

THE SILENT WAR: POKOT AND TURKANA CONFLICT

by

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THESIS ABSTRACT

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Title: The Silent War: Pokot and Turkana Conflict

In this paper, I put to test Homer-Dixon's theory which suggest that Environmental resource scarcity, can singly or in collaboration with other factors such as lack of local institutions and poverty work to produce violence due to competition. I start by analyzing a case study of Pokot-Turkana Conflict from 1969-1984. Using available literature, I discuss various motives of raiding by these two groups. And to further test Homer-Dixon's theory, I analyze a non-violence case study on the Ethiopia-Somali region where agro-pastoralist in the Yarer and Daketa valley cooperate with visiting pastoralists during droughts. The leading question is, Given that both of these case studies take place in areas prone to scarcity of resources and both residents have access to illegal firearms and lack government control, why then are the Pokot and Turkana fighting and raiding each other, while the residents of Ethiopia- Somali region share and cooperate during droughts?

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

What are the roots that clutch, what branches grow
Out of this stony rubbish? Son of a man,
You cannot say, or guess, for you know only
A heap of broken images, where the sun beats,
And the dead tree gives no shelter, the cricket no relief,
And the dry stone no sound of water.

—T.S Elliot, The Waste Land

I was raised in a nomadic pastoralist community; I know firsthand the importance of owning cattle. My parents always reminded me that ‘a cow is life’. The older I got, the more I started to sense, feel and witness the truth of that advice. In a pastoralist community cattle are a source of food, prestige, wealth and status. Men with big herds of cattle hold leadership positions and young men cannot marry unless they have accumulated enough cattle for dowry. In the pastoralists’ communities, a cow is the source of life and also the cause of death. Given the fact that droughts are becoming more frequent and more severe and land is becoming scarcer due to population growth, this key resource is in grave danger. As a consequence, the dynamics of communities are changing more than ever.

The Pokot and the Turkana are two semi-nomadic pastoralist communities that border each other in north-western Kenya. They have more commonalities than differences: They are both regarded as great survivors who inhabit the harsh and inhospitable terrain of north-western Kenya. Since both groups migrated from Uganda to Kenya, they have very similar religious practices, diet and similar social structures. The main differences are: they speak two completely

different languages (Pokot speak Kalenjin and the Turkana speak Turkana). The Turkana don't practice circumcision as a rite of passage and some of the Pokot practice mixed farming—growing crops (mainly corn) and raising cattle. The Turkana also don't bury those killed during a raid by an enemy because touching the body might transmit evil spirits to everyone; the bodies are therefore left to rot under the scorching desert sun (also see *Tropic of Chaos*, Parenti, C. 2011)

Turkana District has a size of 77,000 square kilometers, a per capita Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of 171 USD (UNDP 2006) and a Human Development Index (HDI) of 0.333 (UNDP 2010) Turkana is the largest but also poorest and least developed county in Kenya. Most of the 855,000 people living in Turkana are pastoralists whose lifestyle of moving with livestock (cattle, goats, sheep and camels) is well adapted to the harsh climatic conditions (McCabe 1990; GoK 2008, 2009). On the other hand, West Pokot county (population of 513,000 inhabitants, area of 9,100 square kilometers) has a higher level of development with a per capita GDP of 289 USD (UNDP 2006) and a HDI of 0.4655 (UNDP 2010). The climatic conditions (up to 1,600 mm annual rainfall in the highlands and lower temperatures) allow for crop farming (GoK 2005). In other words, Pokot County's weather is much milder and therefore, its food security is not as dire as the Turkana County.

Unlike the Turkana, Pokot are smaller in number and don't have the vast tracks of land available to the Turkana county. Parenti Christian in his book, *Tropic of Chaos*, writes “Small in number, historically weak, and under pressure from all sides, the Pokot were thus forced up into rocky, infertile mountain redoubt.” P.41. Parenti adds that the Pokots' vulnerability to frequent harassments from their neighbors have made the Pokot a tough and ruthless people. In fact, “The heaviest losses of the Kenya military since independence have been sustained during ill-fated

campaigns to suppress the Pokot.” P. 41. Since they border the Ugandan border, one of their paramilitary tactics that has proven useful to the Pokot is using the Uganda side of the border as a sanctuary where they can cut deals with Uganda army officers to acquire ammunitions.

