

Chapter 8

Inside-Outsiders

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Middlemen for Marble Miners

Peter sat in the front seat next to the driver of the four-wheel vehicle who diligently manoeuvred the potholes in the murrum road at a great speed. Peter turned to the back seat to explain to Marianne:

Minerals cause a lot of conflict because they have a lot of value. When I joined [the civil society organization], we were seeing latent conflict and intervened before it turned violent. The locals did not build on knowledge, just speculations. [They said things such as]: ‘This one . . . the RDC [Resident District Commissioner] . . . the CAO [Chief Administrative Officer] . . . this *mzungu* [white person] they are in with the investors. We saw him riding in a car with the investors’. We [the CSO] accessed people and explained that they have rights. You cannot lock out the investors, because we [the Karamojong] don’t have the capacity to mine these things. The investors can benefit us with roads, health centres, royalties The bad thing with investors is that they are business-minded. They give promises, but they are not concrete. When people want their rights, the investors go to the government, who put their soldiers. At the mining site, there are those barracks just to intimidate people from coming. The elders are saying: ‘Why are they intimidating us in our own land?’ If you move with soldiers, it means you are guilty . . . people get annoyed because the land belongs to the people yet the minerals belong to the government. They don’t see the logic.

Peter was a young man who had been appointed by the civil society organization (CSO) to lead the communication with miners on behalf of the civil society network in Moroto, which is the regional headquarters of Karamoja. He was meant to be the focal point for dialogue with site landowners, who also worked as artisanal miners. Peter explained that he considers himself lucky because even though he was orphaned in the armed cattle raids of the 1990s together with so many other Karamojong children, he still got a chance to go to school on a government grant. The grant meant that he did not become a 'school drop-out' but became part of the small, educated elite in Karamoja who often play the role of middlemen between the mining industry, other outside elites and local landowners.

On this dry and hot morning in 2015, Marianne had been allowed to tag along to a marble mining site with Peter. They had set off on a murram road that slithered through the landscape like the pythons after which Moroto is named. Pythons used to be here in abundance, said Peter, but as the trees and bushes decreased through the previous century, animals went away as well. It was a drought year, so the few crops in the fields had withered; mainly scrub and thorny, dry bushes grew along the way. Peter commented on how the Karamojong are used to living in an environment marked by erratic rainfall patterns. Historically, pastoralism and flexible mobility in the vast region have been the most reliable means of survival. The mining site was located in a mountain area known for its dryness. Marianne and Peter discussed how some people in town say that the locals from this area are lucky because they have the minerals and can get an income. Others say that this community is unfortunate because they are likely to lose their land in the end. The windows of the car were closed to avoid the dust blown about by the strong and playful Karamoja winds. Peter made the common joke in Karamoja that the winds are the 'Karamoja allowance' because the wind is the only blessing that the Karamojong ever gain from outside.

During the drive, Marianne asked about the use of the word *elite*, and Peter reflected:

Some [feel] guilty when you use that word. It's those ones with a business mind. They can go and manipulate their own people, buying people's land, not even following the right procedure . . . *Elite capture* has become a common phrase in meetings . . . Elite capture . . . is when you just capture something for yourself. . . . It is when the educated take advantage of communities, who are illiterate, to buy land and sell to investors. These days, people want to acquire wealth very fast in the wrong way.

The car was nearing the mining site at the foot of a mountain, and at the bottom of a small hill there was an enclave of thin trees and small simple huts for soldiers. A pole had been placed across the road, and when the car stopped, a soldier stood up from a small stool in the shade and lazily walked over to the car. Peter told

the soldier that they were here to talk to the artisanal miners about some tools they had provided them with a while ago. The soldier nodded, and the pole was removed to let the car through. Where the road bent to the left, the car passed a metal gate. It was the sole entrance to a walled compound serving as the mining company's quarters. A bit further along was a drinking place serving local brew, *ngaagwe*, for the artisanal miners. After the drinking place, a site appeared with a building under construction. It was a factory, which was becoming an increasingly difficult part of the mining story, according to Peter. Further along still, the artisanal mining site appeared, and the car stopped.

An older woman, with a colourful head scarf, came to greet Marianne and Peter. She was the chair of the artisanal miners. Marianne explained her research on the relationship between the different stakeholders in mining, and the chair replied:

The relationship with the investors is not stable. They said they only wanted the blocks [of marble], and then the small rubble was for the community to benefit from. So, we became surprised that they changed their minds and picked an interest in the small stones. . . . They put the factory without consulting the people. The factory doesn't employ local people, only a few women for cooking. Some were employed at first, but they didn't pay them Back when they first came, two years ago, they came without talking to people. We just heard the sound of the machine and found soldiers there. We were surprised. They then held a meeting with the investors and authorities at district and sub-county level and made the agreement of small stones versus the big blocks.

