

Relationship Between Cattle Rustling and Development: A Case Study of Tot and Tunyo Divisions of Elgeyo Marakwet County; Kenya:1963 To 2012

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Abstract: This paper discusses relationship between cattle rustling and development: case study of Tot and Tunyo divisions of Elgeyo Marakwet County 1963 to 2012. The study was guided by the following research question: In what ways has cattle rustling affected socio-economic activities of Tot and Tunyo divisions? The study used a combination of two non-probability sampling techniques, convenience sampling and snow balling. The data for the study was analyzed qualitatively using descriptive narratives in systematic themes. The study found out that there is relationship between cattle rustling and development. The implications of cattle rustling include loss of human lives, destruction of property, loss of livestock and involuntary migration of populations to areas deemed safe etc. which affects material and human development. The study concludes that, cattle rustling incidences have negative consequence on the development of the society. This study recommends that the government should formulate and implement policies on conflict management and peace building. Such policies could provide frameworks for understanding the conflict and how to manage them thus helping in reduction of negative consequence as a result of cattle raids. The government should further institutionalize and legalize the role of alternative dispute resolution mechanisms, also it should check the proliferation of illicit arms and strengthen community policing.

Keywords: *Cattle rustling, IO (Oral Informant), ASAL,*

Date of Submission: 12-07-2018

Date of acceptance: 28-07-2018-

I. INTRODUCTION

In Kenya cattle rustling has been a traditional activity among the pastoral and agro-pastoral communities, especially in North Eastern and Rift Valley regions of the republic. The National Council of Churches of Kenya (2009) (hereinafter N.C.C.K) indicates that, cattle rustling is an old practice among cattle rearing communities in Kenya and it was regularized by cultural customs. However in modern Kenya, cattle rustling has transformed from being a customary means of livestock restocking where traditional weapons such as bows, arrows and spears were used, to a large scale practice where sophisticated weapons like guns are used. Fedders & Salvadori (1979) contend that, in traditional societies, offensive warfare was carried out by pastoral communities in Kenya, mostly for purposes of reclaiming stolen animals or seizing animals from another group. Modern cattle rustling have turned out to be the opposite of what was practiced during the pre-colonial period. This has resulted in a different culture and rationale of raiding in which traditional rules are not observed. This has had a disruptive impact on the normative, structural and behavioral dimensions of the affected communities. The Marakwet being one of the agro-pastoral communities in Kenya are trapped in cattle raids activities.

According to Marakwet District Development Plan (2008), the Kerio Valley part of Marakwet is bordering the Pokot to the north and Tugen to east which are Arid and Semi-Arid Lands (hereinafter ASAL) prone to cattle raids. Kipkorir and Welbourn (1973) noted that, historically the Pokot in the north and Tugen to the east, were traditional rivals of the Marakwet. They were engaged in warfare whose objective was always the capture or recapture of livestock with no intention of political conquest or intention to kill. It is surprising to note that, the above has changed and livestock raids in the area no longer observe any of the traditional rules governing cattle raids that were conducted primarily for gaining livestock.

According to NCCK (2009:6) the situation changed when Pokot begun to acquire guns from Karamojong in Uganda in 1970s and early 1980s. This was after 1968 Sangutan war that had resulted in the death of many Pokot raiders. During the war, the Pokot going for cattle raids advanced up to the Marakwet

escarpment along the deep Kerio Valley. They were massacred with arrows by the Marakwet attacking them from the river banks and it is claimed the Pokot died in hundreds. The Pokot sought guns from the state in the name of home guards to maintain their own security, while obtaining illegal guns from her neighbours the Turkana and Karamojong of Uganda. On their part, the Marakwet resorted to purchase of illegal guns to attain balance in terms of weapons, thus exacerbating the conflict. From then Tot and Tunyo divisions of Elgeyo Marakwet County continued to experience cattle raids. This is due to the fact that the two divisions occupy the Kerio Valley, an area bordering other pastoral communities like the Pokot who attach value to livestock thus they raid their neighbours for livestock. It is against this background that the study was carried out.

