THE INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF HUMANITIES & SOCIAL STUDIES

Conflict Escalation within the Nilotic Pastoral Communities of Northern, Kenya

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Abstract:
The article analyses the internal dynamics that were happening in Kenya and the impact they had on pastoral communities. This article argues that with the coming of Moi into power in 1978, and with political and economic liberalization happening in the late 80s and early 90's, a trend emerged where traditional pastoral conflict was increasingly being used for political and economic gains. In order to find out if multiparty contributed to the rise of conflict, the survey was conducted in Samburu, Pokot and Turkana. The cattle industry out of cattle rustling is a huge one supplying meat in urban areas. It is controlled by business people who are not necessarily pastoralists but very well politically connected. This has in turn increased black market for the meat out of stolen cattle thus further enhancing the illegal industry and demand for more cattle leading to more rustling and conflicts. The study concluded that the transition from cultural to commercial raiding has tremendously escalated conflicts. The cultural raiding had rules that governed the number of cattle to be raided, the manner in which to carry out the raids and prohibited any killing especially of women, children and the elderly. This assisted to control escalation of conflicts. The weapons used were inferior and incapable of mass destruction

Keywords: Conflict, morans, Northern Kenya, pastoral communities, majimboism

1. Introduction

The study analyses the internal dynamics that happened in Kenya and the impact they had on conflict among pastoral communities. It argues that with the coming of Moi into power in 1978, and with political and economic liberalization happening in the late 80s and early 90's, a trend emerged where traditional pastoral conflict was increasingly being used for political and economic gains. Moi introduced pastoralists to National Politics.

This paper provides a critical look at how the Moi regime triggered conflict in Northern Kenya. Moi wanted to protect his community from the Pokots who used to attack their enemies using concealed spears and savagely killed many of them. Moi armed his community with arms and denied the Pokots facilities like a tarmac road which terminates at Loruk (the boundary of Tugen and Tiaty), denial of electricity until the former president Moi, a Tugen retired in 2002. In absence of motor able roads, bridges, few schools, no hospital in East Pokot, two boarding schools in the entire constituency. Yet East Pokot district is one quarter of the total Baringo district land mass hence this is interpreted by the East Pokot as a Tugen revenge for the 1907 humiliation, this was the period the Pokots massacred the Tugen. Moi also introduced KPRs in order to use Government resources to protect and arm his community.

The emergence of political entrepreneurs through bad politics also fueled conflict in Northern Kenya. Bad politics is where political leaders continue to marginalize, harass and intimidate other members of different communities in Northern Kenya. Political leaders tended to encourage their people to continue with the age-old cultural practice of cattle rustling. These politicians fear that any attack on the practice of cattle rustling may be politically suicidal. Previous governments have recognized the importance of pastoral communities only when it requires their political support, such as during election time, thus the emergence of the political entrepreneurs. These political entrepreneurs reached their peak in the early 90's especially with the advent of multiparty-ism and the calls for *majimboism.* The second section of the chapter discusses the emergence of political entrepreneurs. This section argues that, with opening of northern Kenya, to a more capitalist system, there was the emergence of warlords, who took advantage of the readily available arms coming into the region to train and arm local Morans. These Morans were then used to raid for commercial purposes. This form of raiding intensified the scale of raiding in Northern Kenya, escalating conflict in the region.

The proliferation of guns and the Kenya government's biased participation in the conflict has equally fueled it among the East Pokot and her neighbors. According to the East Pokot, the Turkana, Marakwet, Tugen, Njemps and Samburu have been recruited as Kenya Police Reservists (KPR) and supplied with guns. The East Pokot allegedly are not recruited as KPR because the government argues that they already have guns. The KPR are not trained, hardly monitored, and demoralized. They use the guns to steal livestock from the neighbors and are involved in a bristling bullet trade in the region. Due to lack of accountability on bullet use, they usually report that they were used in gun battles with livestock raiders. To the East Pokot, being surrounded on all fronts by armed communities' forces them to buy guns for self- defense. The conflict between the Pokot and the Turkana is among the oldest conflicts in Northern Kenya (McCabe, 2004). New waves of conflict escalated in 1995 when Turkana tried to occupy part of Pokot country and were defeated 'devastatingly (Bollig & Österle, 2007). Since then, the conflict has turned more and more openly into a boundary dispute that, in early 2012, involved mutual killings and large-scale displacements on an almost daily basis (Andae & Bii, 2012). One of the hotspots of violence is the village of Kapedo.

A Memorandum to the Interim Independent Boundaries Review Commission (IIBRC) describes in great detail the Pokot claims to the place, and particularly to the Primary School which was supposedly built for them by Finnish missionaries but 'mischievously' transferred to Turkana District in 1985 (East Pokot leaders, professional groups and community council of elders, 2010). In the last decade the Pokot have conquered territory that stretches far into former Turkana territory and turned Kapedo into a virtual Turkana bridgehead, which, according to many Pokot, had to be eliminated. Matthias Österle mentions that at times Pokot snipers shot at Turkana who dared to leave the village in search of water or firewood (Österle, 2007). Only recently, new factors have emerged onto the scene to fuel the on-going conflicts along the Pokot-Turkana border. Successful oil prospecting missions and a proposed geothermal power plant increase the desirability of areas of land that are claimed by both sides.

1.1. Objectives of the Study

1.1.1. General Objective
The general objective of the study was to examine the triggers of conflict escalation within the Nilotic pastoral communities of Northern Kenya.