In this paper I will use the following definitions of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) report on *livestock study in the greater horn of Africa (2004)*: Pastoralists: people who derive most of their income from keeping livestock in conditions where most of the livestock feed is natural forage rather than cultivated fodders and pastures. Agro-pastoralists: farmers who keep livestock fed on crop residues and field by-products for a significant period of the year, but also make use of natural pastures and may need to migrate periodically; or nomads who practice random agriculture when rains are good.

Background of the Pokot-Turkana Conflict

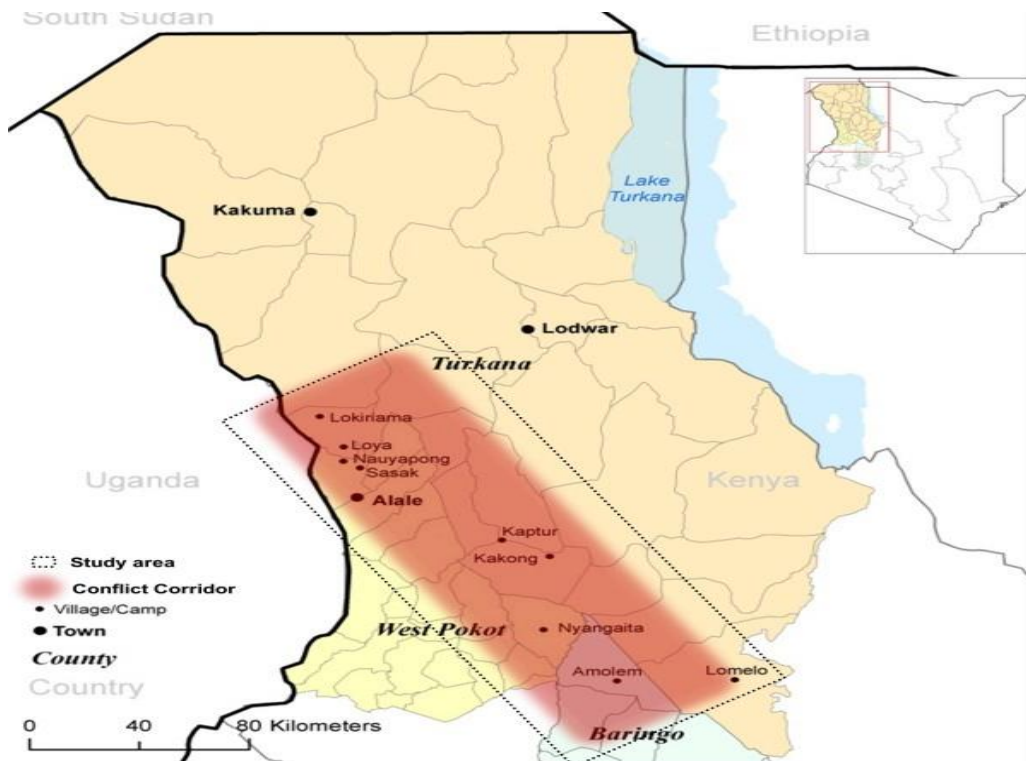
Pastoralism is still a backbone of many communities and countries across the continent of Africa. As a result of global warming and climate change, droughts are becoming more frequent and more severe (ICRC, 2004). Consequently, Pastoralists lose hundreds or thousands of their livestock annually. The limited rainfall means less pasture and water, this scarcity of essential resources (mainly grazing land) is then becoming the main cause of inter-pastoralists Conflict. Pastoralists reside in over 21 countries across the African continent. Many of these communities are affected by conflicts, while the Sahel region and East Africa show sustained levels of inter-pastoral violent conflicts with associated potential impacts on their livelihoods (Bevan, 2007). An estimated 13 million cattle, 25 million goats, 14.9 million sheep, 1.7 million donkeys and 2.9 million camels are found in Kenya’s arid and semi-arid lands (ASALS) (KNBS, 2010). According to a report done by the government of Kenya (2010), the highest populations are held

by the Turkana and Pokot Pastoralists of north –western Kenya. Cattle keeping is therefore a key resource that is crucial for the survival of these two communities and for Kenya’s economy as well. Pastoralism contributes approximately 12% to the country’s (Kenya) gross domestic product (FAO, 2005), with the livestock sector providing an estimated 90% of all employment opportunities and more than 95% of household incomes in ASALs (Kaimba et. 2011). As the above studies show, Kenya benefits tremendously from Pastoralism.