1.2 Study Area

The study was conducted in Tot and Tunyo divisions of Elgeyo Marakwet County. According to Marakwet District Development Plan (1997), Marakwet District was carved from the former Elgeyo Marakwet District on 4th August 1994 through an executive order. Marakwet District was further subdivided to two sub counties; Marakwet West and Marakwet East sub counties based on the two constituencies of the former Marakwet District. Marakwet District Development Plan (2009) indicates that, the two former Districts have seven divisions namely; Tunyo, Tot, Tirap, Kapyego, Kapsowar, Chebiemit and Kapcherop. Marakwet is divided into three main topographical zones which run parallel to each other in the north - southern direction; these are the highland plateau, the Marakwet escarpment and Kerio Valley. According to Kipkorir et al: (1981), the Marakwet living on the base of the escarpment in Kerio Valley live a rural life characterized by small scale farming. The study concentrated on Tot and Tunyo divisions that are directly affected by cattle raids thus affecting the socio-economic activities of the residents of the two divisions.

1.3 Study Objective

The general objective of this study was to study the relationship between cattle rustling and development: case study of tot and Tunyo divisions of Elgeyo Marakwet County 1963 to 2012. This was pursued through the following specific objective: To assess the socio-economic implications of cattle rustling in Tot and Tunyo divisions.

1.4 Material Methods

The study used a combination of two non-probability techniques, convenience sampling and snow balling. Convenience sampling was adopted since this technique is considered easiest, cheapest and least time consuming. Snow balling was suitable because it is a historical study and requires individuals who poses valuable information about cattle rustling and may not be known to the researcher. In this case the researcher utilized one key informant to name others who offered useful information. A total of 140 respondents were selected, they comprised of 2 chiefs, 5 assistant chiefs, 18 teachers from different schools, 5 Non-Governmental Organization leaders and 100 community members cutting across different age groups and gender in the two divisions.

II. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1.5 Relationship between Cattle Rustling and Development

Cattle rustling have had negative implications to the communities affected throughout Kenya. The massive theft of stock, looting and destruction of property, reduced economic activities and degradation of the environment are some of the implications. Other implications include disruption of education, very low investment in business sector due to insecurity, displacement of people and retardation of development projects.

1.5.1 Displacement of People and Schools

The result of frequent cattle raids in Tot and Tunyo divisions has seen displacement of human population. Oral interviews revealed that, the residents of Tot and Tunyo divisions inhabited the flat areas of Kerio Valley that are proximate to their farms on the lower parts of the escarpment. Persistent cattle raids especially from 1992, forced the Marakwet to move to the escarpment where they could give vigilance to bandits that usually came from West Pokot and East Baringo, attacking mostly areas such as Chesetan, Chesuman and the larger Endo. Cattle raids too contributed to complete shut down or partial closure and subsequent relocation of schools. Oral interviews revealed that, schools in Tot division, such as Sangach primary continued to operate in Kerio Valley but enrolment declined. Kapkobil, Kapkoin, Kebetwo, Toroko and Murkutwo primary schools in Tot division were relocated to the escarpment (Major Mendi OI 2013). Toroko primary in Tot division relocated to an area called Parkongo. A total of 39 schools were abandoned in Marakwet Kerio Valley for over three years and were relocated to the escarpment where students learnt in squalid conditions (Chesos 2001:8)

Oral interview further reveal that, in Tunyo division, Barsumbat and Koitilial primary schools moved to the escarpment from the year 1996 to 2003 leading to high dropout rates. Marakwet District Development Plan (2008) reported that, cattle raiding had a major drawback to learning in the District, since most cases of insecurity reported in the sub-counties are related to cattle rustling which the results are; schools and houses being burnt. This has led to increased illiteracy due to low enrolments of pupils in Kerio Valley areas of the District. Research conducted by Pkalya, Mohamed and Isabella (2003) reported that, the frequent cattle raids conflict and banditry activities in Kerio Valley, especially in areas bordering West Pokot and East Baringo, displaced 32,000 people accounting for 23% of the total population of the former Marakwet District. Pkalya et al: (2003:48) further gave the statistics in Tot division, putting it at 95% or 16,857 of the divisions' total population of 17,744 being affected directly or indirectly by cattle raids and the situation was reported to have been replicated in Tunyo as of the year 2003.