Peter explained that this mine was one of the few in the Karamoja region holding a full mining lease. Explorations for mining can happen without the involvement of the local community, but when they have a full mining lease, the company and authorities must involve the local community in the development of the site. However, in the case of the factory, the local stakeholders had not been involved, according to the chair, but woke up one morning surprised by the sound of machines. The artisanal miners saw the factory as an infringement of the deal they thought they had with the mining company when the company first arrived. The factory would undermine their business of breaking and selling the small stones to truck drivers, who drove the rubble to factories outside Karamoja for producing a powder used in paint and other products.

The discussion with the chair turned to focus on the relationship with the CSOs, and she explained how the organizations had taught them about their rights in land issues. She said that people from the organizations were 'our voices' (*ngiporotoi*). 'So these ones are not the elites?', Marianne interjected, and the chair responded with a laugh: 'No! They came and helped us form groups, and

they gave us tools. It's not like those ones who came and grabbed the land. The investors come to meet elites. When they come to the community [the deal] is already finished.'

When asked about the NgaKarimojong word for elite, the chair said: 'We call them *ekokolan* – thieves', which made Peter laugh. Marianne and Peter spent some time at the mining site talking to some of the artisanal miners. One of the young miners pointed out that the artisanal miners wanted to go to the training sessions and meetings about mining. They did not want other people to go and then later be trained by them. They wanted investors to talk to the miners directly rather than to go through elites and others in town. The mediators were not regarded as necessary by the artisanal miners, who believed they could speak for themselves. The discussions were good, but the soldiers at the site seemed keen to have the visitors leave sooner rather than later, so after a while Marianne and Peter thanked the people they had talked to, climbed into the car and headed back to Moroto town.

The conversation about the term 'elite' continued with other stakeholders after the visit to the mining site, and the negative connotations of the term were confirmed by many locals, who also pointed out that 'if you are seen as someone who helps the locals, you are not called an elite'. Some of the NgaKarimojong words they used for elite mean 'someone who is business minded' or 'someone who has knowledge and takes advantage of other people's lack of knowledge'. Some would simply translate elite as *ngikasiomak*, 'someone who is educated', while others translated it more negatively as *ngikaothok*, 'someone who claims to be knowing more' – that is, someone who claims to be smarter than others and benefits from it. None of the participants in the discussions self-identified with being 'business-minded elites' but 'educated elites', as they all worked for NGOs and CSOs. They did recognize how elites were often not appreciated for their efforts. A CSO employee said that elites continuously face local landowners who 'accuse everybody of conniving with the investors', while the CSO employees and other local educated people saw themselves as 'trying to help'.

A young man who had co-founded a research and advocacy organization explained that they started their work because they saw a lack of coordinated effort in regard to mining in Karamoja: 'The mining sector is still young. It will grow. And it will have to have an impact on our lives. We need to embrace it. But we need to get organized. We are not experts in mining, so we hope for training so we can pass the information to the communities.' His words confirmed those of another young advocate who had been appointed to a coordinator role amongst the CSOs working with mining: 'The CSOs have become mediators.' The young advocate explained that they had instated themselves as a necessary link between the local landowners and the powerful others to close the knowledge gap in the mining processes: 'There is a missing link. Who knows what when? The link is not there. The backdrop to it is: What the government wants with the region,

what the CSOs want with the region, what the communities want with the region, and what the local government wants with the region.’

At the mining site, this position is exactly what the young artisanal miner had opposed when he said that the artisanal miners wanted investors to talk to them directly rather than go through elites in town, and that they wanted to go to trainings themselves. The young, educated people who saw themselves as necessary mediators were not regarded as such by the artisanal miners. The young advocate was aware of these opposed positions and made it clear that they were aware of their own role and that it was not always congruent with what all locals want.

Many of the young mediators point to the traditional land authority structure and land ownership as a problem. In Karamoja, most of the land is communally held, but according to Peter the tenure is divided into two types: *communal customary* tenure, which focuses on user rights to grazing areas and access to traditional religious sites according to clan belonging. The other type is *individualized customary* tenure, where home settlements and garden ownership are more closely bound to families and household heads through the patrilineal system. Elders hold the knowledge and authority on land issues as the custodians of land. Some of the young mediators believed this way of governing and relating to the land was perceived by outsiders as ‘lacking organization’, and this led to wrangles over access to land.

