Increased awareness in the international arena on the rights of indigenous peoples following the Working Group on Indigenous Populations (WGIP) and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (United Nations, 2007) led to a wide discourse on “indigenous societies”, “indigenous politics” and comprehensive scholarly studies on the use of local knowledge in contemporary lives in Africa. Local knowledge is an accumulation of material as well as spiritual culture, rituals, values, and patterns of organization and decision-making. It is commonly assumed that local knowledge is an expression of historical and cultural ties and serves as a significant component of people’s (ethnic) identity. As ethnic identities in African states are sometimes versus the state national ethos, it raises important political questions.

This research will investigate into the social expressions of local –indigenous- ethnic knowledge of Pokot communities in urban (Eldoret) and rural settlements (Sigor area, West Pokot).

Are local knowledge patterns preserved, transformed or dismissed in the transition from rural to urban ways of life? Are there differences within communities based on socio-economic status or gender?

How is a local culture defined within the same ethnic community, but in different geographical locations? What ethnic expressions exist in urban and rural daily life?

The Pokot (Kalenjin) people of Northern Kenya are historically known as pastoralists and agro-pastoralists. Marginalized during colonial times and independence, located in Arid and Semi-Arid areas, living in rural settlements and involved in regional conflicts, the Pokot are a case study to this research.

The city of Eldoret was constructed in the early 1900’s as an administrative centre and centre for agricultural activities first for white settlers. Today Eldoret is the 5th largest town in Kenya with a population of approximately 300,000 people. It lies along the Trans Africa international Trunk Road and is an important point of connection to a much wider area.

Rural communities of Pokot people were at the center of field research conducted in July - August of 2015. Analysing the types of social organizing, public spaces and rituals as found in a rural setting, I will now look at their traces in new urban environments, Eldoret in particular.

The study of urban communities is the future part of the study.

The final phase of the research will ask for political explanations. I will describe the political realm and some major political aspects of Kenyan politics that, in my assumption, affect these urban-rural transformations of culture.