1.1.2. Specific Objectives
- Examine the contribution of morans to the conflict escalation within the Nilotic pastoral communities of Northern Kenya.
- Assess the influence of politics on the conflict escalation within the Nilotic pastoral communities of Northern Kenya.
- Establish the contribution of Kenya Police Reservists to the conflict escalation within the Nilotic pastoral communities of Northern Kenya.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Morans and the Conflict
For many years, the Samburu living in the north-east of Pokot territory were brothers in arms with the Pokot in a common fight against the Turkana, particularly in the Baragoi area, where Morans of both groups repeatedly attacked Turkana households in a conflict which was politically instigated in order to 'disenfranchise "enemy" community voters during electioneering period (Masinde, Adan, and Pkalya, 2004). In 2006, however, war also erupted between the Pokot and the Samburu. The bone of contention in this case was the planned implementation of a wildlife conservancy *(Ltungai)* in an area that had formerly been used by both groups without dispute, but which now attracted exclusive claims. The conflict eventually spread to Laikipia. Since mid-1990s, Pokot and Samburu herders had been moving into vacated areas of Laikipia, located in the east of Pokot territory to make use of available pasture.

Fueled by the tensions around the proposed wildlife conservancy they fought each other over land claims (Greiner, Bollig, and McCabe, 2011). These fights found a sad climax in the massacre of Kanampiu village in September 2009, where a Pokot attack led to 35 casualties (Kariuki, 2009). According to a Pokot elder, this massacre was meant to teach Samburu a lesson. The Samburu were explicitly warned not to move their settlements into a zone claimed by Pokot. Kanampiu, the settlement in question, was eradicated in the attack. The pattern of conflict in Kenya is a very complex one. It offers difficult perspective thereby making classification altogether varied. Broadly, the patterns are determined by; rainfall patterns and ecological conditions, clan settlement pattern and distribution, interaction/contagion with group outside the district and the country, with occupations orientation and finally with the existence of water points. In recent times, Government authority has exerted pressure on the pastoralists in an attempt to reduce resource conflicts. Interventions mechanism such as sinking boreholes/wells, and controlling movements and banditry have also defined as patterns of conflicts.

The latter has ensured that settled life and development have emerged in certain areas thus reducing conflictual practices of nomadic pastoralism. It also ensured a controlled use of boreholes/wells thereby guarding potentials clashes between the users. In places with high Government visibility like district and divisional headquarters conflicts and insecurity are low compared to far away areas. Idle Morans become a rogue fluidity army ready for hire on the highest bidder (Chazan & Mortimer, 1992).

After elections of 1992 which the incumbent government won, these Morans became uncontrollable. The government had merely used them as a means to achieve political end but did not care about them thereafter. These Morans began a new form of banditry and cattle rustling never before seen in northern Kenya. In February 1998 after general elections the previous year, bandits from Pokot launched the bloodiest raids ever seen at the time against the Turkana. It claimed several lives and displacement of thousands of populations. Homes, farms and stores were torched, women were raped and thousands of livestock were stolen (Oyugi 1997). The government stood accused of complicity in this violence. The government response in dealing with the conflict was to send the military armed heavily including helicopter gunships. The mission was however, frustrated. The bandits, who had mastered the rugged terrain easily outwitted the government forces. The bandits also seemed to be well-trained and coordinated in their operations. They had become brutal and ruthless often times they organized and extended their activities into neighboring counties thereby inviting revenge attacks.

The escalation of pastoral conflict in Northern Kenya has also been attributed to the emergence of political (warlords) entrepreneurs in pastoral conflict. This is a practice which involves commercialization of cattle raiding. Commercialization of raiding cattle has affected pastoralists' warfare practices in three main ways. First, has been the introduction of hired fighters. This has provided an environment where rich people can hire fighters. These fighters may necessarily not be from the same community. This phenomenon should be seen as directly linked to structural changes within pastoral economy, and not just as a consequence of its exposure to the market. This transformation is supported by cases such as that of the Pokot, who on certain occasions have hired groups of (more feared) Karimoja Morans to fight for them in clan raids.

After undergoing the training, the Morans were sent on raiding missions against the Tugen, Marakwet and Keiyo. Through several similar raids, the warlord and his retainers managed to replenish their stocks. Later more raids were organized further afield against the Turkana and Karamoja of Uganda. Most of these raids yielded good results. This marked the emergence of political entrepreneurs to pastoral conflict in Northern Kenya. Due to the region's systematic marginalization since independence and the natural calamities experienced in the late 80's and early 90's compounded by a serious state of permanent insecurity created by bandits and to some extent by government security forces, the warlords have managed to win strong support from the people for their own personal gains.

Secondly, commercialization of raiding has resulted in a gun culture and a thriving gun market. Guns elevate one's status. As a key informant stated 'one with a gun is not the same as one with a spear'. The gun culture has introduced a system where a few raiders, acting outside societal sanction can raid independently without much consequence. Thirdly, commercialization of cattle enables people who are not herders to profit from livestock raiding. It has also enabled the Morans themselves to raid independently from the social constrains. The resultant effect is that this form of independent raiding excludes reciprocity as marketed cattle cannot be raided back as the raided cattle are normally disposed of very quickly to the market. Allegations of corruption, political interference and weak accountability in the recruitment, deployment and control of Police Reservists were also noted in a KHRC (2010) report titled *"Morans no More: The Changing Face of Cattle rustling in Kenya".* The report observed that there is a lot of political interference with respect to recruitment and management of Police Reservists. The politicians ensure that their community members outnumber those of their rivals in the recruitment exercises. The report further argued that, while Police Reservists recruitment was initially meant to be a transparent Community Policing initiative, the same has been marred with allegations of corruption, incompetence and favoritism along ethnic lines. The report also noted that there are weak accountability procedures within the Reservists system, as it has been reported that some of them either use their official guns to carry out criminal activities or loan them out to criminals.

