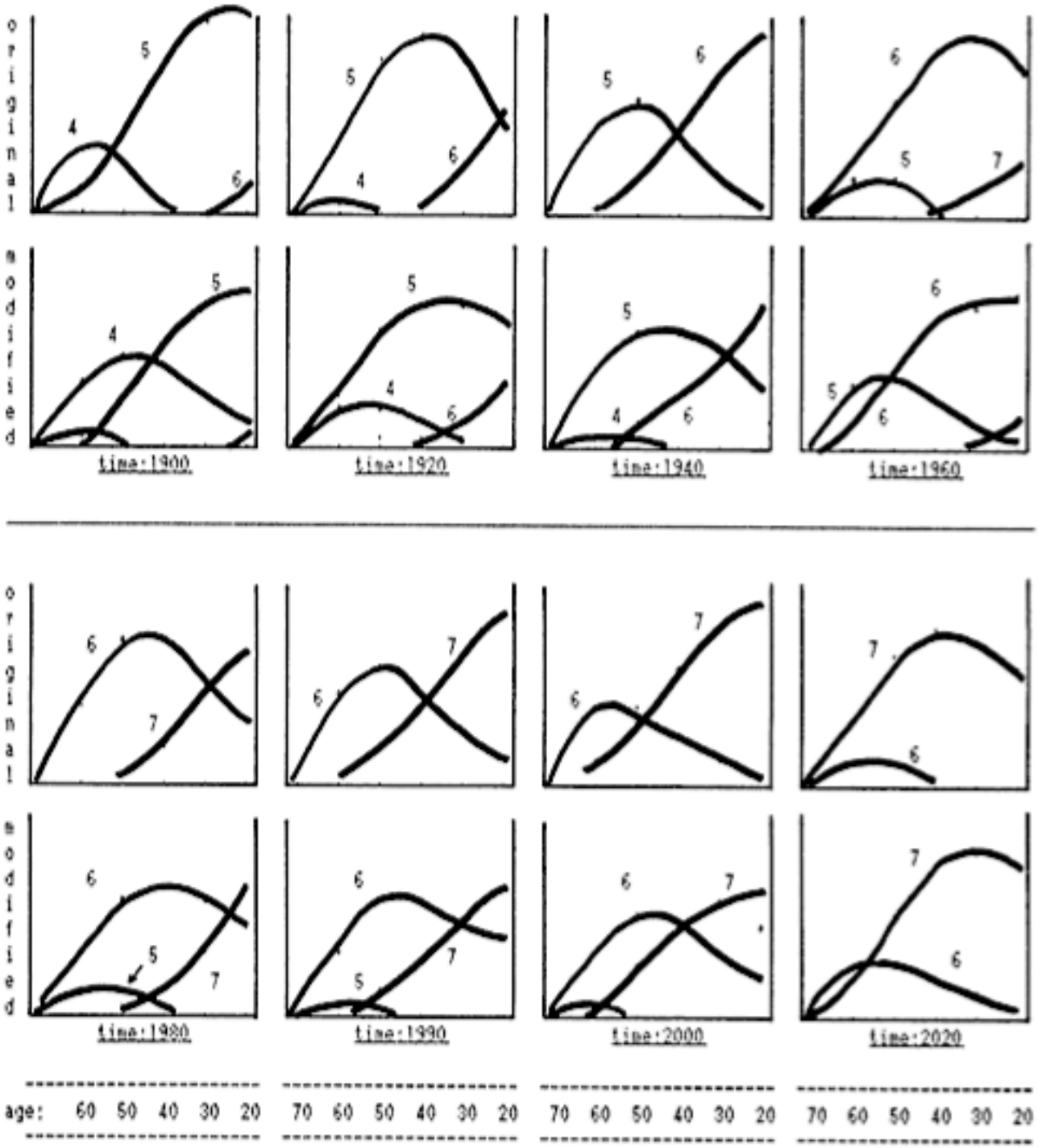


Fig. 23 Turkana generation-sets, original and modified: 1700-2020



(Fig. 23 continued)

The computer model. On the previous and following pages the computer simulation of the Turkana generation-set system is graphically depicted. First the birth curves of all generations are shown (Fig.22), and then the living members of all generations at different times are displayed, at time intervals of 20 years (Fig.23). Beginning with the Ngiputiro GS, two different models have been simulated, an original model and a modified model. The original model simulates an undisturbed course of events, while the modified model takes into account the existence of the 'illegitimate' Ngiputiro and its consequences. For comparison, both models are combined in the diagrams.

The simulation of Turkana generation-sets is based on the following data and assumptions:

1) The group of Turkana which migrated was not a complete generation. Only young men aged between 20 and 40 took part in the migration.

2) For the Patri-Filiation Curve, the same remarks apply as in the case of the Toposa (see p.193f.).

3) The reference point for the model is the year 1980 (information collected in 1987).

4) Regarding the relative number of 'illegitimate' Ngiputiro (i.e. of potential Ngimor (I) members who by illegitimate birth became Ngiputiro) no quantitative data could of course be obtained since the event dates back about two hundred years. Thus, based on the statements of informants[40] that only part of the Ngiputiro were illegitimate, that there were legitimate and illegitimate Ngiputiro at the same time and that these events happened after their fathers, the Ngipyei, had migrated to the lake when the majority of Ngipyei must have been heads of families (around 1760 to 1780, see Fig.23), an assumption had to be made which is shown in the following diagram:

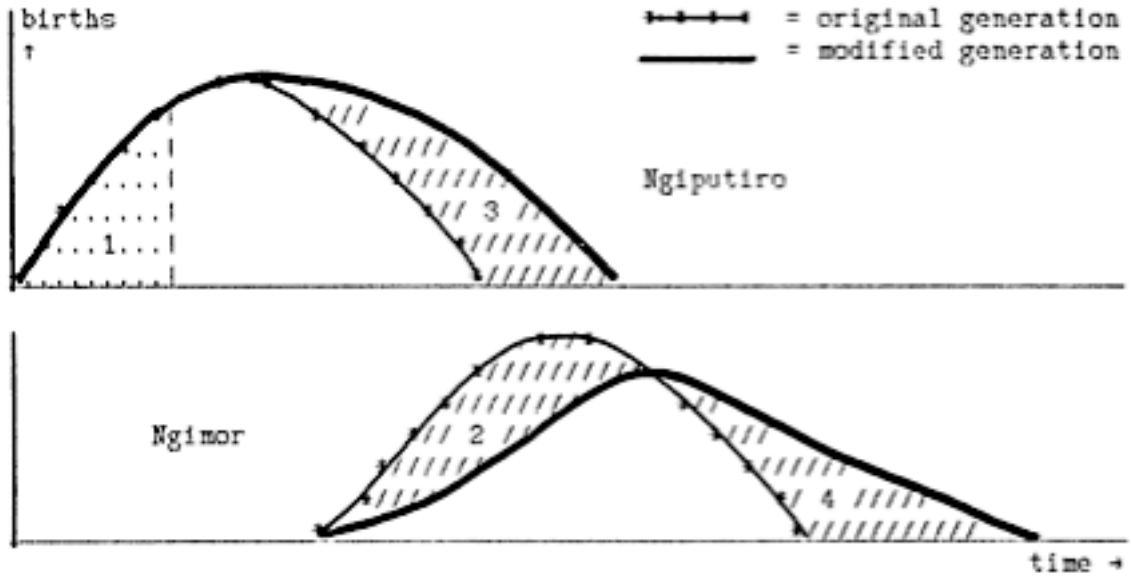


Fig. 24 Legitimate and illegitimate Ngiputiro (schematically)

It is assumed that roughly the first third (1) of the Ngiputiro had to marry illegally, resulting in a third (2) of the Ngimor becoming Ngiputiro. This part (3) is added to the original Ngiputiro, which again results in an extension (4) of Ngimor.

According to the information I collected, the number of illegitimate Ngiputiro varied throughout the country. Not all the Ngipyei were affected by the drought in the same way, and the consequences for the GSS thus also varied. Most of the illegitimate Ngiputiro seem to have lived in the lake region - in other parts of the country they were either fewer or nonexistent. The changes in the GSS, however, initiated by the Ngiputiro at the lake, spread throughout the country.

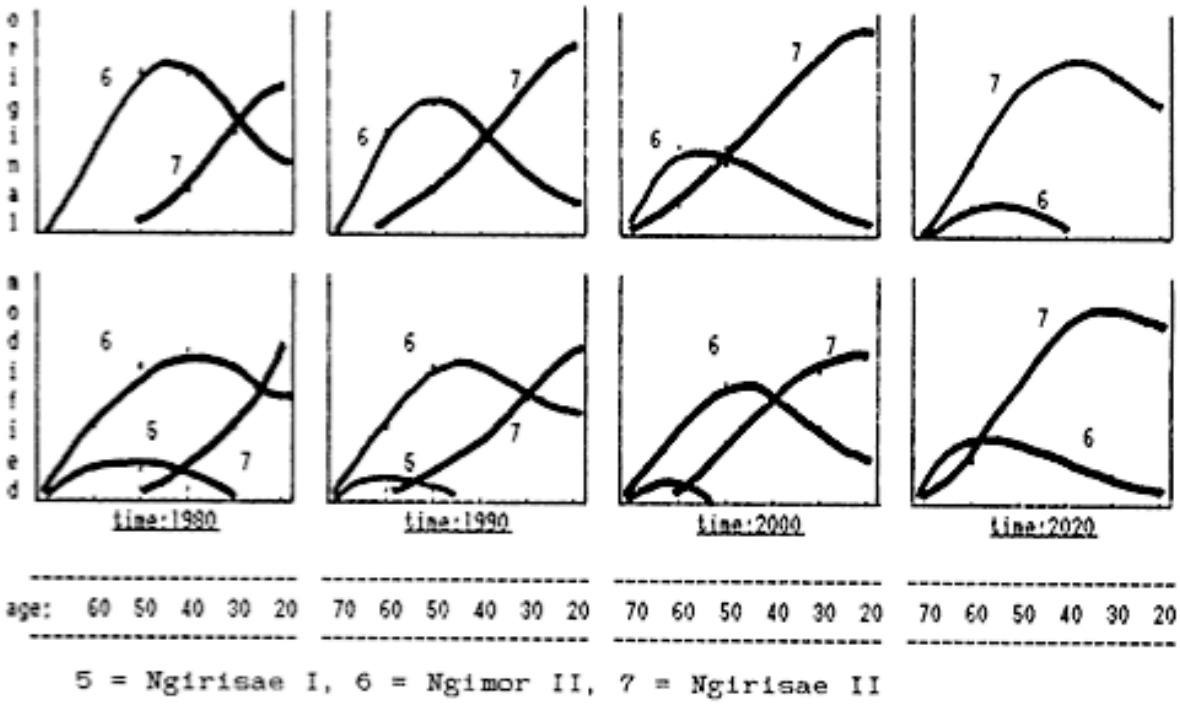
In terms of our model this means that the 'illegitimate branch' of the GSS will be more or less present at different places. Thus, the model simulation has been made of the two limiting cases:
- original state of the GSS (legitimate branch only), and - modified state of the GSS (legitimate and illegitimate branches combined).

The actual situation in different parts of the country can always be found somewhere between these two extremes.

Fig.22 above shows, among other things, how the illegitimate Ngiputiro have increased the overlap of ages between adjacent generation-sets; in their modified version, all generation curves have become broader.

Fig. 23 above shows living members of the different generation-sets at different points of time, both for the original and the modified model. The value of this display shall be shown by one example only. (The diagram below is an extract of Fig. 23.)

"Time 1990" gives us some idea of the present state of affairs: in the original model, the only generations still in existence are Ngimor (II) and Ngirisae (II), and Ngimor are the leading elders. This fits my findings for northeastern Turkanaland exactly and implies that the illegitimate branch of Ngiputiro has not played much of a role there - which again corresponds exactly with all the information collected. At most places in central Turkanaland and at the lake things are different: here Ngirisae (I) still exist and are taken to be the leading elders with the highest ritual authority. At the same time, Ngimor (II) are even stronger in numbers. One reason (another is given below) for the existence of Ngirisae (I) is the influence of the illegitimate branch of Ngiputiro in these places - this is again backed up by the information available.



area	impact of the first (Ngiputiro) modification to the Turkana GSS (= number of Ngirisae elders still alive)
northeast	low
northwest	low
central northeast	medium
central east	low
central west	high
southwest	no information
southeast	high

Table 10 Impact of the first (Ngiputiro) modification to the Turkana GSS

I have tried to systematize the Turkana GSS and to break it down into comprehensible components as far as possible, but it still appears rather complicated. Unfortunately, things became even worse after the British colonisation of Turkanaland.

The present state of the Turkana generation-set system. When the British colonized the Turkana, a simple means for breaking resistance they often used was to take away large quantities of animals. Especially in the case of the 1918 Labur Patrol (see above, ch.3.3.5.3.) this was the cause of considerable suffering amongst the Turkana. On top of this, what cattle that was left then died in a cattle disease (pleuro-pneumonia)[41] which struck in 1919. In southern Turkana this event is captured in the specific name acquired by the Ngimor (II) generation-set. They became known as Ngi-

mampolea; "The ones who could not cut the *apol*"[42] which refers to the fact that since they had no animals to slaughter, they could not, at least for a period, undergo initiations. This lack of animals must have again lead to a large number of illegitimate children and exacerbated still further the overlap of ages between the generation-sets. The same applies to Ngisali, the specific name of Ngimor (II) in the north; "The ones who stopped doing things" were for a period of time not able to have *akiriket* (meat feast) and initiations.

Again, in 1934, there was a severe drought[43] which deprived the Turkana of up to three quarters of their herd. In this situation the whole system of initiations, generation and age-sets must have collapsed. Lomorukai, one of my best informants on the GSS, even insisted that from this point on the Turkana GSS had broken down forever. In fact, birth of illegitimate children seems to be more frequent nowadays, and is common in the settlements where the poor, who do not possess animals, are fed by the government. Here, indeed the GSS does not play a major role any more. In some parts of Turkanaland however, especially in the north, the GSS has survived in its traditional form, and even in the other parts it can only be understood when the remnants of its previous structure are known.

The dozens of different forms which the Turkana GSS takes in the different parts of the country, thus represent a combination of three elements, which are:

1) the 'original' model,
2) the 'modified' model (with the illegitimate Ngiputiro), and
3) the increasing overlap of ages between adjacent generation-sets, caused by a considerable number of illegitimate births, since ca. 1920.

(1) and (2) have been computed, but (3) evades systematic simulation at the present stage because appropriate data are lacking.

(3) has in some parts of southern and central Turkanaland led to a total overlap in the ages of the generation-sets, and the number of elders in Ngimor and Ngirisae has become almost equal. In addition, sometimes it is not even known whether particular people belong to Ngirisae I or Ngirisae II. It must have been these cases which led Gulliver (1951, 1958) to the assumption that generation plays no role whatsoever in the Turkana generation-set system and that it has become a system of 'alternations'. But the Turkana GSS can only be understood when its many varieties are discerned (some of which are still a pure GSS), and the generational aspect can still be tracked in cases where it has become vague. I would have agreed with Gulliver had he stated that a tendency exists towards the development of a system of alternations in some or even most parts of Turkanaland.

The generational aspect is often difficult to detect; for example, in answering the question as to who in the society holds the most authority, a standard response would normally be: "The ones who had

asapan (initiation) first". Concealed in this answer is the notion that the first initiated be from the oldest generation-set, but this is rarely made explicit nowadays (and sometimes not even known).
In some places, the recent age-sets of Ngimor and Ngirisae have even merged: one age-set comes to comprise both members of Ngimor and of Ngirisae. Here, the age-set aspect (with two alternations) seems to become gradually overwhelming.