The young coordinator said that the organizations were trying to harmonize the traditional system with the formal one. The modern, formal system means instating Area Land Committees, in which a number of people are assigned to discuss and deal with land issues in their areas: ‘The council of elders might be powerful in Karamoja, but it cannot omit state law’, as he pointed out. This pertains particularly to mining because while the people might own the right to use the land, it is the government that owns what lies underground. The coordinator explained that the local government representatives were working on integrating the council of elders with what he called ‘the modern system’. Marianne discussed this with an employee at an international NGO, who was affectionately called ‘conservationist’ amongst his friends because of his love of the traditional way of life in Karamoja. He said: ‘The law recognizes the customary land ownership but not the customary traditional governance system. Karamoja is facing an existential threat. . . . We’re between a rock and hard place We’re dealing away with traditional ways. The future comes with conditionality.’

With these words, he expressed the dilemma of NGOs and elites of how to secure benefits for the Karamojong people. The elites felt that they had to share information, educate, link up various stakeholders and organize and harmonize traditional with modern systems, and in the process, they were ‘dealing away with traditional ways’. The ‘conservationist’ was educated and had never been a pastoralist himself, so he and other educated Karamojong were often called

arieng – strangers – by Karamojong, who in return were called ‘indigenous’. They were inside-outsiders, put in a position as betwixt and between their home region and ‘the outside world’. They were continuously faced with being categorized by insiders as the type of *elites* who were betraying their fellow Karamojong in their efforts to help and make beneficial links to outsiders.

Weeks after these discussions, at a hotel in Moroto town, Marianne ran into one of the central outsiders in this mining story: the foreign director of communication from the mining company, who was happy to have a chat with another outsider. The director was accompanied by his Ugandan driver, who also seemed to be a kind of bodyguard. The director explained that they were building factories at their various mining sites and that they had a local Karamojong spokesperson who took care of the CSR (Corporate Social Responsibility) issues. The local spokesperson was studying law in Kampala and was not present in Karamoja at the time, so Marianne talked to him on the phone. He emphasized that the factories would help the local Karamojong in important ways: they would provide job opportunities and with far better working conditions than the artisanal mining work of breaking small rocks in the hot sun and strong winds. The spokesperson explained how the company had carried out environmental and social impact assessments, and legally everything was in order between the mining company and the Directorate of Geological Survey and Mines in the Ministry of Energy and Mineral Development. The company had worked to ensure the surface rights holders’ interests in three ways: consent from all stakeholders, a corporate social responsibility plan and payment of royalties. They had even held cultural rituals where bulls were sacrificed because the mountain used to be a religious site where elders met.

The director grandly invited Marianne to return to the mine and factory she had been to with Peter. When Marianne started organizing for her translator to come along, the director pointed out that there was no need to bring one because the workers were on holidays and there would be no one to talk to. The visit to the mine with the director did not happen, but it was clear that both the director and his spokesperson believed the factory had always been part of the mining lease deal dialogue with the local landowners, which was considered part of the company’s Corporate Social Responsibility towards the local community.

This is the same factory that the artisanal miners had experienced as suddenly appearing on their land without any notice and that they felt was a threat to how they were making a living. In the view of the artisanal miners, the building of the factory breached the deal they had made through the middlemen with the company – a deal that would allow them to earn cash directly from the minerals under their land outside the royalties system.

When the factory was built, middlemen tried to mediate and explain that the artisanal miners eventually would get jobs in the factory, but as local people were not employed in the building process, the artisanal miners called the middlemen ‘bad elites’, engaging in ‘business mindedness’ and ‘corrupt actions to gain money

on the backs of poor people'. Peter explained that they had tried to organize meetings between the artisanal miners and the company, but the company director and his spokesperson never accepted the invitations for the meetings.

Of What Is This a Case?

The case of artisanal marble miners in Karamoja is a specific example of a resource extraction enterprise on the part of investors (or development actors) from outside the local community threatening landholding and land rights. While this is one common type of 'development' activity, there are many other types where land rights are at issue. In Chapter 2 on Transactions we saw how when a private company or national government or international donor initiates plans that require land, the relationship to local landholders and land users must be mediated. Land acquisition cases raise conceptual issues concerning the 'inside-outsiders' who so often broker the relationship between the external actors and the various stakeholders within the affected local community.

Inside-outsiders may be considered a kind of elite with special qualities. They have inside knowledge and experience of the local language and land situation, the social structures and tensions, as well as 'inside sensitivity' in relation to religious practices, cultural ways of doing things and how to evoke trust and understanding. At the same time, they have outside knowledge of international languages such as English and the languages of development, rights and Corporate Social Responsibility. They have various types of outside experience with education, business enterprises, organizations and the political system. They have the cultural capital of exposure to the outside world and the social capital (Bourdieu 1986) of having outside 'connections'; they are cosmopolitans who have lived in cities such as Kampala and Nairobi. They are seen as having both positive and negative potential because they can 'bring something good home from the outside' but also bring bad connections and 'give away what is good at home' to outsiders for their own benefit. These inside-outsiders often do not hold any formal authority in the local society, where elders are traditionally at the top (Dyson-Hudson 1963), and they do not hold a formal position in relation to the investors or development actors. They occupy an important and yet tricky betwixt and between position as middlemen.