2.2. Politics and the Conflict

Majimboism which was originally intended as a form of federal regionalism was later turned into a quest for ethnically exclusive territoriality and became vehicle for ethnic mobilization. Political campaigners from the Rift Valley's pastoralist groups, who became known under the pseudo-ethnic acronym of KAMATUSA (Kalenjin, Maasai, Turkana and Samburu), played a central role in pushing the idea. Majimboism was propagated as an alternative to multiparty-ism, which was seen as a threat to KAMASUTA interests. Within weeks after the first rallies were started, violence erupted against non-KAMASUTA minorities in the Rift Valley particularly against Kikuyu who were branded as aliens and land-grabbers. The clashes which were instigated by political leaders and carried out mostly by young men in traditional pastoralist dress, claimed about 1,500 lives and displaced an estimated 300,000 people between 1991 and 1993. The electoral violence of 1997 largely followed the same pattern (Anderson, 2010).

The internal politics of Kenya particularly the struggle between the pro- majimbo and pro- multi-party-ism groups forced Moi to attempt to unite the various groups in the Rift Valley to support the Majimbo groups against the advocates of Multiparty-ism. This made Moi to make peace with the warring pastoralists communities in the North Rift e.g. the Samburu, Pokots, Turkana, Borana and the Somali. The efforts by Moi to reach and reconcile with Lotodo the king of the Pokots was a classic example of reconciliation efforts. Moi knew that the only group that would protect him against the advent of multiparty-ism were the Pastoral communities. Moi went ahead to form a pastoralist outfit called KAMATUSA-Kalenjin, Maasai, Turkana, and Samburu to counter the GEMA groupings (Jeffrey, 2002).

In contrast to their 'formerly passive role in national affairs,' pastoralists were prominently involved in these politicized clashes of the 1990s (Günther, 2009). Militant *majimboism*, which stirred up the violence of the 1990s as well as the post-election violence in 2008, also has repercussions for more localized conflicts between pastoralists. It fuels conflicts over control and access to territories that had formerly been used in a more flexible and less exclusive manner. In

the late 1990s and around 2000 local patterns of conflict among pastoralists in the north were influenced by national politics or regional politics in other parts of Kenya. In order to mobilise the government for their own causes, local leaders had to find out which degree of ethnicization had become usual and subsequently legitimate elsewhere. There the ethnicization of politics and the tolerance towards or even promotion of ethnic violence proceeded in giant steps, and the idea that every group had a homeland and the right to expel minorities by force gained ground (Günther, 2009).

Moi's decision to lift the curfew in Northern Kenya in 1997 was a politically calculated move to appease Northern Kenyan communities most of whom the government had neglected since independence. The government did this to wade off competition from the opposition who had promised to develop a Marshall plan for the development and transformation of the Northern Kenya region and to bring at par with other parts of the country. The lifting of curfew, however, came in the wake of other dynamic unfolding in the greater Horn of Africa region. Free movement of people in the region allowed for cross-border movement between Kenya's North Eastern province and Somalia (Arero, 2005). Over the next four years, the situation in the NFD deteriorated into a state of anarchy as the Kenyan government fought a low-key yet inhumane war against the Kenyan Somali insurgents seeking secession from Kenya and consequent union with the Somali Republic with support from the latter's government. Despite the heavy costs of the war, the nationalistic Kenyan government, under the Kenya African National Union (KANU) party, could not bear the loss of almost a third of Kenyan territory and it was only after an agreement with neighbouring Somalia in July 1967 that The Shifta War, as the conflict was popularly referred to, petered out. Kenya retained the NFD but that did not put an end to the state of dissatisfaction and marginalization amongst people in the area and the effects of that war and its outcomes are still felt to date (Corriere, 2006).

The people of the NFD have experienced a very precarious form of Kenyan citizenship and national identity. While most have resigned to the fate of being Kenyan citizens, the Kenyan government has not treated them in that regard. In Not Yet Kenyan, Adow highlights the plight of young Kenyan Somalis and other pastoralist groups who are denied identity cards, a critical marker of Kenyan citizenship, by the Kenyan government thus reducing their opportunities in life. This is just a tip of the iceberg compared to the levels that the Kenyan state has gone to ensure that people living across the Ewaso Nyiro and Tana Rivers continue to say "I am visiting Kenya" once they cross these rivers. Due to fear of the effect that events in Somalia might have on the Kenyan Somalis as well as insecurity in the area, post-Shifta War governments have sought to regulate citizenship through extensive screenings as expressed by national identity cards and passports among the people of the NFD (Lamphear, 1998).

In 2009, an initiative to review the existing constituency boundaries added fresh fuel to these patterns of territorial conflict. An Interim Independent Boundary Review Commission (IIBRC) was assigned the task of approving the physical boundaries of the 210 existing constituencies and of suggesting an optimal number of constituencies. The IIBRC, known as the Ligale Commission after its chairman Andrew Ligale, toured all over the country to meet with representatives of the existing constituencies and listen to their views and suggestions. These regional meetings immediately proved to be highly conflictual (Nzioka, 2009). The commission's report finally suggested the creation of an additional 80 new constituencies, a decision that turned out to be 'legal and political land mine (Shiundu, 2010). The announcement of 20 new constituencies in pastoralist areas, for example, immediately sparked heavy protests by residents of areas that felt discriminated against or ignored by the commission's suggestion (Barasa, 2010).

While the political dimensions of inter-tribal violence are largely explicable, the nexus between political leaders and the actual raiders is much less clear. There is evidence that Kalenjin politicians were actively involved in the distribution of modern firearms to the Pokot in mid 1990s. Sometimes it was also reported in the mainstream media (Barasa and Kipkoech, 2006; McCabe, 2004) yet finding out exactly which politicians are involved has proven challenging. This does not come as a surprise because since the post-election crisis of 2008 and the subsequent prosecution of Kenyan politicians by the International Criminal Court (ICC), more public attention is being devoted to politicians instigating ethnic hatred. In private talks, people mostly blamed area MPs and local councilors as culprits. Both are elected by the public and have to compete hard for their positions and balance different claims. Bollig (2006) for example, describes how MP hopefuls were judged according to their capacity to guarantee organized provision of relief food. In order to safeguard their positions, MPs must shield raiders from prosecution while at the same time fearing that their raids may lead to a devastating government response and disarmament campaigns by the security forces, which they must also prevent.