Formation of generation and age-sets. How generation and age-sets come into existence and how new age-sets constantly emerge has already been described for the Toposa. This procedure is much the same in Turkanaland, and I have collected sufficient information on how still nowadays new age-sets 'break away' from their older brothers.

All evidence indicates that the formation of a new age-set takes place every 7 to 10 years. This was the view of Masterman (1926, "10 years") and is backed by my own findings. This time span is also linked to ecological conditions. It has been shown above (ch.3.3.2.) that at least for the last 50-year period every 7 to 10 years a catastrophic drought hits Turkanaland. During this period, few children are born (women do not ovulate during heavy droughts) and many babies die. Thus every 7 to 10 years a demographic gap arises which provides a natural 'boundary' between successive age-sets. When the breaking away of an age-set occurs, this gap will probably serve as the natural dividing line between sets.

Through initiation (*asapan*), a young man becomes a recognised member of his age-set, but even before *asapan* the boys attach themselves informally to an age-set. The evaluation of Turkana age-set lists (see Appendix 7) which was already difficult enough, became especially complicated by the fact that before *asapan*, the strict separation between Ngimor and Ngirisae is often not maintained. Young men destined to become Ngirisae would attach themselves temporarily to a Ngimor age-set and vice versa, as an example from Kotome (northeastern Turkana) shows (see next page).

Ngimampae is the youngest age-set of Ngimor. Some of the Ngimampae are already initiated. All the uninitiated young men on the Ngimor side who take an informal but active part in age-set mat-ters, attach them- selves to Ngimampae; this also applies to the remnants of Ngingolekuruk who are not yet initiated, through matters of seniority.

For some unknown reason, the pre-initiation group of Ngimampae seems to be more attractive for some of the uninitiated Ngirisae than their own group, Ngibelianga. They also attach themselves to the Ngimor group of Ngimampae. Only after *asapan* will they join their proper age-sets Ngibe-lianga and Ngikoporea. I cannot exclude the possibility that the described situation is a preliminary to a merging of the Ngimor and Ngirisae age-sets.

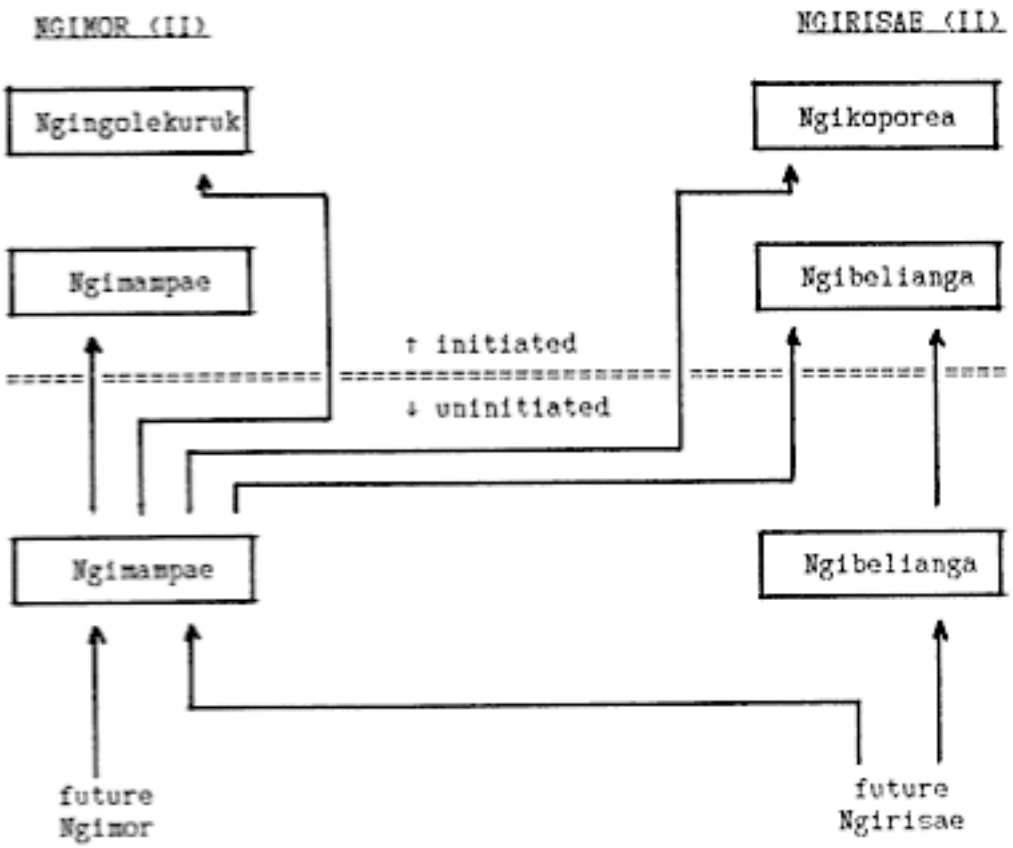


Fig. 25 Formation of age-sets in Kotome

Merging of age-sets. There are places in Turkanaland where the age-sets of Ngimor and Ngirisae have merged completely - even after *asapan* no separation into different age-sets of Ngimor and Ngirisae takes place any more. The notion of fathers and sons alternately belonging to Ngimor or Ngirisae is upheld however. Each of the consecutive age-sets contains members both of the Ngimor and of the Ngirisae group. Here, the generation-set system is changing into an age-set system with a moiety aspect (a purely formal dualistic division into Ngimor and Ngirisae - the situation described by Gulliver). An intermediate stage can sometimes also be detected where the age-sets are still separated, but with some Ngirisae incorporated into a proper Ngimor age-set and vice versa. An extract from the Turkana age-set lists (Appendix 7) may serve to exemplify this: Table 11 (next page) shows how the merging of age-sets took place in different parts of Turkanaland at different times. We have seen above how the impact of change (- illegitimate Ngiputiro, confiscation of animals and general political pressure) on the Turkana generation-set system was strongest in the south and gradually less marked towards north. In accordance with this, the merging of age-sets happened first in the south. Ngisetou is the most southern of the sections in Table 11 (see Map 5), and here the merging of age-sets took place first, around 1960, followed, moving a little northwards, by Ngibocceros (ca. 1970), and then Ngimonia (ca. 1980), while in the most northern section of Ngikwatela the merging has not yet taken place.

	NGISETOU (southern)		NGIBOCEROS	
year	Ngimor	Ngirisae	Ngimor	Ngirisae
1940	Ngimeritula	-	Ngikwalim	-
1950	*Ngisilimong	*Ngicipita	Ngimerimesek	*Ngikwakora
1960	Ngikwamakat		Ngimerimong	*Ngilingakori
1970	Ngijimae		Ngikwacaat	
1980	Nginyangalemo		Ngilukumong	

	NGIMONIA		NGIKWATELA	
year	Ngimor	Ngirisae	Ngimor	Ngirisae
1940	Ngicumatak	-	Ngicumatak	-
1950	?	Nginyangamong	Ngimeripus	Nginyangamong
1960	Ngicumangorok	Ngisurain	Ngicumangorok	Nakawoton
1970	Ngingolekuruk	Ngikoporea	Ngingolekuruk	Ngikoporea
1980	Ngibelianga		Ngimampae	Ngibelianga

Legend:
year = first year of initiation (ca.)
NGISETOU, etc. = territorial section
Ngimor = Ngimor (II)
Ngirisae = Ngirisae (II)
‡ = Ngimor age-set with some Ngirisae attached, or Ngirisae age-set with some Ngimor attached

Table 11 Merging of Turkana Ngimor/Ngirisae age-sets

Summary. With the information available at this point, the present state of the Turkana generation-set system can be described in its main points as follows:

Every male Turkana is either Emorut (pl. Ngimor) or Erisait (pl. Ngirisae). Ngimor (mountains) and Ngirisae (leopards) may be called, following Gulliver (1958), alternations - this is an "etic" (analytical, non-Turkana) term. Everybody is a member of the opposite alternation to that of his father. At any one time both "old" and "young" Ngimor exist, where the old are grandfathers of the young. The same applies for Ngirisae. Old Ngimor, young Ngimor, old Ngirisae and young Ngirisae may be called generation-sets (GS) - again an etic term. In addition, some GS have a unique specific name which distinguishes them from both previous and future GS of the same alternation. In spite of the recurring names of the alternations, it cannot be inferred that Turkana assume their GSS to be a cyclical system - hence the existence of specific names - and no symbolic identification is made between grandfathers and grandsons, despite their being the same alternation.

Why Turkana, Jie (see above) and others have developed a system of alternating names for generation-sets, is still not well understood and cannot be discussed here. The Turkana assign to each of the two alternations different notions and attributes, as follows:

	Ngimor		**Ngirisae**
-	Left	-	Right
-	Mountains. Associations are derived from this: Ngimor are settled and peaceful.	-	Leopards. Associations are derived from this: Ngirisae are mobile and aggressive.
-	Non-aggressive animals (such as giraffes (Ngikorio), the Jie equivalent to Ngimor)	-	Aggressive animals (including elephants (Ngitome), the Jie equivalent to Ngirisae)
-	Black animals	-	Brown animals
-	Black ostrich feathers	-	Brown ostrich feathers
	(White ostrich feathers are for both alternations.)		
-	White and black metal	-	Yellow and red metal
-	Different parts of the meat of an animal (see ch.4.4.2)		

At present, three generation-sets exist:

Ngirisae (also called Ngirisae luapolok - old Ngirisae)
Ngimor (also called Ngimampolea or Ngisali)
Ngirisae (also called Ngirisae lucicik - young Ngirisae)

The old Ngirisae are extinct in the north, and in the eastern part of central Turkanaland only a few remain. A fourth generation, which will again be called Ngimor, is just coming into existence but does not yet play a role in the context of the GSS as its members are still very young.

Within the limits of a family or an adakar (neighbourhood), it is quite clear who is an old and who a young Emorut or Erisait. But on the broader level of society, distinctions between members of the older and younger parts of an alternation are not as clear-cut. One reason for this is the fact that through birth of illegitimate sons the overlap in ages between generation-sets has increased considerably, to the extent that even alternating GS overlap in the age of their members (see Fig.23, e.g. "time 1990").

Each group of Ngimor or Ngirisae is divided into age-sets called *nganaketa* (pl. of *anaket*, literally "suckling group", i.e. all those who suckled together at their mothers' breasts). An *anaket* starts life as a rather informal group of boys of approximately the same age growing up together. The group takes or is given a nickname. Sometimes certain areas take a lead in creating new names, and others follow them, or names of different adjacent areas merge (c.f. Gulliver 1958:905ff.). When its members are initiated, an *anaket* comes to be officially recognized, and henceforth may be called an age-set. Through initiation, a man becomes a true member of his age-set, and he remains in his *anaket* for the rest of his life. Sometimes the name of an *anaket* may change when its members are initiated. It may also happen that young men attach themselves informally to some *anaket* which they then break with at initiation in order to become members of their 'proper' age-set.

A recent development in most parts of Turkanaland (except for the north), has been the merging of Ngimor and Ngirisae age-sets, so that only one consecutive line of age-sets remains, and each AS includes both members of Ngimor and of Ngirisae.[44]

Not all the members of one age-set are initiated at the same time and place. Initiation is called *asapan*, and the group of men who are initiated at the same time and place are called an *asapanu* (pl. *ngasapanisia*). Age-sets are composed of several initiation groups, and each AS covers a time span of approximately 7 to 10 (nearer to 10) years. The initiation of certain individuals may be delayed by complicated seniority rules or for other reasons, resulting in their being initiated together with members of a different age-set.

Whereas in the past initiations were held at a few exclusive initiation centres and the whole system of age-sets was highly co-ordinated throughout the country, nowadays initiations take place and age-sets form on a rather small, area basis. But the notion still persists that AS names should be the same throughout Turkanaland, and an alignment of AS names can still often be found (c.f. Gulliver 1958:905ff.). Today, Ngimor and Ngirisae have their initiations parallel to one another.

A group of men gathered together for a common undertaking, be it dancing or a raid, is called *asepic* (pl. *ngasepico*). An *asepic* may be, but is not necessarily, an age-set. If the issue at hand is a raiding expedition or war, the group may also be called *ajore* (pl. *ngajorea*), a warrior group. Raids are sometimes carried out by age-sets, and thus *ajore* may also be a synonym for *anaket*, age-set.

There are no analytical categories (neither among Toposa nor Turkana) allowing for the precise differentiation between age-sets and generation-sets. *Asapanu* denominates an initiation group, and *anaket* may denote an age-set, a sub-group of an age-set (thus sometimes also an initiation group), or a generation-set, depending on the context.

A Turkana asked about his *anaket*, will invariably first mention his alternation (Emorut or Erisait - Toposa do the same: they first give their GS). With young men it is often difficult to ascertain their GS, i.e. whether they are 'old' or 'young' Ngirisae. This reflects the Turkana generation- set system's tendency to change into an age-set system with a moiety aspect, and is caused by an increasing overlap in ages between alternating GS (see above). The old men, however, are still aware of the GS, and will, for example, distinguish between old and young Ngirisae, should they need to.

A hierarchy exists between the Ngimor and Ngirisae GS and also within each generation-set. At any one time, one GS is the most senior (since the people know who are the fathers of whom), and its oldest AS with living members are the elders equipped with the highest ritual authority, which also provides them with influence in other spheres. In day- to-day affairs, however, elders of both Ngimor and Ngirisae have the same authority, and they sit together in akiriket (meat feast).

> In principle, no superiority is attached permanently to either alternation. Statements suggesting this which are to be found in the literature (e.g. Gulliver 1958, Bernardi 1952) are a generalisation from the current situation where either a Ngimor or a Ngirisae generation-set temporarily hold the highest ritual authority.

In its present structure, the Turkana generation-set system has lost much of its collective aspect, e.g. the significance of collective ceremonies has diminished, especially among younger people and in areas where the GSS has lost much of its importance (in the settlements, for example). But even here, an order of seniority still often has to be established, at an *akiriket* or when an ethnographer distributes tobacco, for example. Then the traditional order of seniority (rank of the individual's GS, rank of his AS inside the GS, the individual's status inside his own AS) is replaced by the order of the men's initiation. Whoever was first initiated, is taken as being of higher status. For reasons explained above, this does not necessarily correspond with the traditional order of seniority. In many parts of the country, however, especially in the far south-east, in the west and the north, the Turkana generation-set system still functions in a comparatively 'traditional' way and is quite 'alive' in the way described in chapter 4.4.2.

4.6. SYSTEMS COMPARED

A comparison of the Toposa and Turkana generation-set systems is primarily of value because, stemming from the same origin, it can be assumed that the basic structure of their systems was identical when they both entered their present homelands. As GSS are stable institutions without built-in break-down tendencies, the present differences in shape between the Toposa and Turkana generation-set systems can be related to the specific conditions of their respective societies.

The environmental conditions in the Toposa area are more favourable than in Turkanaland. The average precipitation is higher, and the Toposa economy is based to a greater extent on agriculture. A considerable proportion of Toposa settlements is clustered in the fertile areas along rivers, while Turkana homesteads have to be more mobile. The Toposa have social centres whereas Turkana society is more atomised. In contrast to the Turkana, the Toposa have a ritual centre, the sacred stone.

Politically, the influence from outside was far greater in the Turkana area. The experience of British colonisation presented a severe threat to the Turkana economy and social system in the form of massive livestock confiscation. Government administration did, and still does, play a more important role in Turkana District than in Toposaland.

These factors have lead to general differences in the shape of the Toposa and Turkana societies:
- The Toposa society is allowed to rely to a greater extent on its own traditional modes of organisation, and institutions like the generation-set system play a more important role than among the Turkana.
- The cohesion of Toposa society is greater, while Turkana lifestyle is more individualistic.
- Due to their relatively stable settlement patterns, Toposa are less able to evade frictions and conflicts by individual migration. Thus the internal potential for conflict is higher in Toposa than in Turkana society.
- More so than the Toposa, Turkana society has been goaded into change through the experience of drought and the establishment of external political authority.