There are a range of inside-outsiders. Some may better be called outside-insiders, depending on the degree to which they are based in the local society with family, land and an occupation. Their intimacy with (other) locals varies, and their interests in land and development differ. Roughly, they tend to be categorized as either 'business-minded' elites who try to connect companies or development projects to landowners, or as 'rights-minded' inside-outsiders who try to ensure that locals are protected. Both kinds of inside-outsiders are, in some way or other, trying to benefit individually as well as contribute to the collective.

Inside-outsiders who are political actors may hope to help their region develop and at the same time benefit personally. Middlemen from CSOs or NGOs see themselves as actors who on the one hand must help the locals defend their rights against the investors, the officials and elites, who are suspected of pursuing their own interests, and on the other hand advise locals to welcome development, which almost always is thought to require input from outside. In addition to working for the greater good, the CSO representatives are trying to make a career for themselves by being in-between.

In the remaining part of this chapter, we first give some background to the specific case of mining in Karamoja. We then use the concrete case of artisanal marble miners to consider three more abstract aspects of inside-outsider dynamics in relation to development and land. We discuss the ways that inside-outsiders imagine potentials for development. Then we turn to the mistrust that so often accompanies attempts to build development on land. Finally, we reflect on some of the dilemmas through which inside-outsiders must navigate.

Mining and Land in Karamoja

The overall livelihood and food security situation in Karamoja in the past decades has been deeply affected by cattle raiding, climate change, disarmament and attempts to settle and ‘modernize’ pastoralists (Gray and Sundal 2017; Nakalembe, Dempewolf and Justice 2017; Hopwood, Porter and Saum 2018; Stites 2020; Abrahams 2021). The artisanal mining practices and brokerage we describe take place in communities that have been and are in serious livelihood crises because pastoralism is not respected and supported by authorities but considered ‘backwards’ and less valuable than agriculture, even though the ecosystem is more fit for pastoralism (Gabbert 2021; Galaty 2021; Little 2021). For most of the population in Karamoja, pastoralism has become near impossible, and food security is at a point where it could be described as a protracted crisis of ongoing hunger, arguably man-made (Stites and Marshak 2016). In this context, artisanal mining is for some the only available source of livelihood.

The literature on mining and natural resource extraction in Africa is vast and covers issues of exploitation (Ballard and Banks 2003; Nem Singh and Bourgooin 2013), politics, conflict and law (Bruunschweiler and Bulte 2008; Ali, Sturman and Collins 2018; Nalule 2020), relationships between artisanal and industrial mining (Pedersen et al. 2019), gender and mining (Ranchod 2001), environmental impacts (Pretty and Odeku 2017), privatization and indigenization (Kragelund 2012). Lately, there has been a growing interest in the issue of elite agency (Gilberthorpe and Rajak 2016) and elite capture (Buur and Monjane 2017; Buur et al. 2019). It is the discussion of elite agency that we turn to in this chapter, with a focus on the situation of inside-outsiders as illustrated in the mining sector in Karamoja.

The Karamoja region has not been surveyed as thoroughly for minerals and oil as other parts of Uganda due to insecurity in connection with cattle raiding and disarmament. Yet gold has been mined by artisanal miners for a long time, and the cement industry has been extracting limestone in the southern part of the region for two decades. Now marble and other stones and minerals are also being explored for and mined (Rugadya 2020).

The online map of concessions in the Karamoja region looks like a nearly finished puzzle, but the relatively late start of mining means that the majority of concessions in Karamoja are at an exploratory stage.

The national government has rights over underground resources and grants exploration licences to businesses wishing to survey mining potential as well as licences for various stages of mining processes. There are four types of licences in Uganda: retention licence, exploration licence, location licence and mining leases. Negotiation with local landowners is only required in the case of application for an actual mining lease. The direct consequence of this is that companies holding an exploration licence may surprise local people by placing demarcation stones on their land without informing or consulting them about their activities. However, when a company applies for a full mining lease, customary owners and stakeholders are required by law to be included as part of dialogues with mining companies and with the local representatives of the political system of Uganda. The differences in processes, and lack of transparency and communication, often create tensions between outsiders (both nationals and foreigners) and local people, as well as those who claim to represent them (Rugadya 2020).