Apart from territorial expansionist, the politics of *majimboism* and political pluralism in Kenya in the early 1990's also played a huge role in the transformation of traditional cattle raiding to cattle rustling. The re-introduction of multi-party politics in Kenya had a number of far reaching consequences one of which was the eruption of ethnic clashes especially in the Rift Valley province. This was partially a fulfilment of President Moi's earlier prediction that a return of his country to a multi-party system would result in an outbreak of tribal violence that would destroy the nation (Human Rights Watch/Africa, 1993). It was also because of the misconception of pluralism and *majimboism* by leaders from the ruling party and opposition parties as well as the general public. Beginning with the late 1980s, after the 1988 rigged elections and early 1990s many Kenyan political elites started questioning propaganda perpetuated by the ruling party. They began viewing pluralism as a cure-all for bad governance. They believed that pluralism could offer a forum for competitive politics and hence guarantee freedom of choice.

Majimboism is a quasi-federal government system akin to the devolved government we now have but is yet to be fully implemented. The pro-majimbo crowd is a coat of many colors knit together by the common fear of the effects of liberal democracy. Others have drawn out their swords against the unitary state, disowning it as a relic of colonial autocracy that privileged ethnic majorities and trampled on the cultural, social and economic rights of ethnic minorities. *Mamdani* posits that *Majimbo* system guaranteed self-governance at local level with oversight of local resources including land while and providing checks and balances to the exercise of power at the national level. The idea of *Majimboism* is

popularized by the notion that it will encourage the distribution of the national cake more equitably throughout the country, as opposed to the perception that the present-day government financially benefits small groups (Anderson, 2010).

Leff (2009) posits that the success or failure of Majimboism as a policy in Kenya will depend entirely on the manner in which its two conflicting interpretations are delivered to the people. Many people and entire communities, feel that the getting into Statehouse gives communities exclusive, or at least, priority access to the feeding trough where they literally take food from the mouths of poor Kenyans including from their own communities. Proponents of the system comprised primarily of political luminaries of the day including Jean Marie Seroney, Taita Towett and Daniel Arap Moi from the then Rift Valley Province and Ronald Ngala from Coast (Diamond, 1987).

The violence has coincided with calls by high-ranking Kalenjins within the government for the creation of a *majimbo* system of government in Kenya, a federal system based on ethnicity. The proponents of *majimboism* have simultaneously called for the expulsion of all other ethnic groups from land occupied before the colonial era by the Kalenjin and other pastoral groups, including the Maasai, Turkana, and Samburu. Inflammatory statements by these figures have been ignored by the government, while similar calls made by opposition politicians have led to immediate action, including arrest and detention (Eller & Coughlan, 1993).

The calls for *majimboism* have taken on a decidedly ominous tone. Its proponents have called for *majimboism* as a means of undermining the recent political liberalization and as a way of demanding the expulsion of all ethnic groups from the Rift Valley except for those pastoralist groups-Kalenjins, Maasai, Turkana and Samburu-that were on the land before colonialism. Galaty (1994) analyses that if implemented, *majimboism* would mean the expulsion of millions of members of other ethnic groups who have settled there since the 1920s and who have legally purchased land since the 1950s. Almost all the political parties in Kenya are made up of powerful tribal leaders who command immense despotic powers in the areas of their origin.

In addition, few of the proponents of *majimboism* have attempted to articulate the mechanism--federalism, semi-autonomous states or regional confederations--by which such a system could be established. It is interesting to investigate the link, if any, between the *Majimboism* debates and the associated rhetoric of resources being taken from non-GEMA communities to the center as well as the clashes that erupted after the voting. Leo discusses that any people, and entire communities, feel that the getting into Statehouse gives communities exclusive, or at least, priority access to the feeding trough their own communities. This opinion has been reinforced in the blogosphere this Century when many Kenyans from various communities have asked "when will it be our time to eat (Michela, 2009).

Moi's continued intolerance of dissent and of any effective semblance of opposition coupled with his intimidation of the press came to a head in July 1990 when two prominent political leaders publicly criticized Moi and were subsequently detained without trial. Following the detention of these political leaders, the international donor community joined the following pressure groups who had launched massive campaigns at different levels towards a multi-party dispensation. This new multi-party movement continued for over a year very cautiously underground, as many feared intimidation, detention and even assassination. In November of 1991 international organizations led by the World Bank and IMF suspended all new development aid to Kenya, until a democratic multi-party government was elected in a "free and fair" election. Moi was forced to begin the process toward a multi-party election. Not until late September 1992 was the December election date announced (Mkutu, 2007).

The Moi government had for long resisted multiparty claiming it would bring divisions and conflicts as Kenyan society was still not cohesive enough. With the 1992 election period approaching, the ruling elite realized that all was not well with them as the support was turning more to the opposition. To scuttle this, the government instigated tribal classes ostensibly to deny the opposition victory. The calculation was to unleash fear and scatter potential voters from their voting bases especially in opposition strongholds. Those behind this plan had recruited and gave special training to Pokot Kalenjin youths who were later released to various parts of the country to create mayhem (McCabe, 2004).

Conflict transformation in the North of Kenya was also attributed to the calls by high ranking KANU officials for the re-introduction of a *majimbo* (federal) system of government based on ethnicity. In the built up for the 1992 elections and after, the advocates of *majimboism* often called for the expulsion of all other ethnic groups from land occupied before colonialism by the Kalenjins and other pastoral ethnic groups (Weekly Review June, 29 1993; Kenya Times May 20 and 21, 1993; Daily Nation June 30th, 1993). The *majimbo* debate proved to be a recipe of chaos, ethnic animosity and conflict that be fell Kenya between 1991 and 1995. The country's political history has it that the clashes began shortly after the infamous Kapsabet and Kericho majimbo conventions held by prominent Kalenjin and KANU politicians like Joseph Misoi, Nicholas Biwott, Kipkalya Kones, Henry Koskey, Ezekiel Barngetuny, Wilberforce Kishiero among others. The majimbo meetings were conducted later on in numerous places in the Rift Valley and it took Moi a long time to comment on this disastrous and loop-sided debate.