All these points are substantiated in different parts of the study, the most important point of which was to show some of the dynamics of generation-set systems and uncover some of the mechanisms, internal or external, which may cause change.

The Toposa GSS has been altered relatively little, and even this would be reversible should the Toposa decide to return the system to its original state. The change (division of the GSS into two generation-set lines) has been caused by internal factors, i.e. conflicts within their own society.

The Turkana GSS has undergone considerable changes, and these are not reversible from the demographic point of view. In contrast to the Toposa, the alterations in the Turkana system have not been caused by internal conflicts but by outside forces. The Ngiputiro generation-set, though forced to cope with severe friction between generation-sets whose members' ages overlap, still managed to adapt and come to terms with the problem in a reconciliatory way. How flexible generation-set systems can be is again shown by the way the GSS has adapted itself to the further challenges of colonisation and the establishment of state authority. Instead of breaking down it is altering its shape and developing into an age-set system where two alternations reflect the former division into generations.

Each GSS has not only its collective aspect, where its members feel and act as part of their group, be it the generation-set as a whole or an age-set within it. There is also always the individual aspect, where each individual tries to exploit the system's rules, constraints and possibilities to his own ends.

Even without the changes triggered by natural and political disasters, the Toposa and Turkana generation-set systems would have adapted in different directions, expressing the different weighting given to the two elements: collective/individual - in turn a result more of the long term conditions of existence of the two groups than of particular events.

The collective aspect is much stronger in the Toposa GSS. Except for *akiriket* and *asapan*, it is difficult to find any collective ceremonies (i.e. ceremonies where groups act as common entities) among the Turkana, whereas the material presented in this study points to a whole list of Toposa ceremonies where men act in groups. From the information I gathered it would seem the difference is not merely a recent development and thus related only partly to the different political circumstances. The initiation ceremony shows most clearly the different emphases placed on the collectivity and on the individual: when Toposa men are initiated, they all spear the same ox, thereby emphasizing their unity as a group; young Turkana men each bring along their own goat to spear, and although they mostly attend the ceremony in groups, it may even happen that a single man is initiated alone.

These specific differences between Toposa and Turkana generation-set systems, together with some others already mentioned in the text, may be summarised and condensed as follows:

Features of the generation-set system	Toposa	Turkana
Political importance	high	low
Ritual authority ascribed by the generation-set system	high	high
Relevance of ritual authority for political power	high	low
Relevance in day-to-day affairs	high	low
Organizational frame	territ. section	local area
Local variation	low	high
Variation from basic structure	low	high
- type of variation	GS lines	age- set system
- variation reversible	yes	no
- demographic structure affected	no	yes
- causes of variation	internal conflicts	external stress
Collective aspect	high	low
Individual aspect	medium	strong
Initiation	collective	individual

Table 12 Differences in the Toposa and Turkana generation-set system

5. CONCLUSIONS

The aim and scope of this study were summarised at the beginning, and its intention was to provide the following:

1) An ethnographic description and theoretical analysis of the Toposa and Turkana generation-set systems, which were described either inadequately or not at all in the sources available.

2) An account of the basic structural principles of generation and age-set systems (with the underlying assumption that the type of GSS from which the Toposa and Turkana ones are derived, is a basic form).

3) A description of changes in the structure of the Toposa and Turkana generation-set systems which have occurred, and an enquiry into the circumstances which triggered them.

4) A test of the thesis that generation-set systems are not rigid structures or frames but systems which are constituted by the action of the people involved.

All this has been hopefully achieved in the course of this study. It now remains to reconsider and briefly discuss the main theses as they were presented in chapter 4.3. Finally, some of the issues raised along the way which are interesting in the general context of generation-set theory, shall be outlined. The reader who is an expert in the field of generation and age-set systems, will doubtlessly find much missing that is of interest and importance, but he or she is reminded that this study is limited to a particular aspect within a whole range of questions: the dynamic character of generation-set systems.

5.1. THESES RECONSIDERED

In chapter 4.3, 9 theses were listed, which had been developed early in the compilation of this study. Now, with the necessary material at hand, their value for GSS of the Toposa/Turkana-type can be examined.

(1) Generation-set systems are stable institutions from the demographic point of view. They do not break down or change as a result of built-in demographic malfunctions.

Thesis 1 is the starting point for this study. Its validity has been demonstrated in ch.4.2.3. For more details, see Müller (1985, 1986).

(2) Generation-set systems are flexible and dynamic. Changes in a generation-set system are brought about by the actors, in a reaction to forces internal or external to the society.

For the two societies in question, the flexibility and dynamism of their generation-set systems is evident. This may be partly related to the fact that the time span of the age-sets and generation-sets is not pre- scribed by fixed rules. Without rules such as these external to the system, this type of GSS operates by its own internal logic and reflects, at any point in time, the present state of the society concerned.

Generation-set systems with fixed time intervals (like gada systems), are much less flexible than the ones described here. It may be of some value to investigate why these systems have introduced rigid structures and what their functions are.

The second part of thesis (2) has been exemplified in both ways: the Toposa changed their system because of internal quarrels, and the Turkana have changed theirs as a result of external stress in the form of drought and political change. In both cases it was not the 'system' which changed mechanically or by itself but was the result of deliberate decisions by the people concerned. The Nguwana consciously caused a division in their generation and then maintained it in their sons'. The Ngiputiro did the opposite: they decided that the two parts of the same generation which had been separated by an aberration of the system should 'sit together' and be equipped with equal rights as far as possible. The present tendency within the Turkana GSS leading it to develop into an age-set system must be seen as a long-term result of the Ngiputiro decision, reinforced by recent events.

(3) Generation-set systems are linked to the kinship system. Disruption of the kinship system affects the generation-set system.

This has been shown for the Turkana by the 'Ngiputiro case' and the disruption caused by British intervention. In both cases, heavy loss of animals caused a temporary breakdown in the legal marriage system as bridewealth was unavailable. As a result, illegitimate sons were born who were then incorporated into the "wrong" generation-set (wrong from the biological point of view), and this increased the overlap between GS with the results described in this study. (Actually, it is not a disruption of the kinship system as such but of the filiation system which affects the GSS.)

One may ask why the Turkana did not change the rule which requires illegitimate sons to be incorporated into the "wrong" GS (or why they did not lower the average bridewealth size). Probably this is due to the fact that the results were only felt later, when these 'illegitimates' were in old age. Nowadays, in settlements, where marriages without bridewealth are the rule rather than the exception, illegitimate children are indeed seen as children of their physical fathers, and their status in the GSS (if the GSS actually has any meaning in the particular settlement) is derived from this.

(4) The degree to which generation-sets and age-sets can be conceptually separated depends on the level on which they are analysed.

It has been shown that generation-sets and age-sets can be separated on a theoretical level but not in the empirical context. On the level of the *adakar* (neighbourhood), GS and AS cannot be separated. At certain times, when a new generation-set comes into existence, GS and AS are the same. On the general level of society, however, the role played by age-sets tends to be more important on an individual, day to day level and that of the generation-sets on a superstructural level. Thus here the two may be taken as different structural elements.

(5) Generation-set systems are effective both on a collective and an individual level.

The Toposa GSS is much stronger with regard to the collective aspect (see ch.4.4.2). It is reasonable to expect that when a GSS loses much of its political significance in a society, its emphasis will shift towards the individual level; that it will lose importance as regards collective ceremonies and ritual but increasingly be used by individual men as a means of private support and as a tool for achieving their own interests. This is what has happened in the case of the Turkana where the individual aspect has become much more prominent.

(6) Generation-set systems are not purely conceptual systems: they are systems of action.

It is generally acknowledged in the various publications on the subject that generation- and age-sets ascribe status to groups and individuals (see ch.4.2.5). It should be mentioned here, however, that often status and prestige, even within the frame of a GSS, are not automatically ascribed but must,

under certain circumstances, be fought for. Examples for this might be the transmission of power as it is described for the Toposa or Losike's fight for asapan leadership in Kading. Furthermore it has been shown that even the present layout of generation-set systems is itself the result of decisions made by the people involved: see the deliberate changes of the Toposa and Turkana generation-set systems described in the text.

(7) Generation-set systems are able to control conflicts between groups and individuals, and they are shaped by these conflicts.

The first claim is generally accepted in the relevant literature. Conflict is often produced by heavy-handed application of the seniority principle, by the old over- zealously exerting pressure on the young. On the one hand, the GSS offers a means of implementing seniority, but on the other hand, the young also have ways of resisting when backed up with the strong solidarity of their age-mates, also a feature of the GSS. Thus GSS are instruments for the execution of power yet at the same time they limit its abuse. The second point also became clear in this study: the very structure of the GSS reflects conflicts within the society. The formation and breakaway of age-sets is one example; another is the way in which the Toposa GSS divided into two generation-set lines as a result of internal conflict.

(8) Generation-set systems produce conflict between age-mates belonging to adjacent generations, and the dynamics of such systems is partly based on this conflict.

Study of the socio-demography of GSS, i.e. analysis of the composition of age and generation-sets, shows that age-sets in consecutive generations exist whose members share the same age. One of these will be equipped with greater authority based on its membership of the senior generation- set. We have seen the problems which arise between two such groups when the issue at hand is the succession of power, and it also became clear that the point at which the succession takes place is itself decided by this conflict. We can assume that, even before this, conflict will exist between age-sets of the same age belonging to different generations. More research on this subject is required, however.

(9) Generation-set systems are a means of limiting and decentralising power.

Beyond the limitations on power referred to in Thesis 8, power in GSS is decentralised by definition. It is distributed evenly among the elders of each small area. Between areas there exists competition rather than a tendency to produce a common leader. If leading political figures do emerge, it is only on a temporary basis, and an outstanding position in the GSS, although this can be helpful, is not necessarily a major criterion for this. The leaders of Turkana resistance at the beginning of this century were diviners who took advantage of the GSS as a structure within which to work; but they failed to stabilise their position in the long-term, because they had no way of legitimising their power (e.g. the Turkana diviners have no genealogies comparable to the laibon of the Maasai).

5.2. IMPLICATIONS FOR THE THEORY OF GENERATION-SET SYSTEMS

(Generations and generation-sets - Basic principles - Demographic and structural background - Changes and processes - The balance of power)

To conclude this study, some points of general interest for the theory of generation- and age-set systems shall be summarised; in one way or another, they have already been raised in different parts of the text and thus the following is partly a repetition and systematic résumé of conclusions already drawn above.

Generations and generation-sets. It has been shown in chapter 4.2.1, and cannot be emphasised enough, that in societies structured around generation-sets, the concept of generation is not necessarily one of equal age. Basic constituent factors of all generation-set systems are (1) that there is always a considerable spread of ages within each generation-set and (2) that consecutive generation-sets overlap in the age of their members.

Although the division of a society into generation-sets is based on the biological father-son relationship, this principle is not followed in every case. It is always the *pater* (social father), not the genitor (physical father) who counts. Among Toposa and Turkana this man may be - as often the case with illegitimate children - the physical grandfather. Likewise children born in levirate are by definition not children of their physical father but of their deceased *pater*. Under normal circumstances, these factors do not play a particularly important role, and generation-sets are virtually equivalent to physical generations. But there may be occasions when the "biological" succession of generation-sets is severely disturbed by factors outside the generation-set system. The Turkana "illegitimate sons" are an example for this. Other changes of the generation-set system, like the division into generation-set lines, do not affect biological succession, because inside each generation-set line the original principle is maintained.

The question may be raised whether succession of generation-sets is connected with a change in the society's values, notions etc. Mannheim has denied this is the case for western societies where no demarcations between generations exist and succession of generations is a continuous process. In generation-set systems, boundaries between generations are precisely demarcated. Generations follow each other at a distance of approximately 50 years, in the case of Toposa, Turkana, Samburu and others, and each new generation may indeed bring with it new habits, notions and values. I have found some indications for this among the Toposa; in general, little material is available on this topic, and more research on it would be desirable. The long generation distance of 50 years may be one reason for the relative conservatism of these societies.

Basic principles. Generation-set systems of the Toposa/Turkana type (and others probably also) are based on the following principles:

1) Every man is a member of the generation-set which follows the one of his father.
2) Generation-sets are sub-divided into age-sets.
3) Generation-sets are ranked according to their genealogical level (fathers, sons, etc.).
4) Age-sets are ranked according to the average age of their members.

With regard to initiation, the following principles are applied:

5) Men are initiated by their fathers.
6) Only members of a leading generation-set have the ritual authority to initiate their sons. (In the case of the Turkana there are two "leading" generation-sets at the same time.)
7) A generation-set must have finished its own initiations before it may begin initiating its sons.

It has been argued by Gulliver (1963a) and Tornay (1986a) that initiation is only the ritual confirmation of a change of status already achieved by the individual.[1] As a matter of fact, young Toposa and Turkana men 'initiate themselves' informally by spearing their first animal. In the same way, the generation-set system confirms and uses ordering principles which exist prior to itself: generation-sets are based on the natural succession of generations, and age-sets are based on the formal recognition of existing cliques, i.e. bands of youths of approximately the same age.

In other words: **The generation-set system in its basic form does not impose arbitrary rules on people but adapts itself to circumstances already given.** The agents in these processes are of course the people who constitute the system by their actions.

On the basis of the material laid out in this study, an assumption must be rejected which has often been made (e.g. by Huntingford 1968, Legesse 1973, Stewart 1977). Generation-set systems are not distorted age-set systems, nor are they age-set systems with a generational rule which was tacked on at a later stage. The Turkana example shows, how the generational principle can lose weight in favour of the age principle. This shows that the development from a generation-set system into an age-set system is possible. I cannot, however, imagine any sequence of events which could turn a pure age-set system into a generation-set system. Furthermore I would suggest examining whether the relevance of the generational aspect has not been underestimated in some of the descriptions of East African age-set systems.

Demographic and structural background. It has been shown that with a set of synchronic data (Patri-Filiation Curve) a diachronic simulation of a generation-set system can be performed. The main results as they apply to all generation-set systems are:[2]

1) Generation-set curves (births) are bell shaped.
2) Generation-sets overlap as regards the age of their members.
3) The overlap in age between generation-sets remains relatively stable over long periods of time. No "built-in" mechanisms producing a break-down of generation-set systems can be found (see Müller 1985,1986).
4) The distance between consecutive generations, i.e. the mean age distance between fathers and sons, has a constant value in each society. It varies according to the society's procreation habits. It is about 50 years in societies like Toposa and Turkana. This is also the "phase" of the generation-set system: the time gap between the recurrence of certain situations (e.g. the accession to power of the next GS).
5) If age-sets are an integrated part[3] of the generation-set system, then there will be age-sets in different GS whose members are of the same age.

Each generation-set has what may be termed a life course. Fig.26 is an extract from Fig.16 and illustrates the life course of the Toposa generation-set of Ngibokoi, for all members aged between 20 and 70. It can easily be seen how Ngibokoi increase in numbers, reaching a maximum (in 1860) and then decrease again. During this process, their mean age steadily increases. Fig.16 additionally shows that Ngibokoi became the leading elders in 1860 and retired in 1910.