The Ugandan legal framework prevents companies from buying land directly from the landowners. In order to be granted a lease, they must enter into a contract with the Ugandan state regarding underground resources and negotiate access through the 'surface rights holders'. This means that mediators at various levels are needed to make these negotiations between the foreign company and state structures in Kampala, authorities in the regional headquarters in Karamoja, the local government structure at village level and finally the local landowners. The local communities need someone who speaks the language of the outsiders, both literally and figuratively; thus, they need middlemen. In this chapter, we mainly focus on the elites mediating between local landowners and outside actors. Other mediators, the outside-outsiders or outside-elites, who are never or rarely seen in Karamoja but figure mainly in statements, are another story.

The development of a social class of 'local elites' who get involved as middlemen in mining in Karamoja has a long history but also testifies to recent changes in the community. The 'young warriors' in the pastoral societies were an important part of the social structure as herders and as warriors during cattle raids, but their status position was below the elders, and they were dependent on the older generation's ritual initiation of their age-set to be able to progress in the gerontocratic system (Dyson-Hudson 1963; Thomas and Asch 1966). Schooling

and formal education first came with the missionaries, whose religion, teachings and presence local power holders resisted vehemently (Mirzeler and Young 2000). Thus, the first people to receive formal education were those marginal to the gerontocratic power centre of Karamoja. While formal education gained a larger and larger presence and acceptance over the years, many Karamojong still struggle to pay the fees, and the region continues to score abysmally in national education statistics. For a few young people, there were education opportunities beyond primary school in Karamoja, which gave a new status. They attended educational institutions in other regions of the country. These elites with their position as inside-outsiders have come to play important mediating parts in outsiders' access to underground resources through the land and locals.

Potentials and Inside-Outsiders

'Uganda cannot wait for Karamoja to develop'. This saying is usually attributed to the first president of Uganda following independence, Milton Obote, and it is often understood in the sense that Karamoja was so 'underdeveloped' that the region had to be left behind while the rest of Uganda steered ahead. Yet there is a different interpretation available among the inside-outsiders that speaks to the potential of underground resources as representing a promise, not only for Karamoja but for the whole nation. In this latter understanding, the potential of underground development needs to be realized by insiders as well as outsiders. The two need to be connected to release the potential because outsiders may have the perception that Karamoja is resource scarce and hostile, while insiders may believe cattle and the pastoral way of life is the only important kind of wealth and growth. Middlemen are needed to expose the middle ground.

During colonial times, Karamoja was indeed considered 'resource scarce', and the land and people were considered 'hostile' by outsiders (Barber 1968). The region was marginalized socially and economically, as the British saw no benefit from investing in it. Demarcation of nations and regions limited the semi-nomadic lifestyle of the Karamojong, and conflicts were concentrated within new national and regional boundaries. The introduction of automatic weapons by outsiders escalated the conflict, and the area was declared a war zone (Mirzeler and Young 2000). Years of insecurity, marginalizing, detrimental state policies, livestock diseases and drought, which also led to poor agricultural production, meant that the region continuously experienced crisis-level food insecurity (Iyer and Mosebo 2017). The lack of alternative livelihoods meant that resilience levels were low. It is in this environment that mining represents itself as an opportunity; for certain people, it is the only opportunity.

The region's environment has probably been fragile for a long time, and it did not help that the colonial government exploited it for grazing and cattle, which contributed to environmental deterioration (Mamdani 1982). After gov-

ernment disarmament programmes ended around 2010, the outsiders' discourse on Karamoja changed from being one of resource scarcity to resource abundance (underground) (Mosebo 2017). Inside-outsiders who were development-minded played an important role in imagining development (see Chapter 7). They promoted the image of underground wealth, which could be extracted, and played a part in connecting mining companies from outside.

For insiders in Karamoja, the environment was probably always considered abundant but in a variety of other ways. Wealth in most parts of this pastoral region has for long been livestock: cattle, goats, sheep, which can be grazed and watered in large territories. Livestock are considered 'ground projects' of central value for life itself and for the potentials of marrying, having a family, having a life worth living (Evans-Pritchard 1940; Thomas 1966; Dyson-Hudson 1972; Hutchinson 1996; Mosebo 2017). Yet apart from the central value of cattle herding, there were always other important and supplementary ways of increasing the quality of life – agriculture, hunting for wild game, gathering honey and wild fruits and trading arms and other goods over long distances. The importance of these not alternative but mainly supplementary sources of income and livelihood were considered of particular value in times of difficulty, and those who had 'something on the side', besides cattle, were regarded as wise. Others who were looking to make a life in other ways apart from herding sought job opportunities in the public or private sector. These insiders often became a kind of insider-outsider with crucial knowledge about what the pastoralists considered of potential value. When mining came up as a possibility after the relative peace, inside-outsiders knew that cattle herding would still be one of insiders' 'ground projects', but they also knew how to evoke people's experience of the importance of having 'something on the side' – they could 'talk up' the potential of tapping into the resources underground and convince insiders that the new or current 'something' might be mining.