4.2.2 Loss of Human Live

The most direct effect of cattle raiding on human wellbeing is the loss of lives and injuries inflicted. It was reported by Mbiyu Koinange, the then DC of Elgeyo Marakwet District in his Annual Report of 1968 that, 8 lives were lost in the northern division (Tot) of the District due to stock theft (KNA/DC/ELGM/8). Oral informant indicated that, cattle raids resulted to loss of lives especially in Arror and Endo areas. He further reveals that, the cattle raiders prime purpose is to acquire livestock which cannot be acquired from the owner easily, thus the scaring of the community members involved killing and maiming (James Kimisoi OI 2013).

According to Pkalya et al (2003), in one incident during polio vaccination campaign conducted around Tot center in 1997, Pokot raiders killed fourteen Marakwet children and their mothers. As a result of the deaths, there are many orphans and widows who cannot sustain themselves. Also KHRC (2002: 25-26) reported that, Pokot raiders attacked Marakwet animal herders on April 17, 2002 killing two people in Tot division, the two being part of a group of youth coming from a farm. On the same year June 26, suspected Pokot raiders shot and killed Marakwet named Kibor Kabuliareng and stole his animals. It is further noted by Clemens (2013:10) pointed out that, the cattle raids conflict, which has strong political connotations, involved extremely violent attacks, such as the Murkutwo massacre in which Pokot raiders killed over 50 Marakwet people in March 2001 and maiming many of them.

4.2.3 Breakdown of Social Order and Change of Traditional Roles

Traditionally among the Kalenjin communities, there were some social rules that governed traditional cattle raiding. Among the Marakwet, during raids, warriors were prohibited from killing the elderly, women, girls and children but cattle raiding activities in Kerio Valley defied the traditional norm. The case in which women and children were killed in Tot center when they were receiving polio immunization indicates breakdown of social order since it was not the case in the past. According to Chesos (2001:8) the cattle raids conflict reached its peak in 1998 when Pokot raiders attacked Tot division of former Marakwet District during polio immunization campaign in the famous "Tot massacres" where toddlers and their mothers were massacred. Targeting of noncombatant especially women, children and raiding of cattle for selfish purposes are symptom of breakdown of entire social order (Osamba 2000:30). The cattle raids activities in Marakwet contributed to the breakdown of social order since important cultural customs were broken, thus setting a bad precedent to the younger generation and the public in general. Oral information further points out that, widows and widowers were particularly affected because they became sole bread winners of their families. Orphaned children assumed the roles of taking care of their other siblings, this was the case in Murkutwo which was severely affected by cattle raids in the year 2001 (James Cheserek OI 2013).

4.2.4 Reduced Inter-Ethnic Activities

Cattle raiding activities had great impact on cross-cultural activities, for example inter marriage, circumcision and traditional wedding ceremonies (*Sapana*). Informants indicated that, intermarriage between the Marakwet and Pokot and vice versa declined especially from 1992 until 2003 when cattle raids activities in Kerio Valley subsided. Traditional circumcision ceremonies also declined due to cattle raids. Traditionally, the Marakwet performed initiation ceremonies on the Pokot. During initiation ceremonies Marakwet initiators would be invited to perform the operation in East Baringo and West Pokot, however the practice stopped due to the cattle raid activities that contributed to suspicion and mistrust. One oral informant indicated that, in the past, Marakwet circumciser (*Boyoptom*) was the ones who circumcised Pokot since the Marakwet were experts in circumcision. When cattle raids activities subsided in the year 2002 and normal activities started to pick up, it is reported that many of the Pokot initiates were grown up men of over 30 years having their own families and to greater extend some were initiated with their children something uncommon in Kalenjin community. The

findings confirmed Kratli and Swift (1999:15), who stated that, protracted clashes and escalation of conflict cause the breakdown of contact between neighbouring or adjacent communities and the consequent loss of lengthy constructed social networks for example inter-clan or ethnic marriages.