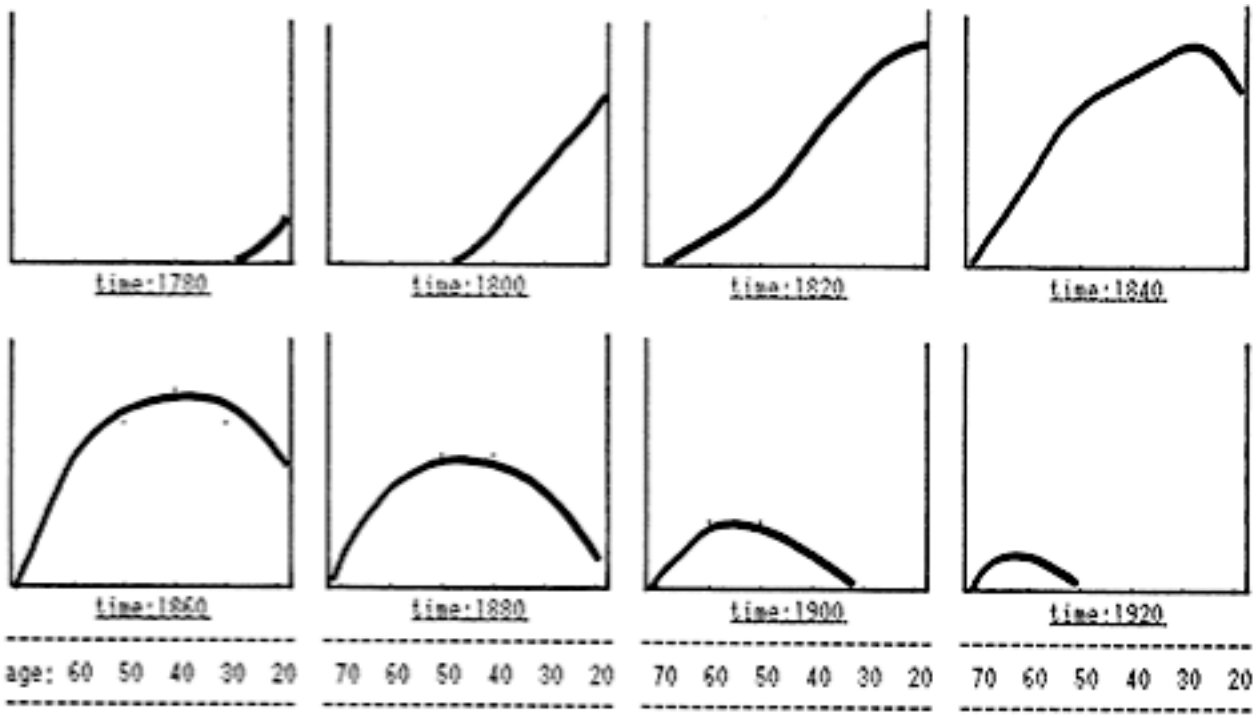


Fig. 26 "Life course" of the Ngibokoi generation-set

Fig. 26 does not show the complete life course of the Ngibokoi generation-set, as only men over 20 are displayed. Taking this into consideration and also the fact, that in 1920 the youngest men are aged 50, the complete time span of this life course adds up to 190 years.

"Life courses" of generation-sets must not be confused with life courses of individual men. A generation-set (in this example) "lives" for 190 years, and each man can participate in only a part of it.

In a more abstract way, regularities in the basic type of Toposa/Turkana generation-set system can be displayed for two consecutive generations as follows:

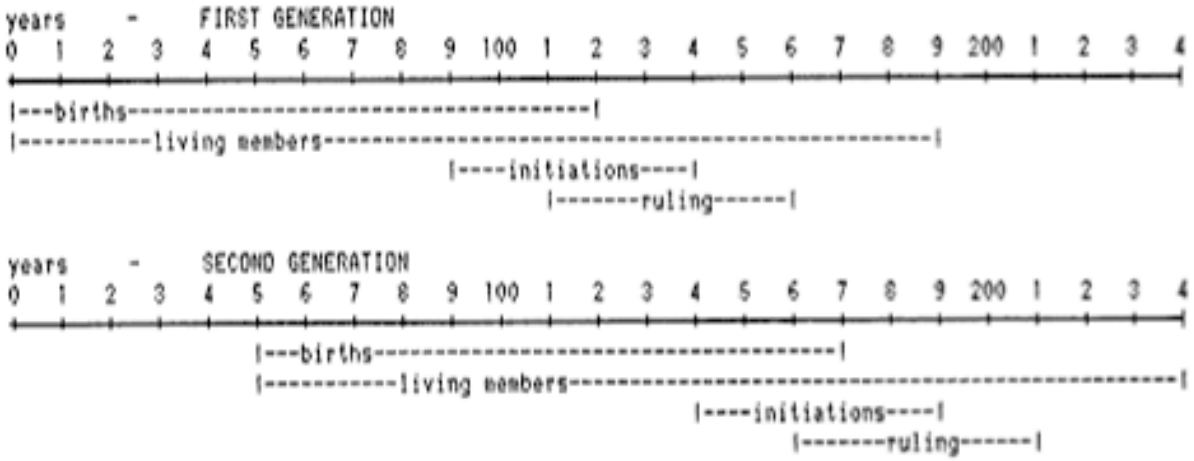


Fig. 27 Schematic sequence of events in the basic generation-set model
(initiation periods: Toposa data)

The sequences depicted in Fig.27 are ideal case ones, based on Toposa data, and deviations may occur, especially in the length and the position of the period allotted for initiation.

Changes and processes. Generation-set system of the Toposa/Turkana type are highly flexible and dynamic for several reasons:

1) They always react to, reflect and only partially control the conditions within the social system of which they are a part.
2) Generation and age-sets are formalized groups, but the processes in which they participate (e.g. discussions and the formation of opinions) are similar to those in informal groups (see Spencer 1965:183 and Homans 1950) and thus highly flexible.
3) Due to the systems' decentralized structure, opinions on certain topics may diverge locally. Individual elders always try to keep the way free for their own decisions, and the "council of elders" may thus often be a forum for not taking binding decisions (Jean Brown's paradox, for the Turkana, in Brown 1979).
4) There are no central institutions, either internal nor external, which control processes inside the generation-set system. Each actor knows only as much about the system as he is likely to need. As

there are no codified regulations concerning the system, ad hoc decisions which are "wrong", i.e. which differ from the normal procedure unknown to the actor concerned, may alter the system partially.

With the insight that it is the actors themselves who react to the given circumstances, some generally posed questions become obsolete such as the question who controls the generation-set system, and the need to find a supervising or central institution such as a specific clan or a territorial section vanishes.

The current shape of such a system can be explained as the product of four factors:

1) basic principles (such as those laid out above),
2) the structural background (e.g. the demographic situation),
3) current conditions (e.g. political or ecological), and
4) processes of action.

All four points may be inter-related. If the system changes, one or several of them must have previously changed. This insight is not merely an abstract one but of concrete value, for example, in practical research. When I learned that the Ngiputiro generation-set had changed the layout of the Turkana generation-set system, I tried to discern why. It turned out that the basic principles had not changed; eventually it became clear that current conditions (drought, in this case) had had an effect on the socio-demographic situation, which in turn led the Turkana to change the organisation of their system.

In this study, two examples of change in a generation-set system have been presented, and it has been shown why these changes came about, and how they took place.

Among the Toposa, current conditions had changed such that tensions between two groups of the male population, the older and the younger part of the Ngimor (I) generation, had become unbearable. The generation-set system offered a way of resolving this problem without affecting the society as a whole. Tensions within a group were removed by dividing it. This mechanism did not need to be invented for the purpose - it is generally used to resolve tensions: age-sets form in this way, through the younger part breaking away from the older.

In the Turkana example, current conditions had changed in a different way. Not an internal conflict but stress from without was the triggering force. Extensive loss of animals resulted in the proliferation of illegitimate children and thus in a change to the structural background of the generation-set system. The increased overlap in ages between generation-sets produced a situation where the seniority principle became over-worked: the elders faced too many equally-aged men. That it was illegitimates who ruled over legitimates only added insult to injury. This situation could not be re

solved by the system's usual mechanisms, and so the Ngiputiro consciously changed the system. The consequences of this action can still be seen today, where the Turkana generation-set is gradually changing into an age-set system.

This change is not unique; it can also be detected among the Labwor. Abrahams (1978) describes the Labwor system as an age-set system with two alternations where sons always belong to the alternation opposite to that of their fathers. The Labwor system is (as, indirectly, is also the Turkana one) adapted from the Jie. This shows that generation-set systems may lose, under certain circumstances, their generational aspect and develop into purely formal dualistic systems. It also poses the question whether other dualistic systems (see Jensen 1953) may not also be local remnants of a previous generation-set system.

The Toposa example illustrates another possible line of development in the layout of generation-set systems, which may be displayed schematically in diagram form (Fig.28, next page).

The starting point is the basic layout of a generation-set system as represented by the Toposa system in the 18th and 19th century (generation-sets A and B). The system then divides into two generation-set lines (C1/C2 etc.). We have seen how this division took place among the Toposa. But what happened once, could also have happened twice or more, splitting up the generation-set system into three or more generation-set lines.

Two generation-set lines can also be found among the Konso (Hallpike 1972), and the Dasanec provide an example of a system operating with three generation-set lines (Almagor 1978a,b). Even the *gada* system of the Boran which has always been a puzzle to social anthropologists (Legesse 1973, Baxter 1978), could be explained in these terms, as a system of five generation-set lines all inserted into each other. That this is not purely a researcher's fantasy is evidenced by the fact that the Boran themselves have the notion of generation-set lines; they call them *gogesa*. Baxter's "time worm" (1978:158) is just a different way of displaying part of Fig.28. Inside each generation-set line the first basic principle of generation-set systems (a man always belongs to the set which follows that one of his father) is maintained. Thus, astonishingly enough, even such intricate systems as the gada operate with basically the same principles as comparatively simple ones such as the Toposa - although the introduction of fixed time intervals brings the former system an additional quality which cannot be discussed here.

A comparative study of East African generation-set, age-set and dualistic systems might be able to reveal how these systems are connected, whether through common origin or cultural borrowing, or if they are just accidentally similar by structural reasons. In any case, the current layout of these systems may have involved a process whereby basic models developed into the present variety of systems.[4]

The balance of power. Generation-sets and age-sets may serve a multitude of purposes - see the list given in ch. 4.2.6. Most of these purposes, however, could also be realised by other forms of

social organisation. What seems unique in socio-political systems based around generation and age-sets in the way described here, is the way they decentralise and limit power.

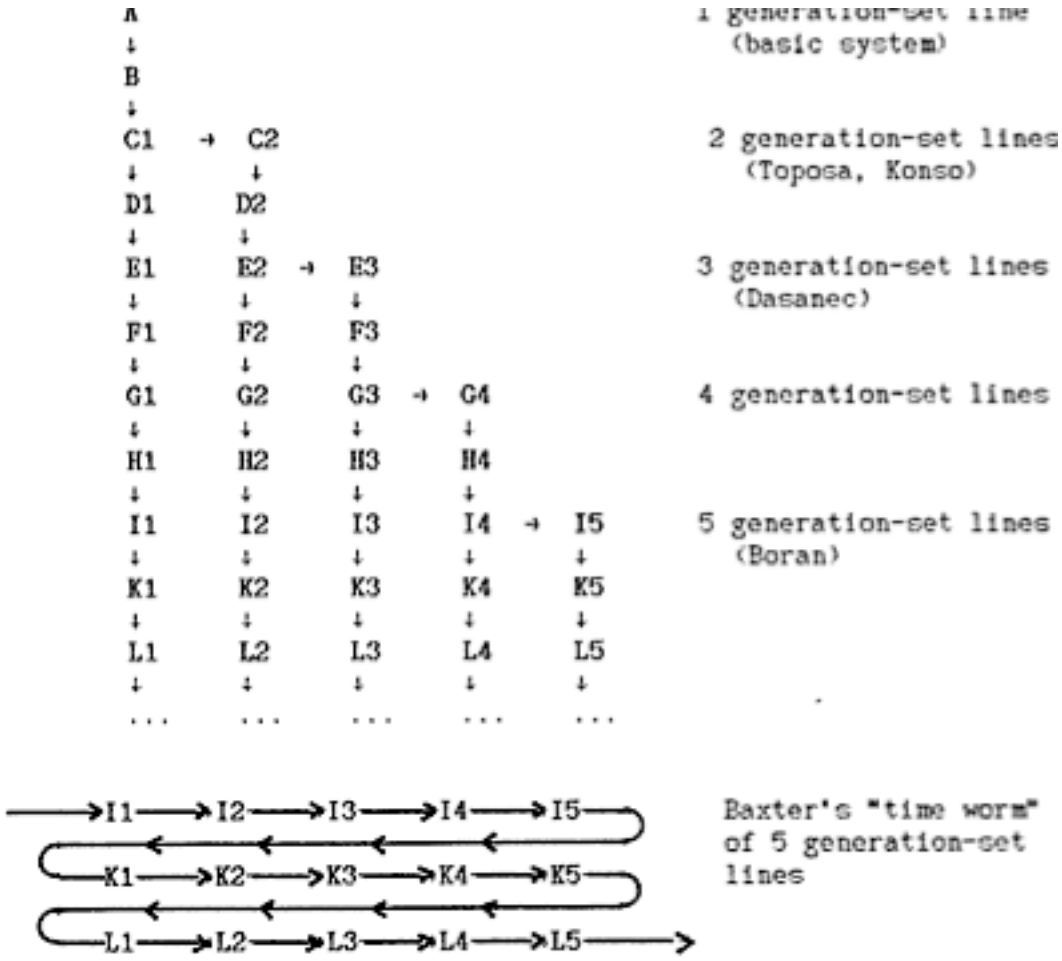


Fig. 28 Modification of generation-set systems by fission

Age-sets which on the one hand stress the seniority principle, present on the other hand junior members with a chance to resist authority by activating the solidarity of their group.

Power in these societies depends not only on a man's status in his generation or age-set. Other factors also play a role (indeed, they are sometimes even more important), such as wealth, the ability to speak, to curse, or to relate with the supernatural in other ways (e.g. divining). But these sources of power cannot limitlessly be exploited without weakening their basis. A man who curses excessively is suspect, a diviner who lacks success in his job is not respected, and animal wealth may disappear quickly enough when a severe drought or animal disease strikes. Furthermore, it seems that in societies like Toposa and Turkana, a deep distrust persists against excessive amassment of power in one area or person, and the seniority principle is always balanced by what I have termed the consensus principle.

Generation and age-set systems require no central authority; they adapt themselves to circumstances as they are. Power is distributed locally among groups of elders who may or may not co-ordinate their actions. Even between individual men of an area there is often an attempt to avoid binding decisions (see above). Neither can power be usurped forever by particular individuals or families, since status ascribed by generation and age-sets is always temporary, based on the system's shifting dynamics. In a generation-set system, the group of elders which, through superior generation-set membership, comes to occupy a position of authority, may to a certain extent be monitored or controlled by an equally aged group of elders from the next generation-set. Generation-set systems of the type described here can never produce a dictatorship; they may be called gerontocracies but the power of the gerontocrats is always controlled by the flexible and dynamic mechanisms of the system.

6. NOTES

CHAPTER 2

1) e.g. Peristiany (1951), Jensen (1954), Dyson-Hudson (1963, 1966), Stewart (1977), Spencer (1978). For an exhaustive discussion of this topic, see Müller (1985)

2) Dyson-Hudson 1963:389

3) Kertzer 1978:370

4) Baxter/Almagor 1978:4

5) op.cit.:21

CHAPTER 3

1) As there is no term for this cluster of ethnic groups which is used by the peoples themselves, any collective name must remain problematic. Various proposals have been made such as Itunga by Wright (1942), Karimojong Cluster by Gulliver (1952b), Central Paranilotes by Tucker and Bryan (1966), all of which have been rejected for various reasons by other authors. The term 'Ateker' has been introduced by Webster et al. (1973:xxi), which also includes under it the Iteso of Uganda. Webster et al. argue that, in contrast to the other terms, Ateker was accepted as a collective name by native speakers. Also Lamphear who talked of Central Paranilotes in his earlier writings has now adopted the term Ateker (cf. Lamphear (forthooming b)). The linguistic classification is 'Teso group' of 'Eastern Nilotic' (Greenberg 1966). In this study, Ateker is used in a restricted sense, excluding the Iteso.