Inside-outsiders tried to convince the pastoralists that mining carried too good a potential to let outsiders run with it all. When development – or potentials of development – comes from outside, from foreign investors or 'big people' (nationals) who are investing in Karamojong land under the auspices of development, some of the inside-outsiders advise local people not to critique or question these development investments. They say: 'If you speak against it, you are accused of being against development as the typical Karamojong you are.' As we saw in Chapter 7, development is an irrefutable ideal; everyone wants it in principle. However, both local people and inside-outsiders are often aware that the resource potential can also turn into a resource curse (Auty 1993), and the curse scenario is often linked to elite exploitation and extraction. It is thus difficult to imagine a potential resource curse scenario or any mining adventure without the presence of a predatory elite (Nem Singh and Bourgooin 2013), even if only in discourse. With promises and potentials not always realized as imagined, the risk of disappointment and mistrust among different actors increases.

The role of elites in imagining the potential of natural resources and anticipating development in their ‘home’ areas is not restricted to mining. From eastern Cameroon, Geschiere describes elites’ part in brokering relations between their communities of origin and logging companies. He notes that elites often have prior contact with the companies and are aware of the increased value of forest resources. They know the laws and procedures regarding the establishment of community forests, and they take initiatives to constitute them in the name of development. Yet their role evokes suspicion:

this increased interest from the side of elites seems to elicit an equally increasing distrust on the part of villagers. The same people who used to reproach the elites for not taking any interest in the village were the first to denounce their secret dealings with logging companies or the ways in which elites from the area . . . try to claim promising parts of ‘their’ ancestral forest. (Geschiere 2009: 88–89)

As in Karamoja, the inside-outsiders are aware of the potential value of what is on or under the land. They are in a position to introduce companies that can realize that value on the world market and at the same time (claim to) protect and bring development to their communities of origin.

Mistrust, Invisibility and Elite Extractions

In the case of the artisanal marble miners, Peter explained how ‘elite capture’ refers to the situation in which people with advantages exploit their position to benefit individually and forget about securing benefits for their communities. As the region receives increasing attention from outside, elite capture is a growing problem that creates increasing mistrust between local people and inside-outsiders. In Chapter 6 on Belonging, the suspicion of inside-outsiders was aimed at the High Court judge, who came from Kampala to mediate the land conflicts at Ogul. Although this was not a development initiative but an attempt to contain violence, rumours circulated about the judge’s motives. Some even accused him of wanting to take over the disputed land in order to mine minerals.

The extraction industry in Africa (Buur et al. 2019) is shrouded in stories of elite capture and suspicions of people ‘mining their own business’. Mistrust and suspicion seem to thrive particularly well in the vicinity of mineral extraction due to high expectations of profits and invisibility or non-transparency.

The case from Karamoja provides insight into how the processes around mining are received and managed in a setting where underground extraction is a relatively new phenomenon – there are many expectations which are not yet realized. It shows how unintelligible and complex processes are when a lot takes place in offices far from the mining sites, leaving so much that is invisible

to the people directly affected by them. Invisibility and disembedded transactions (see Chapter 2) leave room for explanations based on speculation and half-witnessed events, such as seeing a government official in a car with an investor and drawing the conclusion that the government official is not a neutral mediator anymore. The invisibility of the deals combined with the very visible changes in the landscape tend to create mistrust. Big equipment arrives, buildings shoot up, trucks drive out with minerals, outsiders in suits speaking foreign languages are present. When there is sparse communication, people start speculating: Who is benefitting? Are the insiders who connect with outsiders extracting something for themselves?

Peter, the CSO representative in the case, pointed to the problem of elite capture and implied that high up officials actively withheld knowledge so they could continue taking advantage of the situation in various ways. The CSOs wished to intervene to provide transparency and to ‘close the knowledge gaps’ so that elites could not take advantage of the local communities. In their view, the novelty of mining in Karamoja had been a window of opportunity for the elites, who had knowledge from outside. As the quote at the beginning of the case reveals, the community resistance to what they viewed as elite capture was barred from turning into violent conflict by the local mediators. The CSOs provided the locals with more knowledge, making their rights visible to them and hoping they could use this information to secure their rights. The CSOs saw this path as opening up a way for the positive development that mining could bring for the region. Many locals, such as the chair of the artisanal miners, were grateful for the training and involvement by the CSOs. Yet for some of the locals, both elite capture and well-meaning CSO involvement were considered confusing, and they suspected that both of these inside-outsiders were involved in the extraction of resources.