4.2.5 Created an Omnipresent Sense of Insecurity

Cattle raids undermined trust and created an omnipresent state of insecurity in Marakwet west and east sub counties. Cattle raids created an environment of insecurity making Tot and Tunyo divisions of Elgeyo Marakwet County to be nicknamed “Kosovo” after one of the armed conflicts in Yugoslavia that claimed many lives in 1990s. Kathina (2000:5) noted that *Kosovo* is a nickname for Tot division and the entire Kerio Valley due to intense fighting that engulfed the Kerio Valley as a result of cattle raids. According to one oral informant, Tot division had been deserted especially the lower side of the road leading cutting across Endo and Chesegon. Osamba (2000), who carried research in north western Kenya voiced similar views in his findings that, violence and warfare have created an environment of insecurity, creating tension and conflict among neighbouring communities. He further revealed that, the conflicts has affected approximately two million people ranging from Turkana in the north, the Samburu, the Pokot in the center and the Marakwet, Keiyo and Tugen in the south. Oral information indicates that, many of the thugs are youths who had trained as vigilantes “*kabaryong*” a local vigilante group which was meant to protect the community from cattle raiders.

4.2.6 Loss of Property and Livelihood

Cattle raids in the past were not accompanied by destruction of property other than forceful acquisition of livestock, maiming and killing of individuals who become a stumbling block to the raiders. The early 1990’s and moving forward, there was a total different wave that saw burning of houses. For example in 2001 during cattle raids activity directed to Chesongoch, there was looting of goods in trading centers while houses and food stores were destroyed. Cattle rustling increasingly impoverished families which were rendered destitute with prolonged droughts which eroded household’s assets base of agro pastoral residents of Tot and Tunyo division. According Kamungi (2001), the condition of displaced people in Marakwet is worse because they cannot sell off part of their land to start life afresh as their land is held communally. Mohamud and Pkalya (2005) who conducted research on economic implication of pastoral raids in Kenya and Uganda noted that, there were substantial drops in production and acreage of food crops in 1995/1996, 1998/1999, and 2001/2002. Marakwet District Development Plan (1997) recorded that, between 1991- 1995, there was significant drop in production of cassava and sorghum. This can be adduced to insecurity caused by cattle raids activities in Tot and Tunyo divisions, areas known for the production of the two crops in the District due to the favorable warm conditions.

Table 2: Table Showing Estimated Crop Production Trends in Marakwet District in the Period 1991 to 1995

| Crops | Description | 1991 | 1992 | 1993 | 1994 | 1995 |
|---------|--------------------|------|------|------|------|-------|
| sorghum | Area (ha) | 897 | 973 | 744 | 209 | 155 |
| | Yields (‘000 Tons) | 0.71 | 0.77 | 0.59 | 0.19 | 0.092 |
| cassava | Area (ha) | 450 | 300 | 225 | 62 | 67 |
| | Yields (‘000 Tons) | 0.53 | 0.35 | 0.33 | 0.74 | 0.99 |

Source: Republic of Kenya. (1997).

4.2.7 Decline of Trading Activities

Traditionally, the Marakwet were known for barter trade with their neighbours as far as Turkana. With a peaceful environment, formal trade flourished and there were many trading centers that were known for exchange of grains, livestock and other commodities. The traditional trade which thrived in pre-colonial period through to the post-colonial period declined due to insecurity brought about by intensive cattle raids. Insecurity in Kerio Valley forced many markets center to close since half of the population moved out of Tot and Tunyo divisions to settle in relatively secure escarpment. Many traditional market places have since collapsed completely, for example Kapyaban in Aror and Krool around Mokil area among other markets collapsed. The current generation only gets to hear of stories about booming markets that were once in the areas, for example Krool and Kapyaban were completely shut down and they have never revived to its former position.