Most of local political leaders are normally anointed by their respective ethnic spiritual leaders and as a result, the communities that they represent follow and obey what their leaders tell them faithfully. Some of the political leaders abuse the hallowed positions they occupy in their communities to mislead their people/and or incite them against other communities thereby, contributing to an increase in tension among the different communities. A disguised relationship between politics and cattle raids instead of just ethnic succession or competition over scarce resources has been established by Greiner (2013). This scholar correctly recognizes that local politicians have quietly promoted rustling both as a means of raising funds for enrichment and to finance campaigns, but also to destabilize groups perceived to be in opposition to their election. He observes that cattle rustling practices thrive under deteriorated governance structures as

in Northern Kenya where the State appears unable or unwilling to commit adequate resources to ensure stability and development.

2.3. Kenya Police Reservists and the Conflict

Further, some of the political leaders have been reported to influence the appointment of KPRs and home guards from their communities. These "yes men" of the respective politicians are more likely than not to act in a way that advances the interests of the said individual politicians as opposed to advancing the interests of the whole community, (Weiss, 2004). Misol et al, (2002) in their study titled *"Playing with Fire: weapons Proliferation, Political Violence, and Human Rights in Kenya"* observed that the government security presence was minimal or ineffective in conflict-hit pastoral areas of Kenya and that Police Reservists played a very critical role in providing security to citizens in these areas. The study illustrates the importance of the Reservists to both the government and the citizens hence justifying the need to continuously monitor and review their program for betterment of their services.

The above observation was supported by Mkutu (2008) in his study titled *"Guns and Governance in the Rift Valley: Pastoral Conflict and Small Arms"* who noted that the Reservists were advantageous in protecting the community since they were within reach, respond quickly, are familiar with the local people and endure the difficult conditions of the local terrain. In The study Mkutu identifies the characteristics of tolerance that the Reservists have over police officers and that which police can use to their advantage in protecting pastoral areas. Kizito and Mkutu (2004) in their study titled *"The Impact of Armed Criminality in Urban and Rural Kenya"* have equally echoed the importance of Police Reservists in pastoral areas of Kenya by positing that the government uses them to supplement the police in these areas. The study reveals that the government in its dilemma of balancing between over-stretched police resources and the obligation to ensure safety and security to Kenyans in all parts of the country is left with no choice but to engage the services of Police Reservists to bridge its police personnel gap in the vast and volatile pastoral areas.

Mwasaru (2006) in her study titled *"Community Policing in a Pastoral Community"* observed a trend where there is a shift in the role of Police Reservists mainly due to the difficulties associated with pastoral environments. She noted that police inadequacy has created a security vacuum which has forced the community to preconceive the Reservists as their only hope for security. Mwasaru further noted that the commitment of Police Reservists to secure the community has made the community members to view them as their 'small government' on security matters, hence allowing them to make key security decisions without involving the police. However much the government is in dire-need to employ the services of Police Reservists in the pastoral areas, it should discourage a perception by the community that the reservist can be a substitute for police officers, so as to avoid a trend where they may be diverted from their intended goal.

Mwasaru supported her observation by arguing that Police Reservists have shouldered the bulk of police work in the pastoral areas, since police have delegated to them the duties of gathering information, preventing crime, arresting and interrogating suspects. She however noted that failure to include them on the government payroll makes them vulnerable to traps of corruption and violation of human rights, hence worsening the security situation. The study reveals over-delegation and failure to pay Police Reservists as challenges which can easily lead them into misuse of their role. Mkutu and Kizito (2007) in their study titled *"Private Security Companies in Kenya and Dilemmas for Security"* observed that Police Reservists were very effective in 1990s, as regulations governing their operations were strictly followed. They however noted that with the rise in corruption people of questionable behavior have been recruited as Reservists. The study identifies failure to follow regulations and rise in corruption as challenges facing the management and control of Police Reservists in Kenya.

Ndung'u (2010) in his study titled *"A Reserve Force in Decline: Dilemmas of Supporting Community Security through Auxiliary Police in Greater Marsabit"* also noted corruption within the police as a challenge influencing the performance of Police Reservists. He argued that their recruitment and deployment is politicized, uncoordinated and highly controversial. Ndung'u further observed that, although Police Reservists play a noble role, some have privatized the arms given to them by the government and allegedly use them for criminal ends.

Similar challenges were also found in a study conducted by Wepundi et al (2012) titled *"Availability of Small Arms and Perceptions of Security in Kenya"*. The study noted that although Police Reservists enjoyed legitimacy from the local communities and were a better option in securing the pastoral areas, they were facing poor supervision and management which has been seen to create grounds for misuse and abuse of their role. The study further noted that the Reservists are not well equipped, supervised, trained and motivated to work for the community, providing remote livestock security to providing private security, with the younger Reservists more easily tempted than the older ones. Mkutu and Wandera further observed politicization of the Reservists, under resourced police force, communal versus private property conflicts, unequal distribution of resources, state's arbitrary arming of some Reservists and not others and availability of illicit arms and ammunition as some of the factors causing problems with the Reservists system.

Wepundi (2011) in his study titled *"Analysis of Disarmament Experiences in Kenya"* examined some of the actions the government has taken in reaction to the problems facing Police Reservists. He noted that in 2003, the government committed to disarming all Police Reservists countrywide since it could no longer entrust the security of its people in them. This commitment was restated in 2010 when the government disarmed Police Reservists in the North Rift and Upper Eastern and promised to re-establish them after thorough vetting. Wepundi observed that the move was based on the Reservists' previous implication in banditry, cattle-rustling and trafficking of small arms with people using unscrupulous means to join the system and later using the guns issued to them for personal purposes.