Confusing processes were also considered a problem for outside investors. For investors, the local modes of land governance and land ownership seemed disorganized, and it is likely that the local communities maintained the confusion and lack of transparency on their side to retain some power. The local mediators worked to make these processes transparent on both sides, so it was like a game of tug of war with the CSOs caught in the middle. Paradoxically, where elites are concerned, it is the confusion and invisibility of processes on both sides that provide a space for them and give them a role to play in land processes or else they would have no stake in the mining, because they are not landowners. They have no authority in providing access and no position to directly influence processes. They have identified a problem and a solution, and they have instated themselves to bring the solution to the problem – as local development mediators.

When Human Rights Watch raised a critique of the marble mining company, the spokesperson responded that the company had held meetings with the district council, area members of parliament, other stakeholders and ‘indigenous people’ (Business & Human Rights Resource Centre 2017). From their perspec-

tive, they had ‘followed the rules’. Yet the process of drawing in representatives of the so-called indigenous people often creates mistrust. People who represent ‘the locals’ are not necessarily the same as those who consider themselves rightsholders of the land. As we saw in Chapter 2 often several local groups make claims to the same land, and when outsiders do not know this, they make mistakes and buy land from people who do not have the authority to sell.

The artisanal miners were upset that the deal that meant they could earn cash directly from the rubble in the mining site, outside the royalties system, did not come to pass. The agreement the company highlighted was the CSR plan of building a factory and of paying royalties. The company paid the obligatory 3 per cent of royalties to the surface rights holders, while, according to the rules, the state keeps 80 per cent and 17 per cent goes to the district and local government.

Marilyn Strathern (2011) has provided a way of thinking about sharing processes in her essay ‘Sharing, Stealing and Borrowing Simultaneously’ which might help highlight the double relation between doing everything lawfully and still being considered a thief. Strathern suggests that we look for co-presence in all social configurations: what is also always there or potentially there, apart from the obvious or visible. Strathern points out that the same range of behaviour that can be called borrowing can also be called stealing. Perhaps what turns the one into the other are the limits of people’s tolerance for one another’s intentions (2011). The mining company followed the rules, and from their point of view they were borrowing access to the land, and they were sharing the benefits through royalties and the CSR plan. Yet from the perspective of the artisanal miners, the company never intended to discuss the building of the factory, and thus their extractions were classed as stealing. This ended any tolerance people had for the company. The woman who was chair of the artisanal miners expressed this diplomatically: ‘Our relationship with the investors is not stable.’

When people start doubting the intentions behind development from outside, stories and mistrust thrive. The artisanal miners said that during a meeting the company had made people sign an attendance list, which later appeared as a formal signed document of agreement with the mining company. The story – whether true or not – shows that people felt cheated and that their limits of tolerance for the company’s intentions had been transgressed. With the appearance of the factory, the artisanal miners knew that the company was no longer interested in sharing – that is, leaving smaller stones for the miners to sell. The ethos of sharing in Karamoja is explicit (Mosebo 2015), also in relation to land and underground resources. It is considered bad form not to share if you have plenty of something. If you have plenty of pasture and water, you must share with other herders and their herds who are in need. If you have plenty of marble in your mountains, you should share this with people who come to ask for it. This principle of sharing responds to the needs of the recipient, and in this understanding, people are obligated to share their wealth with people who demand

a share (Woodburn 1998). If they do not, they are depriving someone of receiving, and in a sense that is stealing (Mosebo 2017). Thus in Karamojong logic, the factory changed the company's actions from sharing to stealing, even if the company saw it as part of their CSR strategy. The idea that the outsiders did not come with good intentions was underscored by the presence of the soldiers who guarded the mining site. They increased mistrust of the company's intentions: 'The elders are saying: "Why are they intimidating us in our own land? If they come in a good way, why should they need soldiers? If you move with soldiers, it means you're guilty."'

Even though the company did everything they were legally required to, it was not enough to guard them from gaining a bad reputation. This was not simply a matter of giving the right amount of money, employing enough local people, letting people work the mine for a profit (Mosebo 2017). Their actions surrounding the mining needed to show intentions towards positive development for local people. While the mining company had a legal licence to operate, there were still questions about their social licence to operate (Prno 2013). Were they mainly borrowing, sharing or stealing land? These are questions that are not only relevant for mining but for land issues more generally across northern Uganda.

Dilemmas and Development Brokers in Land Issues

Even though inside-outside mediators raise mistrust, they can play crucial roles for realizing potentials of development (Buur and Monjane 2017). Local development mediators regard mining as an opportunity for the communities to benefit from the wealth in the region, and they regard the outsiders, the investors and the mining professionals in Uganda as necessary partners towards this. As the young CSO representative said: 'We do not have the capacity to mine these things.'