2) Driberg 1930:36

3) From District Annual Reports: Whitehouse 1954:3, Rylands 1937:15, McKay 1938:19, 1939:14, 1940:2, Whitehouse 1954:4; Turnbull 1944:129

4) From District Annual Reports: Whitehouse 1947:7

5) From District Annual Reports: Goodbody 1949:11, Whitehouse 1950:5, Chevenix-Trench 1952:4; Whitehouse 1954:4, 1955:1, 1957:4

6) ECOSYSTEMS 85

7) Unpublished UNICEF-Report, 1982

8) Government Census, 1983

9) This mountain range is generally referred to as Moruakipi, the 'mountain of the water', but it is also said that this is only a distortion of 'Moruangipei' which means 'the mountain of Ngipei', i.e. the mountain formerly populated by the Ngipei generation-set.

10) Dyson-Hudson/McCabe 1985:2

11) Translation by Peter Muzee, my additions in brackets.

12) ECOSYSTEMS 1985, Soper 1985:12

13) Pratt/Gwynne 1977: 42, and map following p.6

14) ECOSYSTEMS 1985

15) Pratt/Gwynne 1977: 21

16) Dyson-Hudson/McCabe 1985:32f.

17) ECOSYSTEMS 1985, Table 6.1

18) ODI 1985:2

19) Gulliver 1951:39

20) Soper 1985:12

21) Dyson-Hudson/McCabe 1985:43f.

22) Soper 1985:14f.

23) Brainard 1981:75

24) King 1937:78

25) Brainard 1981:23. For further information on Turkana agriculture see: Gulliver 1951:30ff. and Soper 1985:55ff.

26) Gulliver (1951:256f.) lists 25 species, Galvin (1985:85ff.) has found 31 and Morgan (1980:49ff.) even 45.

27) Gulliver 1951:33

28) Overseas Development Institute 1985:19

29) Gulliver 1951:16

30) cf. Hogg 1986:6

31) Gulliver 1951:15

32) ECOSYSTEMS 1985:Table 8.1.

33) Lokaito 1986:60

34) Soper 1985:16

35) Leakey/Walker 1985

36) R. Dyson-Hudson/McCabe 1985:17

37) Lamphear 1976a:107

38) Lamphear n.d.

39) op. cit.

40) op. cit.

41) cf. Lamphear n.d., chs. IV,V

42) Lamphear 1976c:232

43) op.cit.: 231

44) op.cit.: 232

45) op.cit.: 232f.

46) op.cit.: 234

47) according to Lamphear n.d.

48) According to information which I gathered in 1986 (Lucio in Narus) this name is the distorted form of 'Moruangipyei' meaning 'the mountain of Ngipyei', i.e. the area where the generation-set of Ngipyei once lived.

49) Collins 1982:80

50) op.cit.:84f.

51) Gulliver 1951:60,136, Brainard 1981:213, Brown 1980:6, etc.

52) Dismas Karenga, 20.7.1986. He actually called it a 'sleeping organization'; the context reveals that he rather meant a 'standby organization'.

53) In contradiction to the officially adopted way (see below, "administrative units"), Toposa speaking of 'the Bunio people', 'the Peimong people' etc. say Ngibunio, Ngipeimong, etc. in the same way as they speak of the Ngitoposa. This applies to all section names except Ngikor where the Ngi- prefix is also included in the official spelling.

54) Information on Turkana territorial sections is based on Gulliver (1951:57), with my own additions and orthographic correc- tions.

55) ekinoit tree = Acacia senegal

56) Gulliver 1951:57, 61, etc.

57) Dyson-Hudson/McCabe 1985:66

58) Gulliver 1951:59

59) List compiled by Cyriakos Lolinga Akolong in 1982.

60) Gulliver 1951:67f. and unpublished field material by M. Dempf

61) Gulliver 1951:67

62) op.cit.:69

63) op.cit.:70, Brown 1980:6, Brainard 1981:213, Dyson-Hudson/McCabe 1985:80

64) In Bunio I was told that they had to move every 3 to 4 years for this reason.

65) cf. Gulliver 1951:200

66) I have borrowed this idea from Prof. G. Elwert.

67) It is often said that Turkana and Toposa women are only "allocated" animals by their husbands. To this must be said, first, allocation tends to convert into ownership, and second, women own animals independ- ently of their husbands. Sources are gifts by relatives, shares of bridewealth from their daughters, etc.

68) Of course not by her own physical son.

69) cf. Tornay 1979a:314, for the Nyangatom.

70) Reference is made here to Elwert (1980), who stresses the socio-political complexity in acephalous societies and the correlation between the number of political sanctions available and the extensiveness of support networks: the less sanctions are available, the more complex is the system of support networks.

71) cf. Almagor 1978a:127

72) That of the British school of social anthropology with its concepts of 'structure', 'function' and 'segmentary societies'.

73) 'Seniority' is to be distinguished from 'status', in that while the former refers to the relative rank between individuals, the latter refers to the absolute rank of an individual within the society as a whole.

74) For the Jie and the Karimojong, Gulliver (1953b:154) and N. Dyson-Hudson (1963:363), have given a different rule: first are the first-born in order of seniority of their mothers, followed by the second-born in the order of seniority of their mothers, and so on. My own information is mainly from the Turkana, and whenever I posed the question of seniority of brothers there, people insisted on the rule described in the text.

75) Gulliver (1951:182) lists the following 'qualities and opportunities for leadership and influence in Turkanaland: wealth in stock - war leadership - personality and ability - position of Senior-Man of an age-set - position of Government headmen'.

76) Based on personal communication with Fr. Bernhard Ruhnau and my own deductions; cf. Gulliver 1951:239f.

77) cf. Bailey (1965)

78) Other "democratic" principles like Spencer's (1965) "sense of respect" or Almagor's (1978c) "ethos of equality" can be subsumed under the "consensus principle".

79) This issue has been thouroughly discussed in several contributions in Fukui/Turton (eds.) 1979.

80) See Spencer 1965:xx, for the Samburu.

81) Lamphear n.d.

82) See Zambonardi 1930.

83) See AIC 1984.

84) Personal communication, Fr. Bernhard Ruhnau.

85) Sources: Primary Education Turkana District, TRDP Report, 1981; ODI 1985

86) Schwartz 1984:166)

CHAPTER 4

1) "Gesamtheit annähernd Gleichaltriger, die auf Grund der Intervalle zwischen den Geburtsschichten bestimmt wird". (Quoted from Bernsdorf 1972:272)

2) "Der Gang einer Bevölkerung mit Absterben und Erneuerung (ist) etwas Continuierliches und ohne Ein- oder Abschnitte. ... Die Generationen folgen einander nicht, wie Wachposten oder Stationen, die sich ablösen; es läßt sich niemals ein Moment bezeichnen oder denken, wo die eine aufhört und die andere beginnt." (Rümelin 1875:287)

3) "Der statistische Ausdruck für die Generation als Zeitmaß wäre die durchschnittliche Altersdifferenz zwischen Vätern und Kindern für eine gegebene Zeitperiode." (Rümelin 1875:288)

4) "Wo die Kinder eines Mannes im Alter bis zu 50 Jahren voneinander entfernt sein können, da verschieben und verschlingen sich die Generationen in einer Weise, die sich nicht mehr verfolgen läßt und zugleich kein Interesse mehr bietet." (Rümelin 1875:290)

5) Although Barrett (1983:151) gives a more elaborate list of age-grades, I was never able to detect more grades in the proper sense of the word than the four mentioned in the text. These four were the ones which I came across myself through observation and in conversation, and the same list was invariably given to me by my informants (e.g. Ekori and Akunyuk). Barrett does not state the meaning of his different age-grades, but it is evident that, at least on the male side, there are age-set names incorporated.

6) Gulliver 1951:192

7) For an analysis of systematic and non-systematic errors in this context, see Brainard (1981:6ff.).

8) I owe credit to Jean Lydall and Ivo Strecker for their assistance in finding this term.

9) c.f. Kuper 1983:61

10) c.f. also Baxter (1978:75) for the Boran, and Eisenstadt (1954:107) for the generalization.

11) Fortes/Evans-Printchard 1940:xxi

12) c.f. Eisenstadt 1954:107, Baxter/Almagor 1978:3.

13) A rich man may give the bridewealth at once; others in several instalments over a couple of years; no fixed rule for the timing of the final instalment can be given.

14) Nyakiriket literally denotes the half circle of green branches around which the men sit. It has been first described by Eriksen (1978).

15) cf. Almagor 1978c

16) Tornay (1981c) also describes this breaking away of age- sets as the common procedure among the Nyangatom.

17) cf. Tornay 1981c:164

18) A man's favourite animal is always male, and in most cases is castrated.

19) Adapted from Schröder 1978:34f.
20) The names of the six elements are:
    (1) nyabolun,
    (2) nyakinyakakin,
    (3) nyakuwangakin,
    (4) nyakuwaar,
    (5) nyakicukokin,
    (6) nyekuruk (Schröder 1978:39).
21) Donato, Sabino, Zakaria and others.
22) 9.7.1987 in Lokichokio
23) According to one of my sources the 'beating of the people' does not take place until the following day.
24) Ochre is found in the Ngikor section.
25) Tornay (1986a) has described a similar process among the Nyangatom.
26) King 1937:66
27) Sources: Lomorukai, Kinyang, Lucy Lokwale, Pauline Ekaran, others, and own observations.
28) c.f. also Dyson-Hudson (1966:170), for the Karimojong.
29) Gulliver 1958:904
30) All names connected with this event have been changed. The key can be obtained from the author.
31) c.f. Lamphear 1976a:29
32) Lamphear 1976a:36 etc.
33) Dismas Karenga, 20.7.1986, in Lokiriama
34) B. Ruhnau, 1.8.1986, and others.
35) Angatani, Eipa, Ekori, Emuria, Ewalan, Icum, Kinyang, Lomorukai, Lotoya, Nakibuel, Nakimat, Ruhnau, Tengeteng and Lamphear (1976b).
36) c.f. Gulliver 1958:902. Turkana informants normally put it this way: "He takes the side of his uncles."
37) transl. by Peter Muzee, Lokichokio 11.7.1987
38) Tengeteng, Lotoya
39) 19.7.1986 in Namorupus
40) Tengeteng, Lomorukai, Lotoya, Ekori
41) Lamphear n.d.
42) Apol is a special part of meat from the right or left side of an animal with outstanding ritual importance which has to be cut out before the rest of the animal is divided.
43) op.cit.
44) This state of the GSS - only one age-set line containing two alternations - corresponds exactly with Abraham's (1978) description of the Labwor system, which is "borrowed" from the Jie and altered in the same way as by the Turkana.

CHAPTER 5

1) "The ritual events tend to set a seal on an already achieved change" (Gulliver 1963a:46, for the Arusha), and "Les hommes s'initient eux-mµmes en sacrifiant du bétail, des ennemies. Les rites asapan ... sont pas de l'ordre de l'initiation, mais de la confirmation" (Tornay 1986a:87, for the Nyangatom).
2) For more details see chapters 4.2.3, 4.2.4, 4.5.1, 4.5.2 and Müller 1985 and 1986.
3) "Integrated part" means that each GS is divided into age- sets. This does not apply, for example, to the Boran gada system, where age-sets are de-coupled from the GS.
4) c.f. Jensen 1954:22ff.

APPENDIX 1: LIST OF TURKANA AND TOPOSA INFORMANTS

The composition of names is: Christian name (if any) - Turkana/Toposa name - name of father (if known). When an informant is mentioned in the text, only the Turkana /Toposa name is referred to. Females are marked (f.).

Location	Name	Age.ca.
Aipa	Ekaal Agulu	85
	Paul Ekori Ekidor	77
Ile/Abei	Apumure	70 (f.)
	David Ebei Napurico	36
	Charles Ekai Napua	28
	Philip Ekitela Itukon	65
	Peter Emoru Ewalan	59
	Joseph Eraman Erukon	48
	William Ere Ecuman	30
	Julius Eteba Longoripus	43
	Francis Ewoi Maria	61
	Dismas Eyenae Kebo	25
	Paolo Ligoi Ekaale	28
	Lipamoe Kiapa	30
	Timothy Locoro Lopeto	55
	Paolo Lodaan Longoripus	63
	Lokoringo Lobolia	55
	Thomas Lokoyo Awoi	26
	Lomanatamoe Loogok	61
	Marco Lowos Loyanae	26
	Peter Maide Ekusi	29
	Milton Maria Ewoi	14
	Nakoel Lonyemi	61
	John Naur Nasuron	49
	Maurice Naurien Ebongon	53
	Simon Ngasike Ateit	40
Kadekaiken	Lotoya	95
Kalapata	Akobo Naremit	50
	Ewoi Lourien	27 (f.)
	Kelai	30 (f.)
	Lokaru Erupe	50
	Lokwang	65
	Lomohong Kangira	50
	Lowoton Aremekan	70
	Nakadoki	55
	Tengeteng	50
Kalobeyei	Eiyomo Ngorokolim	75
	Ekali Erus	70
	Ekoumwa Lokiyo	70
	Yaram	65
Kalodir	Akore Karapun	35
	Lokol Kadoro	70
	Nakoki Emosing	85
	Lokorie, Ekaale, Eongor, Lomoni, Lopuen, Ewoi, Eregae, Erokode, Amode, Etak Namerio, Ekidur, Lokore, Ekal, Esunyen, Apangorit, Lokol	

Kaloitayen	Egelan Longiro	60
Kalokol	Alogeta, Christopher Esinyen, Samuel Samal, Jeremiah Ekalonon, Ecua	
Kaloteker	Arko Ponyong	65
	Simon Ekeno	35
	Kinyang Aleper	70
Kangatosa	Edukwan, Ekaal, Ekori, Epiriemong, Ewesit, Korima, Lokirion	
Kapoeta	Aurelio Lorot Lwope	55
Katilia	Thomas Camale	65
Kawokono/Lobur	Cyriakos Lolinga Akolong	40
Kopoe/Bunio	Kamilio Loparan	(60)
	Victor Lotabo	45
	Petro Lokadong	45
	Guiseppe Lokai	35
	Losebei	70
Kotela	Lopolumoe, Ekaran, Ngitome	
Kotome	Kalimapus, Esinyen, Songot, Aleper, Kapoko, Edung, Esuron, Lotiani, Edome, Lokired, Ekwam	
	Nakibuel Epuri	55
Lodwar	Jeremiah Eteri	45
	Thomas Ekamais	25
	Pauline Ekaran	23 (f.)
	Peter Muzee Tioko	28
Lokichokio	Eipa Kerio	60
	Emuria Kelae	60
	Nakiru Lokapite	57
Lokichokio (Toposa)	Mikaele Lokopir	65
	Zakaria Kuya	35
	Elia Lokidur	25
	Samuel Lokwar	50
	Lonya Lokitoe	45
	Donato Lokidur	60
	Angelo Lokuri	47
	Marko Lobae	15
	Lucia Nalema	65 (f.)
	Lucia Nakuron	40 (f.)
Lokiriama	Erea	65
	Lokali Jelinga	67
	Munyete Lowoton	65
Lokodule	Bruno Lokoto	35
Lokori	Wilson Munyeth	57
	Nagirase Lokumwole	80
	Nawuigorot Lobuiny	85
Loleapan/Riwoto	Paolo Lopim	60
	Lokalio Lomobe	25
	Peter Ngaswa	35
	Marko Lolimo	40
	Daniel Loperi	40
	Louis Lokorio	35
	Abd el Rahman Lokorolim	45
	Justin Lore	42
	Lotubongorok Lopedes	58
	Lowara Aleri	67
	Lolup, Diego Lokal	
Lopur	John Akunyuk Tioko	70
	Lokai	30

Lopuseki	Alem	55
	Icum Apalongorok	75
Lorengippi	Nakimat Eongor	65
	Nawotin Eongor	55
	Lokwang Eongor	35
Lorugumu	Paolo Cudang	62
	Ekwam Ekai	55
	Wayne Gabriel Ewalan Kaikor	70
	John Ekales Emanikor	40
	Isaac Lomorukai	66
	Lotot Kapesa	63
	Musa Ngitiang Longomo	59
Lotubae	Apalobok, Apalasil	
	Benson Emekwi Ekwam	18
	Elele Lopurokot Apeiemesek	68
Morulem	Lotit Longula	58
	Nacetan Lotion	66
Namorupus	Angatani Koker	(85)
	Immanuel Ichor Imana	45
Nawuiarengan	Eregai	72
	Lokoli	70
Oropoi	Ebenyo Ekiru, Lokome Lodyau, Paul Kuron Edapal, Rafael Ekoumwa Lokasirim	

APPENDIX 2:TRANSLATION OF GENERATION- AND AGE-SET NAMES

All names refer either to an event, an animal or the colour or shape of the horns of an animal.