The nature of the most remote frontier areas, however, meant that they were largely "unpoliced" and the rule of law by the state was irrelevant. Livestock and natural resource conflicts were common (Lamphear 1992). However, community

protection was often a self-help affair although from time to time the state (through the military) could "summon resources and strike hard if it saw the need to do so (Waller 2010). The administration of the arid north was supported by the military, with a few African constables also seconded there (Anderson & Killingray 1991). To this day, the state continues to use the military in periodic disarmament and "pacification" operations to subdue intercommunal conflict in Northern Kenya.

The Kenya Police Reserve is interesting because it is a well-established force that is enshrined in law as a provider of community security, although in practice it is inadequately overseen by the state and only partly carries out this assigned function. It has been described as "security on the cheap" (Mkutu 2001) for rural areas owing to the voluntary nature of the force, and as will be seen, a lack of resourcing that severely curtails its effectiveness. The Reserve is often considered a "home-guard" is a voluntary force created and armed by the state to supplement police activities. However, historically, home-guard units were a separate entity in Kenya and were distinctly different from Reserve units. Home-guards in Turkana and other northern border areas have been in operation since the 1960s under the supervision of the provincial administration to protect locals from raiding threats. In 1952 in Central Province home guards were created as self-protection groups in a response to the nationalist militant Mau Mau rebellion. In the settler areas of the White Highlands, these were paid units from among the labor forces of the property owners. Together with Tribal Police personnel, they were used as guides, trackers, and collectors of information for the state who later undertook night patrols to enforce government curfews or other regulations (Mkutu 2005). Later the home-guards joined the assault against the Mau Mau.

The Kenya Police Reserve, by contrast, was established in 1948 as a body of unpaid volunteers, a large number of whom were Europeans (around 35% in 1952) (Clayton & Killingray 1989). The duty of the Kenya Police Reservists (KPRs) was to provide assistance to the regular police in the maintenance of law and order but they acted rather autonomously, leading to concern from some (Clayton & Killingray 1989). They were also used in supporting the resistance against the Mau-Mau insurgency from 1952, particularly through air attacks carried out by the Reserve air wing. After independence the Kenya Police Reserve was retained, but its presence in urban areas was withdrawn in 2003 by the Kenya government which noted that it had become corrupt and unmanageable (GoK 2004).

However, KPRs has been the key contributing factor in the increased use of ammunition and increase in cattle rustling. Government's initiative to recruit and arm the Kenya Police Reservists (KPRs) has escalated conflicts among Pastoralists communities. While this was initially meant to be a transparent community policing initiative, the same has been marred with allegations of corruption, incompetence and favoritism along tribal lines as far as the decision on who should be armed as a KPR or home guard is concerned. In some instances, there have been allegations of political interference with respect to recruitment, as the politicians are said to ensure that their clan members and/or community members outnumber those of their rivals in the recruitment exercise. Even more worrying is the fact that there are weak accountability procedures within the KPR and home guard operations and it has been reported that some of them either use their official guns to conduct criminal activities like livestock theft or loan out the said guns to criminals. Although started with the noblest of intentions, it must now be categorically stated that the KPR and home guard community policing initiative has on the contrary, aided in the fueling of crime and livestock theft among the pastoralist communities. The weakening of state control over the pastoralist region has resulted in the emergence of cattle warlords who run armed militias to protect their interests (Mwasaru, 2006).

In rural areas, especially in Northern Kenya, Kenya Police Reservists (KPRs) have always played an integral part of the administrative structure. Throughout their history, the KPR have metamorphosed to become an important, if not the only, security agency in Northern Kenya. However, beginning in the mid to late 90s, the KPR gradually became more of a private security. Increasingly, politicians and business people started requesting KPR as their security. This transformed a force that was meant for the community to be a private force controlled by a few who were able to pay for their services. Two particular issues account for this trend in the KPRs, first is their recruitment into the service. These KPRS were and still recruited on the basis that they are from a certain community and they can fire a gun. These KPRS were recruited on voluntary basis and hence the incentives to use the gun sometimes for their own survival or for commercial gains were high. In some instances, they began using the gun to harass other people as they were not trained in police work. Over time, the KPRs have become synonymous to a private army that is available to the "highest bidder" Second, KPRs in Northern Kenya are armed by government issued guns. This has resulted in the criminal use and firearm misuse by some. The governments, through the OCPD, officer commanding Police Division have not found an effective way of checking the use of firearms supplied to the KPRs.

4. Methodology

The study used a descriptive research design because of its capacity to fuse both quantitative and qualitative data in the study (a mixed design). The fundamental concern in descriptive research was to highlight the conditions, practices, structures, differences or relationships of variables evident in the study. The characteristics enabled the study to take a multifaceted approach towards data collection to capture and give a detailed description of the factors contributing to the escalation of conflict in Northern Kenya. The design was also instrumental in making generalizations about conflict management in Northern Kenya. Further, the design enabled the researcher to easily identify time series of conflict trends in Northern Kenya in pre and post 1990.

The study focused on persons aged 18 years and above, which is estimated at 164,825 people which translate to 47.5% of the entire population. Therefore, the target population for the proposed study was 164,825 people. A select

sample was picked which was as representative as possible. The sample size for the proposed study was calculated using the formulae below (Yamane, 1973).

$$n = \frac{N}{1+Ne^2}$$

n = sample size

N = population

e = error of sampling method = 0.05

$$n = \frac{164{,}825}{1+ 164{,}825\ (0.05)^2}$$

= 399 respondents

The study was concerned with the Nilotic pastoralists in Northern Kenya namely Samburu, Turkana and Pokot who live in Samburu, Turkana and Baringo Counties. The study was carried out in Samburu West Sub-County, Turkana South Sub- County and Tiaty Sub- County in Samburu, Turkana and Baringo Counties respectively. The researcher interviewed key informants from each of the identified counties in the region. These Key informants were categorized as: security experts; elected leaders; Morans; county officials; local traditional elders; representatives of women groups and CBOs (specifically Oxfam, World Vision and the Peace Caravan). Key Informants were drawn from various individuals from the respective targeted counties who were knowledgeable about conflict in the region.