Much as mediators are needed, they also pose dilemmas, in large part because of their in-between positioning. Mediators are actors who have a capacity to go between positions; they have knowledge, know-how, experience and insights, motivation, interest and social standing across spheres to bring together actors, knowledge and ideas from inside and outside (Buur, Baloi and Tembe 2012). They can be brokers between insiders and outsiders because of their unique position.

The concept of *brokerage* in anthropology has a long history of focusing on actors working in the space between communities and political elites (Lindquist 2015). The local elites in the mining case were working exactly between the local communities and the political and economic systems outside the region, which have a direct effect on the region. Brokers, more generally, are actors with a capacity to connect the local to the larger whole by pulling together elements from various social systems, as described early on by Lévi-Strauss (1966) and Wolf (1956). The broker figure is often characterized by moral ambiguity because she/

he crosses social boundaries and is suspected of gaining from this individually (Boissevain 1974; Lindquist 2015). In relation to land and mine development, we see how brokers are often questioned morally as ‘business-minded’ people who are selling land unscrupulously, forgetting about traditions and values of the land, and they are suspected of conniving with the investors.

There was no evidence that any of the local mediators in the mining case (except the spokesperson who was employed by the company) was actually conniving with the investors. Nor did they appear to have ulterior motives of extracting resources on the backs of the local communities solely for their own benefit. The mediators were aiming at securing development for the region as well as securing personal development. They wanted the opportunities that development presents and to be regarded as citizens on par with other Ugandans with the rights that this is seen to provide (Mosebo 2015). If a development process is successful and accepted within a socio-economic system, it creates a space for an educated elite within that system, and the middlemen become insiders rather than strangers. In Karamoja, they therefore ‘hunted’ for opportunities to instate themselves in the development processes and become representatives of the Karamojong but also looked to become ‘someone’ in the eyes of the people. This connects them to societal development, but it also risks placing them in new dilemmas, since the implementation of any land intervention is likely to benefit some of the local community while excluding others.

Rugadya (2020: 6) describes how local elites in the Karamoja region helped miners’ associations to obtain royalties from marble and limestone companies. According to the Mining Act of 2003, these royalties were meant for the landowners who held surface rights, but the artisanal miners were better organized, causing resentment among the landowners. In the same way, the middleman in the case of the wind turbine in Ik County (Chapter 2) put himself in a dilemma when he identified some families and not others as ‘original owners’ of the land.

Outside entrepreneurs and development projects also need brokers, to get access to local people and resources, and to be able to claim that local populations have been heard and represented. In the words of Bierschenk and colleagues, local development brokers are key:

In the case of the development project . . . brokers represent the project’s local social carriers, at the interface between the people (the ‘target group’) aimed at by the project and the development institutions. They are supposed to represent the local populations, express its ‘needs’ to the structures in charge of aid and to external financiers. In fact, far from being passive operators of logic of dependence, development brokers are the key actors in the irresistible hunt for projects carried out in and around African villages. (Bierschenk, Chauveau and De Sardan 2002)

Brokers are out to hunt for projects, but projects are also hunting for brokers. Yet brokers, as we have seen in our cases, do not only go between already-established positions. They also create new positions and meanings themselves. Brokers do not merely negotiate between reified formations such as ‘the global’ and ‘the local’ but embody several such formations and are active in producing meaning, categories and identities (James 2011).

Local mediators carve out a space for themselves, as a way of life, but they often find themselves in dilemmas on two interconnected but separate levels: the personal level and the societal level. To be part of the community, the elites must contribute towards the survival and well-being of the local people. In Karamoja, sharing is essential for social belonging. The local mediators are thus expected to contribute to the local communities with their knowledge, resources and access to the outside. Yet, those capacities are exactly what make them stand out as strangers or outsiders, and the processes they engage in continuously reinforce this outsider position. They must balance their involvement and carefully communicate what they are doing in order not to face existential threats.

Conclusion

Development, in the sense of growth, almost always involves land in some way. It also very often involves resources and actors from outside, and in some cases, as we have seen in this chapter, there is a gap between actors and intentions from outside and actors and intentions from inside. Development brokers insert themselves into this gap and mediate between insiders and outsiders, as a kind of inside-outsider themselves, who speak both local and international languages of development. They seldom live from pastoralism as the local communities do, but they identify as Karamojong. The local communities, however, regard some of these inside-outsiders with scepticism as elites who are interested in capturing riches for themselves (though seemingly on behalf of the locals). Other elites and inside-outsiders are considered useful in negotiating with outside business people. Inside-outsiders are often seen by outsiders as key to the realization of development potentials in a region, and sometimes deals are made with representatives that do not seem transparent to local communities. This creates suspicion, mistrust and disagreement, as we have also seen in other cases in the book – some are suspicious of outsiders who buy land for development purposes, while others are keen on this kind of investment and development from outside.

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