It is also important to point out that, livestock markets were temporarily closed by the local administration in order to curb trade in raided animals thus paralyzing business activities of livestock traders and farmers. A report by Mohamud and Pkalya (2005) noted that, some of the most important livestock markets in Marakwet District were routinely closed as a security measure when thefts between the Marakwet and Pokot escalated. Temporary closure of livestock markets affected collection of tax revenues for local government. It

estimated that, over Kshs 300,000 in council revenues was lost every month when the markets were closed. Similar views were noted in a study conducted in Turkana by Schilling et al: (2012) which reported that, due to cattle raids, options to sell livestock to traders were limited since they (traders) were afraid of attacks on their way to Kitale or Nairobi. It was reported by the East African standard newspaper that, Rift Valley bottlers had stopped operation in bandit prone West Pokot and Marakwet Districts (Bartoo and Faria 2001:10)

4.2.8 Threat to Water Catchment Areas

Cattle raids conflicts have had significant damage to ecosystem or disruption of range land management in Elgeyo Marakwet County. One of the consequences of cattle raids which have been felt so much in Marakwet long after cattle raids activities subsided is the destruction of the natural ecosystem. When cattle raids conflict accelerated in 1992, the Marakwet inhabiting Kerio Valley part moved and settled in the escarpment, an area considered safer from raiders who had their field day in the lower parts of Kerio valley. The movement has put pressure on escarpment and really caused destruction of the ecosystem. The escarpment which is a water catchment area for Embobut River and other streams that flow towards Kerio, a source of livelihood for people living in fertile Kerio valley, come under serious threat due to cattle raids activities. Marakwet District Development Plan (2002:15) noted that, insecurity in parts of the District, particularly Tot and Tunyo divisions, seriously curtailed implementation of development projects in irrigation, education, and livestock. Insecurity caused by cattle raids led to relocation of settlements to the escarpment, thus seriously compromising the environment by destroying water catchment areas, a source of irrigation water and lifeline of the Marakwet people living in Kerio Valley.

4.2.9 Shelving and Abandonment of Development Projects

Due to constant cattle raiding activities in Tot and Tunyo divisions, there was significant fall in development projects funded by the government and NGO's. One oral informant indicated that, before the advent of militarized cattle raids that became more pronounced around 1992, many development projects were ongoing within the two divisions. For example, there was a livestock upgrading center in Kapkondot in 1990's, but it was stopped and later abandoned due to constant cattle raids and partly because there were few livestock to upgrade since many livestock had been moved to the escarpment or stolen by cattle raiders (Alfred Kabilan OI 2013). The same project has been reintroduced after cattle raids subsided in mid-2002. The project is currently based in Chesongoch under the name "Chesongoch multiplication center". Another oral informant indicated that, Christian Children's Fund (CCF) an NGO from Canada which worked to promote education in ASAL areas had to close its office in Kerio Valley part of Marakwet due to insecurity. The beneficiaries of the program were left on their own in Tot and Tunyo divisions (James Kimisoi OI 3013).

Oral interviews conducted in Arror revealed that, in early 1990's there were agricultural programs being implemented. For example, the planting of new breed of mango trees never took root in Arror due to constant cattle raids activities directed to the area by Pokot raiders thus, few people planted the new breed of mango trees. The informants stated that, the current generation is enjoying the mango trees planted in 1980's by the previous generation. Also a camel project introduced in Koitilial collapsed since the camels were targeted by raiders, thus it was abandoned. KVDA which had been concentrating its activities in Kerio Valley, covering Tot, Arror and Cheptebo areas by helping farmers in production of maize, citrus fruits, sorghum, cassava and green grams decreased its activities in Kerio Valley part of Marakwet because of insecurity in Tot and nearby farms (Marakwet District Development Plan 1994: 28).