A: Turkana

Abac	tribe of Ethiopia, some settled together with Turkana
Amara	Amhara (of Ethiopia)
Nakawoton	migrating people
Ngi-baamed	decorated rows of mud cap
Ngi-belakwara	broken spear (when they killed the Asapan bull)
Ngi-codo-mesekin	lame sheep
Ngi-cuma-ngorok	speared a black and white bull
Ngi-cuma-tak	speared a calf
Ngi-gerewoi	eland
Ngi-kalel	flowing watercourse
Ngi-kapeli-kora	red/white spotted he-goat
Ngi-kinyanga	crocodile
Ngi-koli-tom	white spotted elephant
Ngi-koporea	brown ostrich feathers (akipor nangora)
Ngi-kopo-tom	get hold of a gun and run away with it
Ngi-korea	giraffe
Ngi-korijam	spotted skin
Ngi-kwa-kaal	white camel
Ngi-kwa-kora	white he-goat
Ngi-kwang-ai	the Whites (when the White Men came)
Ngi-kwang-oromo	Acacia tree (white looking in dry season)
Ngi-kwan-yia	white grass
Ngi-linga-kan	bracelets at their arms
Ngi-linga-kori	white, head and chest spotted
Ngi-linga-kwa	white and red
Ngi-mam-pae	"no friend" (befriended people fought each other)
Ngi-maruko	gathering clouds
Ngi-maseth	locusts
Ngi-meri-cadae	spotted foot-bracelet (from wild cat hide)
Ngi-mri-kora	spotted he-goat
Ngi-meri-mesekin	spotted sheep
Ngi-meri-nyang	spotted yellow
Ngi-meri-rot	striped footmarks
Ngi-meri-siae	wild cat
Ngi-mor	mountains
Ngi-ngiroi	white/cloudy
Ngi-ngole-kes	bolded people ("with blaze")
Ngi-ngole-kuruk	crow with blaze
Ngi-ngole-kwan	white blaze
Ngi-ngole-mongin	bulls with blaze
Ngi-ngole-sugar	white (thorns) and Esuguru flowers
Ngi-ngole-tum	fat bull with blaze
Ngi-ngoroko	spotted black and white
Ngi-nute	did Asapan in a cool place
Ngi-nya	grass
Ngi-nyang-adung	yellow Edung tree
Ngi-nyang-akipor	yellow water pool

Ngi-nyang-alemo	yellow bull without horns
Ngi-nyanga-mong	yellow bulls
Ngi-pei	jackals
Ngi-pei-emesek	one sheep
Ngi-poroelea	flying
Ngi-putiro	wart hogs
Ngi-reng-emong	red bulls
Ngi-rioko-mor	black stone
Ngi-riono-mong	black bulls
Ngi-risae	leopards
Ngi-rorobae	"eat everything"
Ngi-rotin	paths
Ngi-rupiae	money (was introduced)
Ngi-siamae	no hairdo
Ngi-ruru	Erut tree
Ngi-suguru	Esugur plant
Ngi-suru	moskitoes
Ngi-tapeno	atapen bird

B: Toposa

Ngi-bokoi	flesh coloured
Ngi-ceke-kori	long hair, spotted (like a giraffe)
Ngi-codo-kori	lame and spotted (like a giraffe)
Ngi-comino	baboons
Ngi-cuma-bilil	speared a lame ox
Ngi-cuma-bong	speared a white ox
Ngi-cuma-kori	speared a spotted (like a giraffe) ox
Ngi-cuma-ngole	speared an ox wit a blaze
Ngi-cuma-nyang	speared a yellow ox
Ngi-dongo	"castrating"
Ngi-dopo-konyen	spots around eyes
Ngi-golei	eagles
Ngi-kaleso	ostriches
Ngi-kalingura	white face, spotted
Ngi-kapeli-nyang	yellow spotted
Ngi-ke-meri-nyang	spotted, yellow
Ngi-kidodoka	frogs
Ngi-kolipua	brown, no horns
Ngi-kori-kinei	spotted goats
Ngi-kori-mong	spotted oxen (like a giraffe)
Ngi-kori-nyang	yellow spotted (like a giraffe)
Ngi-kosowa	buffaloes
Ngi-kurwono	black
Ngi-kurwopua	"making dust"
Ngi-kwa-kinei	white goats
Ngi-lemukamu	had nyasapan in the dry season
Ngi-lemumarwas	spotted
Ngi-lemunyang	brown, no horns
Ngi-linga-nyang	half yellow, half white
Ngi-libaro	green plains
Ngi-magalibong	white horns down
Ngi-mariakot	"spill blood"

Ngi-meri-bong	white spots
Ngi-meri-kori	spotted (like a giraffe)
Ngi-meri-pus	spotted, blue
Ngi-meri-seget	black and white on shoulders
Ngi-mor	mountains
Ngi-mugeto	Tian-antelope
Ngi-ngatunyo	lions
Ngi-ngoletyang	hartebeests (?)
Ngi-ngoroko	spotted black and white
Ngi-nyanga-mong	yellow oxen
Ngi-puscuma	baboons
Ngi-pyei	wild dogs
Ngi-risae	leopards
Ngi-rwanamug	antelope species
Ngi-rwono-mong	black oxen
Ngi-rwono-tuk	black cattle
Ngi-taamo	guinea fowls
Ngi-talinga	pointed feathers
Ngi-tapa-tulia	black spots around eyes
Ngi-tome	elephants
Ngi-toro-mong	oxen, horns bent together
Ngi-tukoi	zebras
Ngi-tulia-bok	brown and white spots around eyes
Ngi-walangor	brown
Ngi-wapa-kori	spotted (like a giraffe)
Ngi-woyamor	long horns
Ngi-yita-nyang	sharp horns, yellow
Ngu-wana	naturally growing horns

APPENDIX 3: FEMALE AGE-SETS

No specific research on female age-sets was carried out during my period in the field, but I was able to record two female age-set lists just by chance. First, a Turkana female age-set list was given to me by the women of Ichor Immanuel Imana's home- stead in Namorupus (one or two names were not remembered):

Ngaelimo	(a type of tree)	age: ca. 70 years
Ngasikiria	(donkeys)	
Ngakuiono	(a type of tree)	
Ngawade	(swinging skirts)	
Ngatapeno	(a type of bird)	age: ca. 50 years
Ngakotore	(a type of bird)	
Ngabilikereta	(a type of bird)	
Ngadamadamakuja		
Ngasamal	(Somalis)	
Ngalemungkes	(short hairs)	
Ngayeriyerio	(the ones who run fast)	age: ca. 16 years

It was stated that every four to five years a new female age- set is formed: this is confirmed by the above list.

Second, a Toposa female age-set list given to me in Lokichokio by Nalema, an approximately 50 year old widow from Nacelukunyuk in the Mogos section of Toposaland:

Ngadopokori		
Ngakimea		
Ngakoritom	(spotted elephants)	
Ngawoloi		
Ngadonga	(the dancers)	
Nganguranyan		
Ngakurio	(doves)	age: ca. 50 years
Ngagolei	(eagles)	
Ngataamo	(guinea fowls)	
Ngakodolio		age: ca. 30 years

The two lists have not been cross-checked, and I do not claim any degree of accuracy or completeness. They are however enough to cast doubt upon the generally made assumption that there are no female age-sets among the Ateker.

Female age-sets have their own activities, and each age-set has its own ornaments, songs etc.
Turkana and Toposa state that married women become attached to their husbands' generation-sets, and my Turkana informants on the subject told me that at this point a woman's membership in her female age-set ceases to exist. When there is a public event, women dance in groups according to the generation-sets of their husbands. But we saw among the Toposa that these dancing groups of women were subdivided according to age, as there is a great range of ages between women within one generation-set. It would be interesting to learn whether these subdivisions by age are remants of the women's former age-sets.

APPENDIX 4: PATRI-FILIATION CURVES AND SURVIVAL RATE

The numerical values of the Patri-Filiation Curves in Fig.7 are as follows:

age of fathers at birth of sons	Fed. Rep.of Germany [%]	Toposa/ Turkana [%]
18 - 22	4	-
23 - 27	21	-
28 - 32	27	2
33 - 37	21	5
38 - 42	14	10
43 - 47	8	14
48 - 52	4	19
53 - 57	1	22
58 - 62	-	14
63 - 67	-	7
68 - 72	-	4
73 - 77	-	2
78 - 82	-	1

Values for "Federal Republic of Germany" were found in: United Nations: Demographic Yearbook 1981, p.446; the data were processed as shown in Müller 1985, p. A2.

The Toposa/Turkana Patri-Filiation Curve applied in this study is based on two data sets:

(1) 1983 Toposa census. Data were collected in the Nangoletyrae area of the Riwoto section, in 1983. The census comprised 37 households, of which 7 were selected where child procreation had obviously ceased. The selected sample contains 51 persons.

(2) 1984 Turkana census. Data were collected in a random sample during 1986 and 1987, with the assistance of Milton Maria Ewoi and Micah Etabo. The census comprised 94 households, of which 26 were selected where child procreation had obviously ceased. The selected sample contains 149 persons.

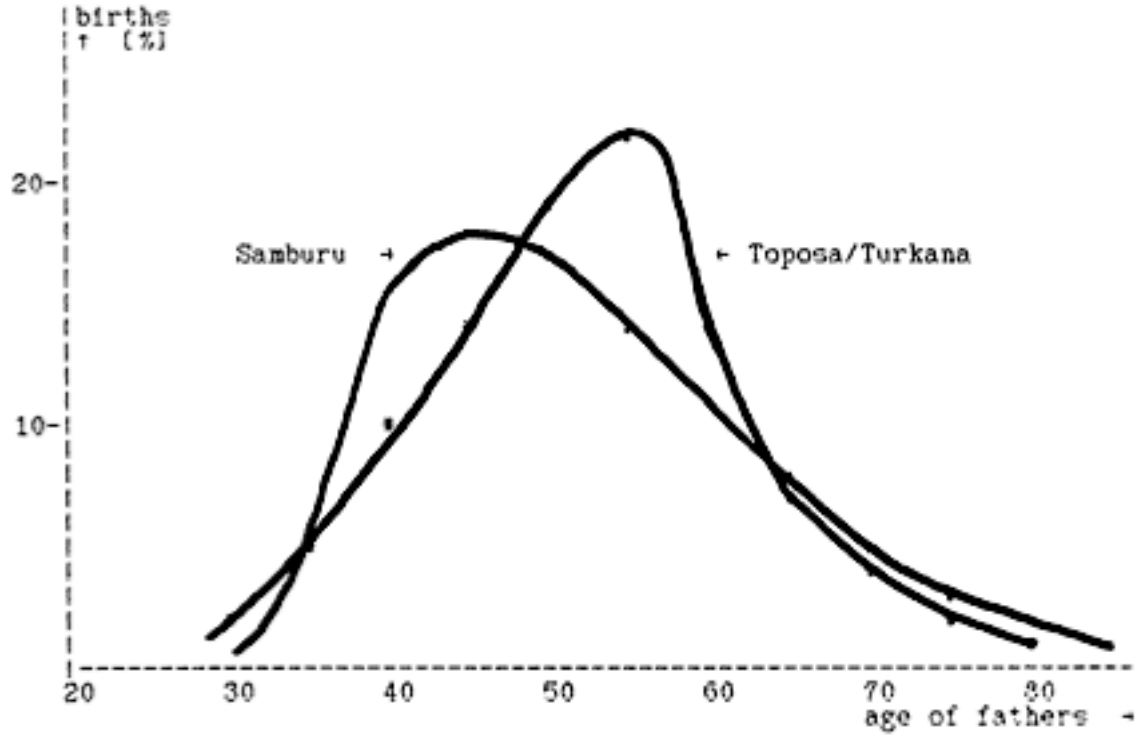
The two samples display similar filiation features and are therefore combined into a common Toposa/Turkana Patri-Filiation Curve.

My first computations in 1985 were based on Samburu data supplied by Spencer (1978:137), following his assumption that the demographic situation regarding male reproduction is similar among the Samburu and the Ateker. There is, however, a significant difference between the Samburu and the Toposa/Turkana data. In 1985, the Toposa data available seemed to be too meagre to prove this difference, but it was corroborated by the 1986/87 Turkana census.

For the Patri-Filiation Curve "Toposa/Turkana", the data were processed in the following way:

age of fathers at birth of sons	Toposa (numbers)	Turkana (numbers)	Toposa + Turkana numbers	%	Toposa + Turkana corrected [%]
28 - 32	2	7	9	5.9	2
33 - 37	2	10	12	7.8	5
38 - 42	5	13	18	11.8	10
43 - 47	9	23	22	14.4	14
48 - 52	9	18	27	17.6	19
53 - 57	10	28	38	24.8	22
58 - 62	4	10	14	9.2	14
63 - 67	3	3	6	3.9	7
68 - 72		7	7	4.6	4
73 - 77					2
78 - 82					1

The figures in the last column were corrected by graphic interpolation, an additional margin was allowed for levirate cases, and numbers were rounded off as the computer programme accepts only integers.

