



Some possible PASTRES research themes

1. Changing resources

New forms of mobility. As pastoral systems change, new forms of mobility are emerging. Traditional systems of nomadism/transhumance are being replaced, but with what? Who is able to adapt, and who not? What are the implications for resource use, labour and patterns of accumulation? And how, as a response to uncertainty, is mobility changing, and for whom?

Socio-technological experimentation/innovation. Pastoralists make use of a whole range of technologies, from traditional socio-technical practices to new opportunities opened up by access to mobile phones, apps linked to market information or satellite data. What are the new ways technology and pastoral society connect, through what socio-technical 'imaginaries' and practices? How are processes of 'innovation' (and improvisation, experimentation) conceived of and practised, as responses to uncertainty? Who are the innovators, how do they organise (collective/individual), what governance/institutional arrangement? How is all this differentiated by age, gender, educational level, ethnicity? And how are new practices and innovation (improvisation, experimentation) processes helping people respond to uncertainties (or not)?

Frontiers and resource grabbing. The grabbing of resources – land, water, minerals – in pastoral areas continues apace, accelerated by investment regimes, corridor plans and government policies. Whether from external or internal sources, such changes in land control are driving new patterns of differentiation, with changing inclusions and exclusions. What are these patterns, and what implications does it have for social differentiation, vulnerability and new uncertainties?

2. Changing markets

Market networks and uncertainty. How are market networks in pastoral settings constructed for different livestock products and by different people? What is the social, political, knowledge structure of these networks, and what does this tell us about 'real markets' and responses to risk and uncertainty? Can we learn from pastoral markets – and their social basis – for increasing resilience in other market systems?

The financialisation or risk, and the role of index-based insurance in livestock systems. How does it work, who gets involved, who is excluded, and how are risk, uncertainty and ignorance constructed? Does financialisation through insurance crowd out other risk/uncertainty responses? What are the social and political consequence of the penetration of financialised instruments and practices in pastoral settings?

3. Changing governance

The politics of early warning and preparedness. Great efforts have been invested in early warning systems (climate models, satellite tracking, institutional infrastructure) to allow for greater preparedness for inevitable shocks and stresses, such as drought. But how do these work, what

assumptions about risk/uncertainty are embedded, and what do pastoralists think of them, with what responses?

Safety nets, social protection and moral economies. How do household level safety nets operate in pastoral areas, through what coping strategies and forms of collective moral economy? How do they respond to different types of risk and uncertainty? What cultural practices govern these? How have they changed over time, with what effects on livelihoods? How do these informal systems intersect with formal social protection and humanitarian aid interventions in pastoral areas?

Hybrid (experimental, adaptive) governance. Under conditions of uncertainty, ambiguity and ignorance, standardised, linear governance approaches don't work. What are the ways 'governance' (for example around herding, markets, the management of resources etc.) is practised in pastoral settings, formally and informally and through hybrid forms? Who is included/excluded? How is this changing as new uncertainties emerge? And how do these responses to risk/uncertainty become embedded in society?

Reliability professionals in pastoral systems. Who are the individuals and what are the cultures, practices and behaviours that increase reliability, and the reduced likelihood of catastrophic collapse/failure? What are the parallels and differences with other 'critical infrastructures'? Can we learn from pastoralists' practices?

4. Changing cultures and institutions

Common and collective vs individual arrangements. Common property, collective management of resources, collaborative economic activities, embedded in pastoral social relations, have traditionally been central to responding to uncertainty. These collective institutions are important for an array of things – from range to water to markets etc. But they are changing, through greater enclosure, privatisation, individualisation? Does this affect the way pastoralists respond to uncertainty? Does a less collective, more differentiated response result in some gaining, others losing? What ways are used to recreate elements of a more common/collective management system, even with privatisation, individualisation and so on? Are there new forms of commoning emerging, which are different to before?

Changing cultures and practices. Responses to uncertainty are embedded in cultures and reflected in practices. What are these, and how are they changing – for example around resource management or market engagement? How does religious belief and practice influence responses to uncertainty? How do deeply rooted cultural ways of seeing the world – the relationships between people and nature, the role of the supernatural in controlling fate and so on – affect the way uncertainties are framed, and responded to? As systems change and new uncertainties arise, how do cultures and practices respond?