The study adopted two data collection methods: surveys and interviews. Surveys helped to capture a large percentage of the targeted group and at the same time capturing the demographic data of respondents as shown above. FGDs was essential in capturing points of view of specific groups in the community on the escalation of conflict among Nilotic Pastoralist in Northern Kenya. A Survey was conducted using a designed questionnaire with both open-ended and closed questions administered. The study also adopted the Afro-barometer Methodology in carrying out the survey. The researcher divided each county (Samburu, Turkana and Baringo) into sample Sub- counties, Administrative Divisions and locations. The researcher gave each location a number and used random sampling to select location 1 marked (X), skipped one location and picked the 3rd (X) and continued in that order for the rest of the sample frame. In each of the random sampled locations, he interviewed 133 respondents from each sub county selected as shown above. The researcher aimed at collecting data from specific groups in the community who in one way or another had been involved or affected by the escalation and perpetuation of conflict in the region. The groups targets were; elders, women, morans, security officers, Peace Committees, County Government officials and NGO s and/CBOs officials. One FGDs was composed of a minimum of 10 persons but with a maximum of 18. A homogeneous group could be 10, this is a situation where only one group is interviewed, for example Morans, Elders or Women. Non- homogeneous consisted 18 people. Consequently, this situation drew up mixed membership from various groups, three members from each of the above groups made up the composition.

5. Results

5.1. Contribution of Morans to Conflict

The study sought information on the contribution of Morans to conflict among the Nilotic pastoralism in Northern Kenya. The findings are presented in Figure 1.
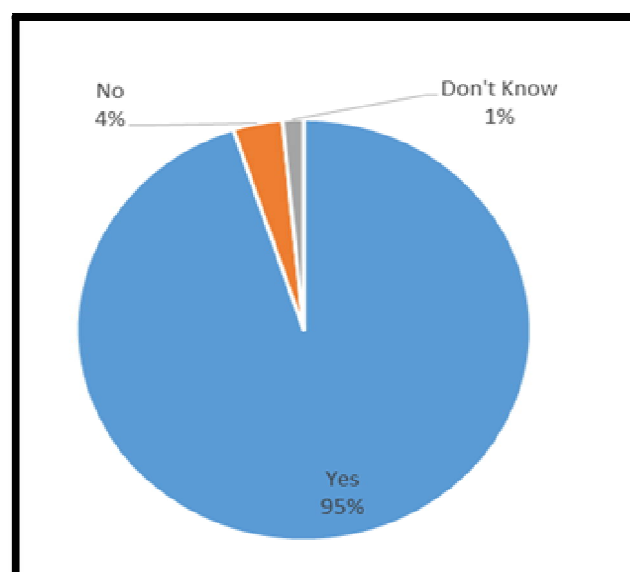

Figure 1: Conflict Contribution by Morans

In Figure 1, the results show that the respondents who took part in the survey indicated that the morans contributed to conflict with 95% while 4% said they do not contribute. The explanation to the contribution by morans was sought and the results in Table 1 show that the morans bought sophisticated weapons/guns that were used in the conflict. It was also found out that Morans conducted the raids at will without control.

	Frequency	Percent
Sophisticated weapons/guns by Morans	229	57
Reducing livestock/wealth	147	37
Political influence	23	6
Total	399	100

Table 1: Explanation of the conflict Contributed by armed Morans

5.2. Contribution of Political to the Conflict

The study sought information on the contribution of politics to the rise of crime among the Nilotic pastoralism in Northern Kenya. The findings are presented in Figure 2.
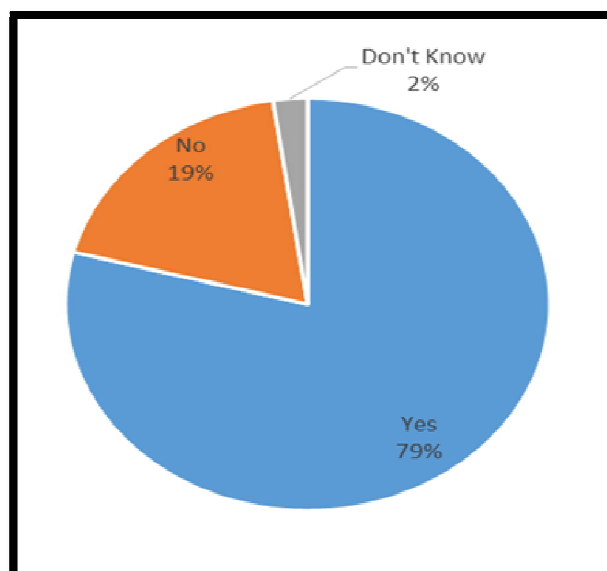

Figure 2: Contribution of Conflict by Politicians

Politicians had a great contribution to conflict as shown in the Figure 12. During electioneering period, politician incite their kinsmen to start conflict aimed at displacing voters who are unlikely to vote for them. 79% of the respondents were of the view that politicians incite people for conflict. They use incitement to start conflicts in the region and supply weapons like guns and bullets to the community as shown in Table 2.

	Frequency	Percent
Supply of sophisticated weapons/bullets	85	21
Facilitation (food/water/market)	103	26
Political influence(inciting)	208	52
Promoting tribalism	2	1
Others	1	0
Total	399	100

Table 2: Explanation of the Conflict Contribution by Politicians

The cattle raids by armed young men involve attacks on rival ethnic groups or clans. At times, raiders come from neighboring countries such as South Sudan and Ethiopia. But while traditional cattle-rustling did not always involve killing, it is now invariably lethal. Increasingly, some argue, cattle-raiding is motivated by a competition for political power and resources. Political barons use organized attacks to drive out their political rivals and extend their business interests. Politicians organize raids as a way of mobilizing resources required for campaigns and elections.