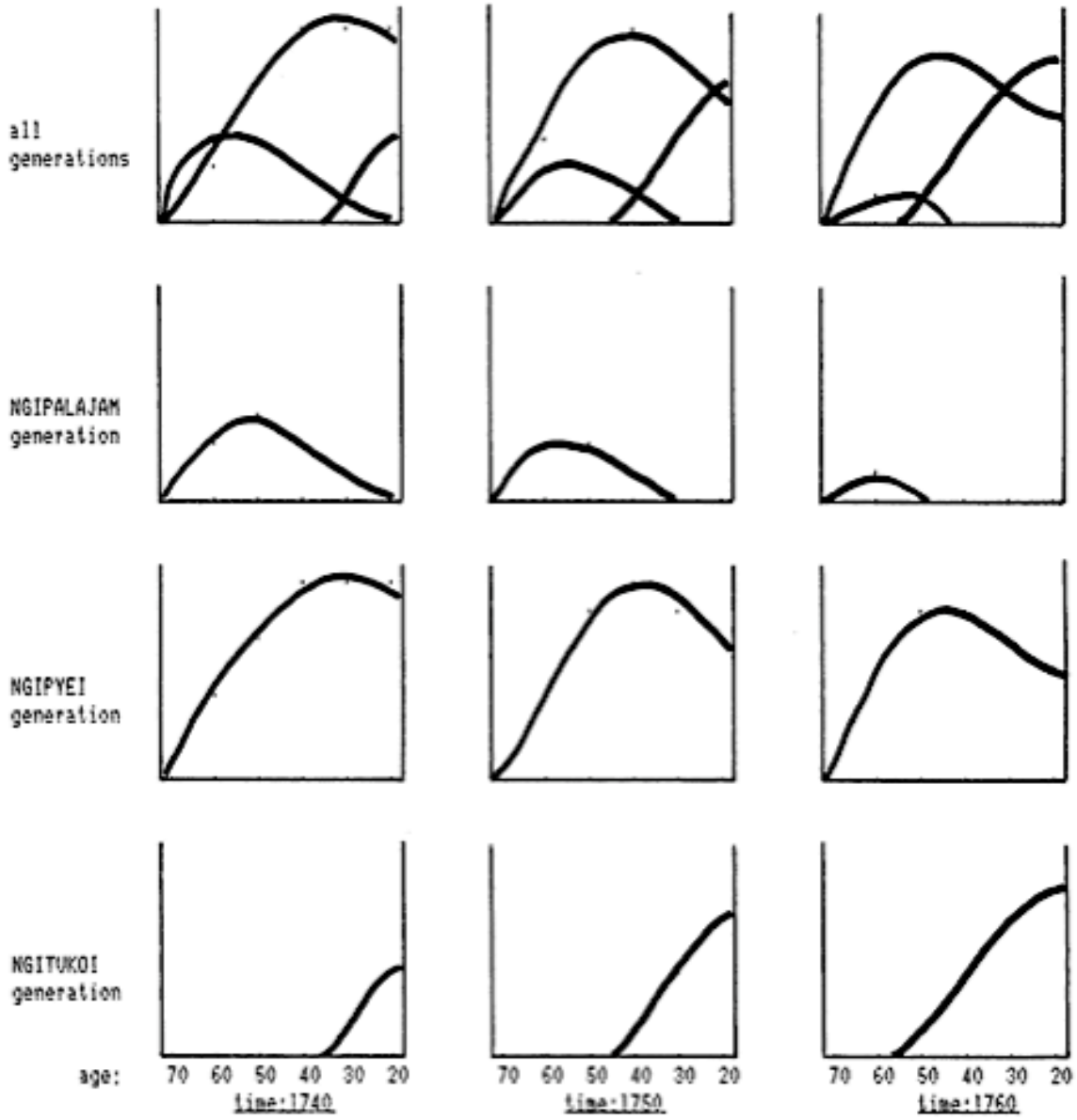


Patri-Filiation Curves: Toposa/Turkana and Samburu

As survival rates for Toposa/Turkana are not available at the moment, the rates used here have been adapted from other African data (see Müller 1985:99). The numerical values of Fig.9 are:

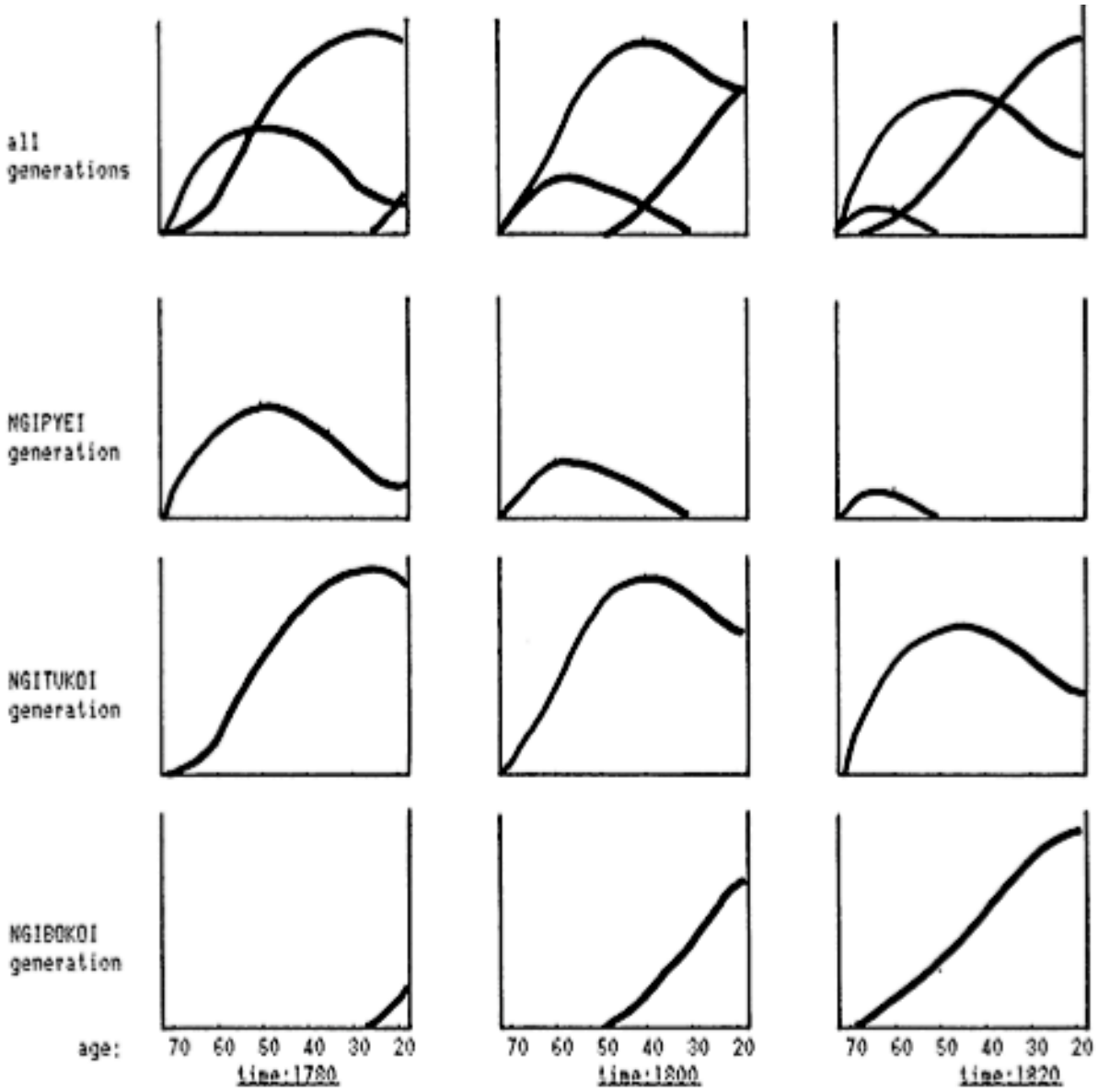
age:	0	10	20	30	40	50	60	70
survivors:	100	57	55	52	49	42	25	0

APPENDIX 5: GENERATION-SET MODEL: SPECIFIC EXAMPLES



Toposa generation sets: 1740, 1750, 1760

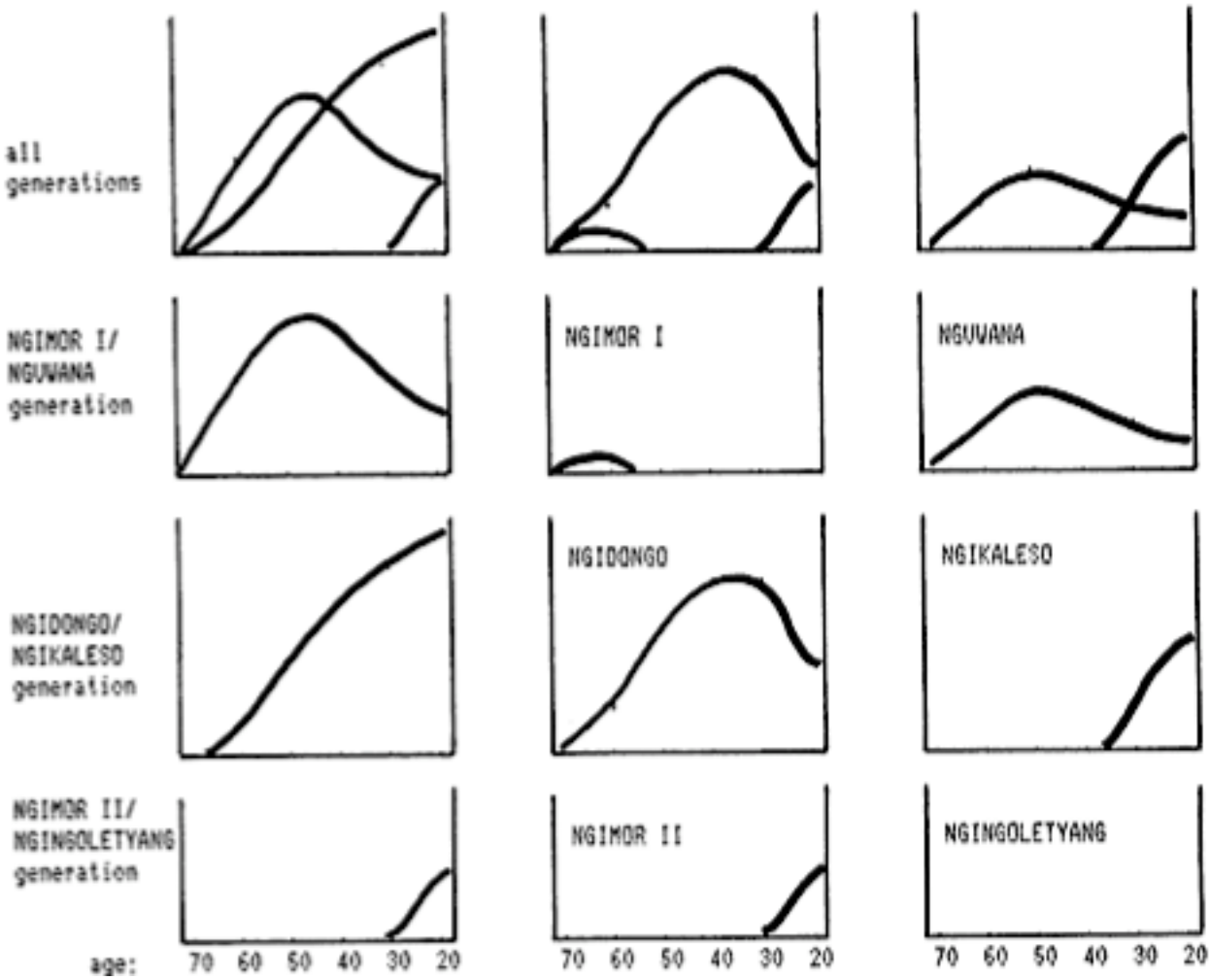
This figure shows, among other information, that Ngipyei became the leading generation-set around ca. 1750.



Toposa generation-sets: 1780, 1800, 1820

This figure shows, among other information, that Ngitukoi became the leading generation-set around ca. 1800

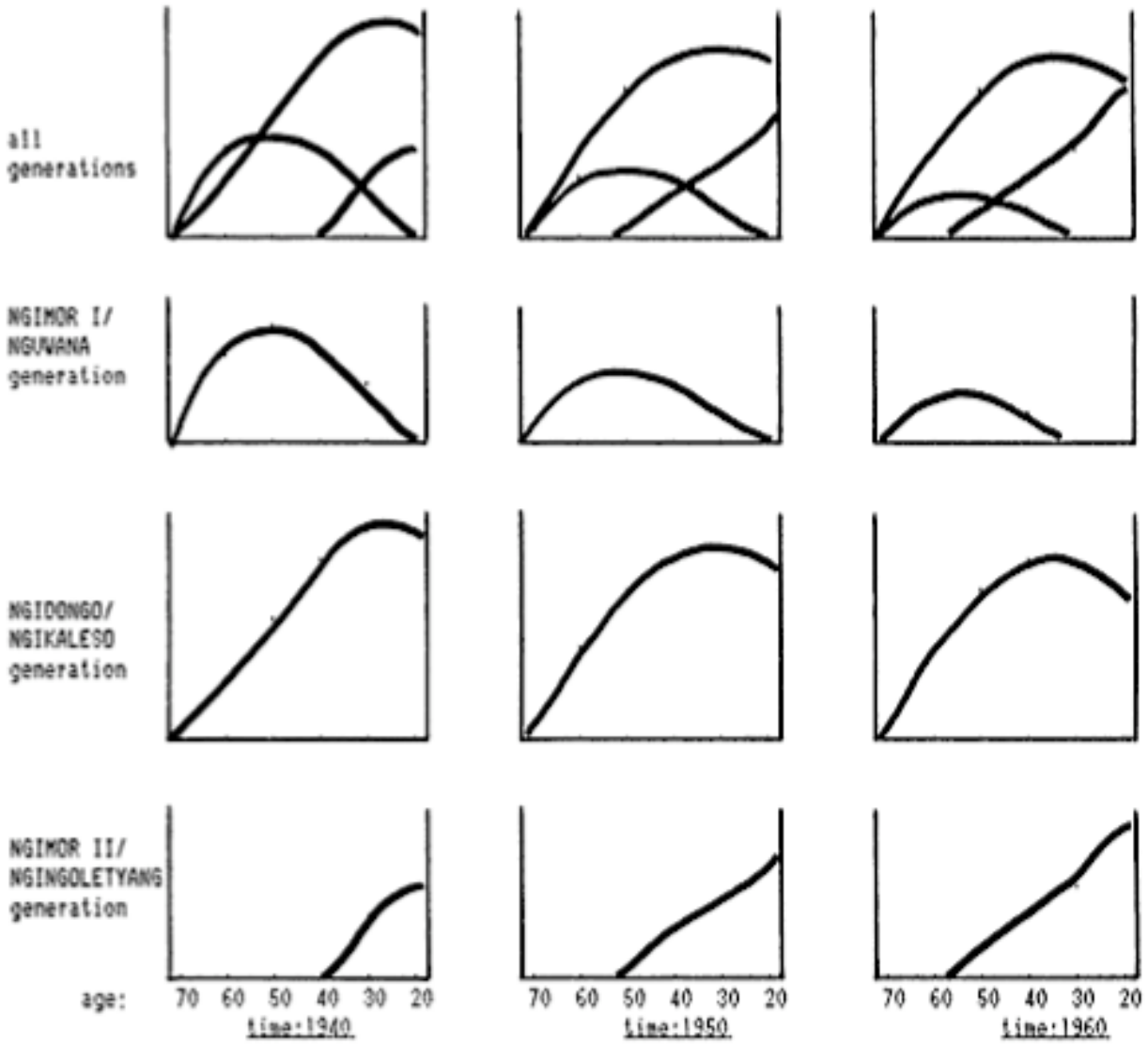
The above two figures combined show: If the assumption is true that the Toposa migration took place under the leadership of the Ngipyei generation, then this migration must have been between ca. 1760 to 1810.