It is worth noting that, insecurity in the areas stopped many development projects. In research findings presented by Osamba (2000), it is noted that, because of the state of lawlessness in North Western region of Kenya, it is very difficult to implement any development project. Government officers and the NGO's based in the area live in constant fear of the bandits thus no meaningful development is undertaken. Oral interviews indicates that, cattle raids deprived Tot and Tunyo division chances of prosperity as no meaningful development project can thrive in insecure environment. According to Miaron, and Nduucu (2013:29) communities affected by cattle raids lag behind in development as they lose their wealth to the thieves and government development programs become sluggish due to insecurity.

4.2.9.1 Adoption of Modern Livestock Farming Techniques

Adoption of modern livestock breeds by livestock farmers in Tot and Tunyo divisions of Elgeyo Marakwet County is attributed to cattle raiding activities in the area which mainly affects traditional livestock breeds. The change of livestock breeds and livestock keeping techniques by some livestock farmers come in part due to continuous livestock raids. Due to increased cattle raids along the Kerio Valley part of Marakwet, some farmers resorted to improved livestock breeds that are less prone to cattle raids since they are confined within the compound and may not be easily accessed by raiders who are attracted by large herds of cattle. One informant indicated that, many families in Tot and Tunyo divisions turned to keeping of few improved livestock

breeds as opposed to many traditional herds due to fear of losing large herds to raiders (James Kimisoi OI 2013).

Marakwet District Development Plan (1997:24) noted that, rearing of dairy cattle gained importance because of growing pressure on land and in part due to cattle rustling in Kerio valley part of the District, which mostly affect the local breeds of cattle. This is because dairy cows cannot be driven over long distance by cattle raiders compared to local breeds, thus cattle raiders are least attracted to dairy cows. It is worth noting that, many livestock farmers in Tot and Tunyo divisions have turned to the zero grazing or tethering in order to avoid loss of many animals to livestock raiders.

Summary, Conclusion and Recommendations

The study set to examine relationship between cattle rustling and development: case study of tot and Tunyo divisions of Elgeyo Marakwet County 1963 to 2012. In order to achieve the goals of the study, the researcher was guided by one research question: In what ways has cattle rustling affected socio-economic activities of Tot and Tunyo divisions? The study found out that, cattle raids conflicts had both negative and positive consequences on the socio-economic activities of Tot and Tunyo divisions of Elgeyo Marakwet County. It affected the lives of people in negative ways. On the social aspect, many people were uprooted from their homes thus they immigrated to other parts of Elgeyo Marakwet County, closure of schools, increased robbery activities due to presence of illegal guns and destruction of the ecosystem in the escarpment among other implications. On the economic perspective, there was decline of trading activities since many market centers collapsed while other were periodically closed by the government to curb the sale of raided livestock. To some the conflict had positive implication since some respondents stated that it made them to reason beyond their surrounding as they sent their children to boarding schools in order to concentrate on their studies. Others ventured to dairy farming away from the traditional breeds that are subject to raids. Based on the research findings, the researcher concludes that cattle raids incidences have negative consequence on a society. There is need for the government and other members of the public to work hand in hand in helping to reduce cattle raids menace. The researcher hopes that, the study has brought out the logical History of relationship between cattle rustling and development: case study of Tot and Tunyo divisions of Elgeyo Marakwet County over the period 1963 to 2012.

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Chebii Zephaniah Kiprono "Relationship Between Cattle Rustling And Development: A Case Study Of Tot And Tunyo Divisions Of Elgeyo Marakwet County; Kenya:1963 To 2012." *IOSR Journal Of Humanities And Social Science (IOSR-JHSS)*. vol. 23 no. 07, 2018, pp. 13-19.