In order to find out if multiparty contributed to the rise of conflict, the survey was conducted among the Samburu, Pokot and Turkana communities to ascertain the same.
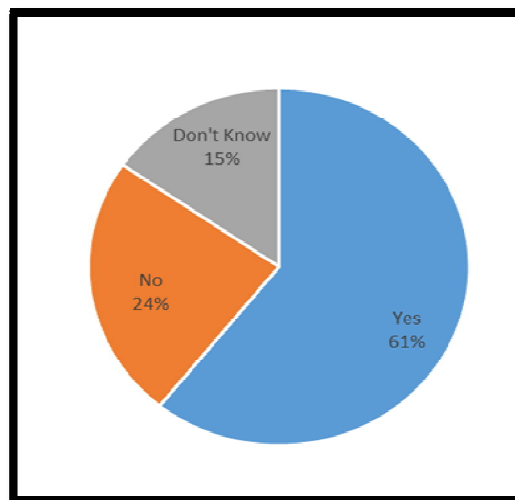
Figure 3: Multiparty Contribution to Conflict

The findings in Figure 3 revealed that yes indeed multiparty struggle in Kenya contributed 61% of the respondents agreed that multypartism was a major contributor to the rise of conflict in the region, 24% denied while 15% did not know.

5.3.Contribution of conflict by Kenya Police Reservists
The study further sought information on the role Kenya Police Reservists (KPRs) in the rise of conflicts in Northern part of Kenya.
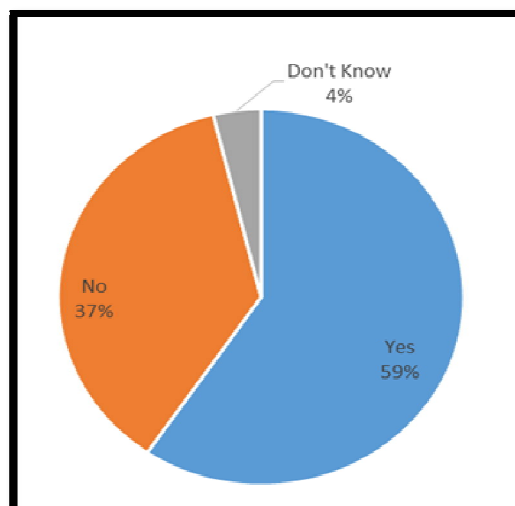

*Figure 4: Contribution of Conflict by Kenya
Police Reservists*

The results in Figure 4 show that Kenya Police Reservists (KPRs) contributed to conflict in the regions. Personalization of the Kenya Police Reservists (KPR), also contributed to the transformation of cultural conflict into a political conflict. Table 3 explains how KPRs are involved in the conflict. KPRs are young Morans who have been selected by their Pastoralist Communities to receive government guns in order to protect their communities from other pastoralist communities living along the Porous borders. The explanation to the contribution by KPRs is shown in Table 3.

	Frequency	Percent
Avail sophisticated weapons by KPRs	180	45
Train/Advise raiders by KPRs	84	21
Participate in raids by KPRs	134	34
Others	1	0
Total	399	100

Table 3: Explanation to the Conflict Contribution by Kprs

From the findings, majority of the respondents (45%) were in agreement that KPRs avail sophisticated weapons to the raiders while 34% of the respondents were in agreement that KPRs participate in the raids which leads to the rise in crime in Northern Kenya. The findings indicate that KPRs avail sophisticated weapons to the community and even

participate in the raids without community members. They also train the civilians on how to use the weapons and advice raiders on the best tactics to use to win the battle.

According to a key informant, The KPRs are the commanders of the thugs. They are key organizers and even raiders. Some are the most respected commanders. They are now being used as assassinators, for robbery, stopping vehicles on roads, and intimidation in urban areas where they behave like messengers of Politicians by arresting people. Another key informant responded that The KPRs are like 'legal criminals'. They are given guns without much vetting. All you need to become one is a few 'politically correct' ties and you will get a gun, after that no one cares what you do with the gun. Imagine even if a KPR dies, the gun rarely gets back to the police. In most cases, it is inherited by the family and after sometime it is completely lost. In rural Kenya, the main visible security force is the Kenya Police Reserve, an unpaid force guarding localities and armed by the state. Northern Kenya faces challenges of low state penetration, small arms flows, and armed inter-communal conflict. The state has a weak hold on Kenya Police Reservists (KPRs) and their arms, and this situation is weakening further as many moves into paid private security roles, including guarding oil exploration and drilling sites. Security is critical in view of the recent oil discovery and ensuing land disputes, which could trigger widespread conflict, and the recent devolution of development and administrative functions to counties in Kenya.

6. Conclusion

Politicians have been accused of instigating cattle raids and conflicts. The current study has proved that they have done so through funding of the raids and verbally igniting the youth to engage in conflict during political rallies. Politicians have been accused of their active involvement in distribution of firearms to the Pokot in the mid-1990s. The transition from cultural to commercial raiding has tremendously escalated conflicts. The cultural raiding had rules that governed the number of cattle to be raided, the manner in which to carry out the raids and prohibited any killing especially of women, children and the elderly. This assisted to control escalation of conflicts. The weapons used were inferior and incapable of mass destruction. With introduction of more sophisticated weapons like AK-47 riffles, conflicts resulting to deaths, mass displacement and annihilation of some villages became a new phenomenon. This in turn encouraged more arming of communities and cyclical retaliatory attacks. The cattle industry out of cattle rustling is a huge one supplying meat in urban areas. It is controlled by business people who are not necessarily pastoralists but very well politically connected. This has in turn increased black market for the meat out of stolen cattle thus further enhancing the illegal industry and demand for more cattle leading to more rustling and conflicts.

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