Toposa generation-sets: 1930

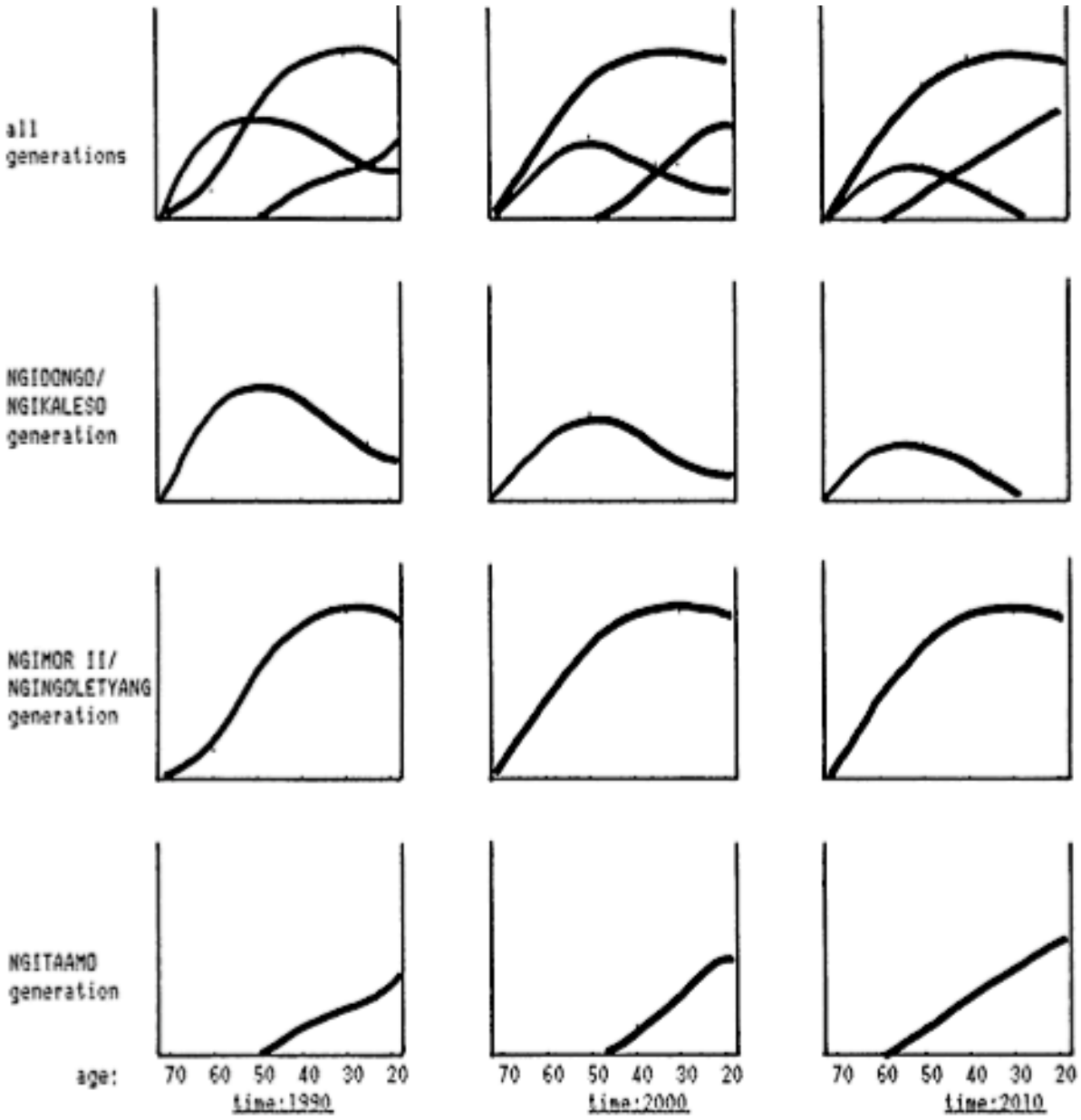
This figure shows the correspondence between computer model and King's information of 1930 (1937:70f.)

Ngimor I: "Only two or three alive in 1937."
Nguwana: "old men"
Ngidongo: "elderly men"
Ngikaleso: young men
Ngimor II: youngest men
Ngingoletyang: not yet existing



Toposa generation-sets: 1940, 1950, 1960

This figure shows that Ngidongo/Ngikaleso have become the leading generation shortly after 1950.

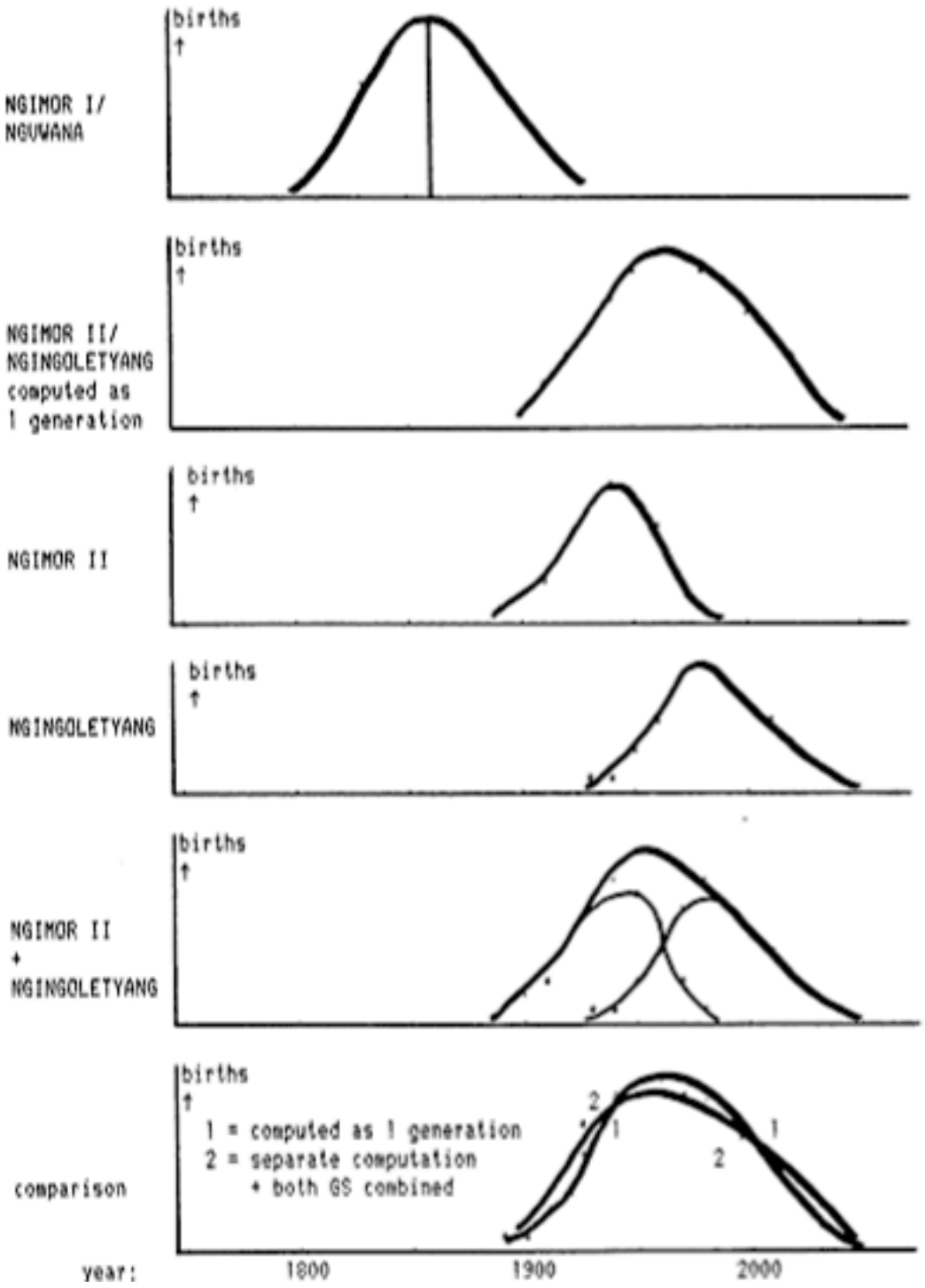


Toposa generation-sets: 1990, 2000, 2010

This figure shows:

(1) the present composition of the Toposa generation-set system (time: year 1990) and

(2) that Ngimor II /Ngingoletyang wil become the leading generation only after the year 2000.



Toposa: calculation of divided generations

This figure shows how after two generations of separation the demograpic composition of the total generation remains almost unchanged.

APPENDIX 6: TOPOSA AGE-SETS

For the age-set lists given below I do not claim a great degree of accuracy. (For reasons explained elsewhere, it is almost impossible to collect exact AS lists.)

Forgotten sets may be missing. The order of sets may not be correct. Alternative names for the same set may occur together. Names for sub-sets may also be included. (Each Toposa age-set is a collection of sub-sets which are not mentioned here.)

Older AS have a second name which they obtained at their nyasapan (initiation), derived from the colour of the animal they speared: Ngicum... = the ones who had speared ... .

Although this is normally denied, age-set names vary between sections.

Age-sets before Ngimor I are not remembered.
Ngitaamo and Ngikosowa have not yet subdivided into age- sets.

The oldest age-set is at the top of each list

Generation-Set	**Age-sets**			**Remarks**
Ngimor I	Ngigolei			list from Riwoto
	Ngiremoruk			
	Ngilibamwa			
	Ngilibaro			
	Ngidiroko			
Nguwana	Ngirwonotuk	=	Ngicumanyang	list from Riwoto
	Ngingolemok	=	Ngicumabong	
	Ngimariakot	=	Ngicumabaling	
	Ngirisae	=	Ngicumakori	
	Ngikapelnyang	=	Ngicumangole	
	Ngimagalibong	=	Ngicumabilil	
	Ngirwonomong	=	Ngilemukamu	
Ngidongo	Ngilemumarwas	=	Ngicumagum	list from Riwoto
	Ngicerebong	=	Ngicumabok	
	Ngimulekori	=	Ngicumarem	
	Ngitoromong	=	Ngicumangor	
	Ngikorimong	=	Ngicumapus	
	Nginyangamong			

Ngikaleso	Nguwalangor	= Ngicumameri	list from Riwoto
	Ngikidodoka		
	Ngilurui		
	Ngitalinga		
	Ngukurono		
	Ngimeriseget		
	Ngingoroko		
	Ngipusecuma		
	Ngiwoyasia		
	Ngikidodoka		list from Mogos
	Nguwalangor		
	Ngitalinga		
	Ngukurono		
	Ngingoroko		
	Ngimeriseget ...		
	Ngicemekeri		
	Ngituliapus		
	Ngingoramuk		
Ngimor II	Ngiwoyalem		list from Riwoto
	Ngikorokinei		
	Ngitapatulia		
	Ngikwakinei		
	Ngituliabok		
	Ngimerikori		
	Ngicekekori		
	Ngikorinyang		
	Ngimugeoto		
	Ngikorokinei		list from Mogos
	Ngitapatulia		
	Ngikwakinei		
	Ngituliabok		
	Ngiwapakori		
	Ngicekekori		
	Ngitasonyok		
Ngingoletyang	Ngingatunyo		list from Riwoto
	Ngiwoyamor		
	Ngikosowa		
	Ngikolingura		
	Ngikemerinyang		
	Ngibokongor		list from Mogos
	Ngiwoyamor		
	Ngingatunyo		
	Ngikorinyang		
	Ngikolingura		
	Ngikolipua		
	Ngikemerinyang		

APPENDIX 7: TURKANA AGE-SETS

The age-set lists given below do not claim to possess a great deal of accuracy. (For reasons explained elsewhere, it is almost impossible to collect exat AS lists.)

Forgotten names may be missing. The order of names may be wrong. Agesets may have several alternative names. Alternative names of the same set may occur together in one list.

The years given below denote the approximate date when age-sets began to initiate. These too are only tentative and become more vague the older the age-sets are.

The oldest age-set is at the top of each list.

Legend:

*	=	Age-set also contains members of the other alternation.
...	=	Age-set name is also used as a generation-set name.

section	**place where information was collected**
Ngisetou(S)	Kalodir
Ngisetou(N)	Kerio
Ngiboceros	Kangatotha, Ile
Ngisir/Ngikamatak	Kotela, Lorengippi, Namorupus
Ngimonia	Lopur
Ngikwatela	Kotome, Lokichokio

Age-sets of Nginya, Ngipyei or Ngiputiro

Nginute
Ngidokoro
Ngisuguru

Age-sets of Ngiputiro

Ngiputiro
Ngikorea
Ngikwakaal
Ngiwarewarea
Ngikinyanga
Ngirui

Age-sets of Ngimor(I)

Jahr	Ngisetou(S)	Ngisetou(N)	Ngiboceros	Ngisir	Ngimonia	Ngikatela
1800			Ngimor			
1810			Ngirionomong			
1820			Ngikwanyia			
1830		Ngikolil	Ngikalel			
1840			Ngikapelikora			
1850			Ngimases			
1860			Ngimerikora			
1870			Ngigerewoi			
1880		Ngicodomesekin Ngiporokinei	Ngicodomesekin Ngiporokinei			
1890		Nginyangadung	Nginyangadung			
1900		Ngiruru	Ngiruru	Ngiruru	Ngilingaren	
1910			Ngibelakwara	Ngibelakwara	Ngibelakwara	
1920			Ngiriokomor(?)			

Age-sets of Ngirisae(I)

Jahr	Ngisetou(S)	Ngisetou(N)	Ngiboceros	Ngisir	Ngimonia	Ngikwatela
1840			Ngikorijam			
1850			Ngitapeno			
1860		Ngikorea	Ngimerinyang			
1870			Ngikolitom	Ngikolitom		
1880		Ngikorimunyen	Ngilingakwa	Ngilingakwa	Ngilingakwa	
1890		Ngimericadae	Ngimericadae	Ngimericadae	Ngimosingo	Ngimos-
ingo						
1900		Ngimerisiae	Ngimerisiae	Ngimerisiae	Ngikwakook	Ngik-
wakook						
1910	Nginyangakipor	Nginyangakipor	Nginyangakipor	Nginyangakipor	Nginyangakipor	Nginyan-
gakipor						
1920	Ngingoletur	Ngingoletur	Ngingolesugur Ngiwarea Ngikwangae	Ngiwarea Ngikwangae		
1930	*Ngicomodei	Ngikadaakwa	-	Ngilingakori	Ngimerirot	Ngimerirot
1940	-	-	-	Ngikwakora	Ngingolepese	Ngingolep-
ese						

Age-sets of Ngimor (II)

Jahr	Ngisetou(S)	Ngisetou(N)	Ngiboreros	Ngisir	Ngimonia	Ngikwatela
1910					Ngisuru	Ngimor
1920	Ngikolimongin				Ngisali	Ngisali
1930	Ngirengemong	Ngimampolea	Ngimampolea	Ngingolemongin	Ngingoroko	Ngingoroko
1940 tak	Ngimeritula	Ngikwalim	Ngikwalim	Ngikorimongin	Ngicumatak	Ngicuma-
1950	*Ngisilimong	Ngimerimesek	Ngimerimesek	*Nigisuru		Ngimeripus
1960 gorok	*Ngikwamakat	Ngimerimong	Ngimerimong	*Ngimaruko	Ngicumangorok	Ngicuman-
1970 lekuruk	*Ngijimae	Ngikwacaat	*Ngikwacaat	*Ngisiamae	Ngingolekuruk	Ngibaamed Ngingo-
1980 pae	*Nginyangalemo	?	*Ngilukumong	*Ngikopotom	Ngibelianga	Ngimam-

waiting for asapan:

*Ngijimae		*Ngulumei	*Nginyangalemo	*Ngibelianga
*Ngimampae				
*Nginyangalemo				*Ngipeitom
*Ngingolemongin				
*Ngisumae				
*Nginyangalemo				

Age-sets of Ngirisae(II)

Jahr	Ngisetou(S)	Ngisetou(N)	Ngiboceros	Ngisir	Ngimonia	Ngikwatela
1950 gamong	*Ngicipite		*Ngikwakora		Nginyangamong	Nginyan-
1960	*Ngikwamakat	Ngilingakori	*Ngilingakori	*Ngimaruko	Ngisurain	Nakawoton Ngilinga-
kan 1970	*Ngijimae		*Ngikwacaat	*Ngisiamae		
1980 lianga	*Nginyangalemo		*Ngilukumong	*Ngikopotom	Ngikoporea Ngibelianga	Ngikoporea Ngibe-

waiting for asapan:

*Ngijimae				*Ngibelianga
*Ngimampae				
*Nginyangalemo				*Ngipeitom
*Nginpolemongin				
*Ngisumae				
*Nginyangalemo				

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SNR = Sudan Notes and Records
UJ = Uganda Journal

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