As Pastoralism revolves around livestock, the conflicts are predominantly about livestock and its related productive assets—water, land and pasture. These resources closely tie conflict to the violent theft of livestock, referred to as raiding, which are both a contributing factor and an articulation of conflict (Mwangi 2006). On one hand, raiding leads to distrust between communities which is a prerequisite of conflict. On the other hand, communities use raiding to articulate their hostility toward enemy communities (Eaton, 2008). Old literatures on African pastoralists suggest that raiding is not a new phenomenon between neighboring groups. The International Committee of the Red Cross report (ICRC 2004) noted that pastoralists raiding back then were more ceremonial, because the process was meant to train young men as they transition to adulthood. It was also the only means to bring wealth, in the form of livestock, to one’s community. The report also adds that the type of raiding practiced then was “redistributive”— a form of restocking one’s herd after a devastating drought or disease. During his numerous studies of the so called “raiding corridor”, Bollig 1987 concluded “in precolonial and early colonial times in Turkana and Pokot raided each other, but periods of open warfare changed with times of peace.” So, the hostility between the Pokot and Turkana was not always constant. When grazing land becomes scarce during droughts, due to resource capture, competition intensifies and the cleavage between groups widens. The “we-they” cleavages

further leads to group-identity, and as a result groups then sees the other as an enemy whose presence is threatening their survival.

This conflict has negatively impacted these two communities in many ways: In addition to the limited and varying natural resources, the Turkana and Pokot region has experienced significant political marginalization which has led to a lack of basic services such as education, road infrastructure and health services (GoK 2007; McSherry and Brass 2008). Recently, a highway that leads up to the north-western tip of Kenya was stopped because of the insecurity of workers—even mediators and other humanitarian missions from the government of Kenya, face grave danger when visiting this raiding corridor. According to various studies, the majority of participants engaging in raids are younger men mostly below the age of 30. The Turkana and Pokot ethnic communities have been on a conflicting path for many decades that respondents were unable to recall a year when they went without raiding and conflicts. (Schilling et al. Pastoralism). This intractable conflict has somehow become normal in this part of Kenya. In both communities there is a profound sense of insecurity, distrust and hatred. Below is the area of study.



Location of the study area in Kenya. Schilling *et al.* *Pastoralism: Research, Policy and Practice* 2012 2:25 doi:10.1186/2041-7136-2-25

It was observed (Schilling *et al.*) that the rangelands south of Loya, located between the Turkana plains and the highlands of Pokot, were rich in pasture. Yet, neither of the two groups was accessing the area because of insecurity. The insecurity is further increased by highway robbery of bandits who take advantage of the power vacuum.

New face of raiding

Traditional raiding is not a new practice among pastoralists' communities in Kenya. In fact most traditional Maasai songs are about praises and recognitions of brave warriors. Bravery and fierceness is often earned by killing an enemy or a wild beast such as a lion that is attempting to or has already harmed or killed a cow, and of course by how often a warrior has had successful raids. For centuries, pastoralist communities have periodically used violence to access land, water and to steal livestock from neighboring groups (Eaton, 2008b) Yet, in the

recent decades the cultural practice of livestock theft has experienced significant changes which in combination with the availability of small arms and the effects of extended droughts made raiding more frequent, violent and destructive (GoK 2008; Mkutu 2008; UNDP 2011; UNOCHA 2011; Schilling 2012; Schilling et al. 2012a; Schilling et al. 2012b). The intergovernmental organization created by states in the horn of Africa, CEWARN (Conflict Early Warning and Response Mechanism) reports that between 2006 and 2009 the region experienced a net loss of livestock of more than 90,000 due to raiding alone (CEWARN 2010). The data shows that livestock raiding is a frequent and deadly activity. On average 71 raids were recorded per year (six raids per month) between 2006 and 2009 in Turkana alone (TUPADO 2011). In 2006, 139 people died in raids while 27 were injured. These numbers increased to 190 and 80 respectively in 2009 (ibid.) (see also *Raiding the Future*, Schilling). Based on interviews conducted with community members in Turkana and West Pokot, three types of raids can be identified according to their number of participating raiders (see also Schilling et al. 2012b). First, highly organized “mass raid” in which several hundreds to even thousands of raiders “come from all over Turkana” (Raider T1 2011) to attack a whole community in a neighboring county. Second, in “Adakar” raids several dozens and occasionally up to a few hundred raiders from near-by villages come together to raid one village of a rivaling community. The third type of raids is the smallest involving a hand full to rarely more than 15 participating raiders.

The shift from larger to smaller but more frequent raids may be explained by two reasons. One, as the communication infrastructure in the region is improving, mid- and larger sized raids rarely go unnoticed by the government authorities who then inform their counterparts in the area who are potentially targeted by the raid (Akeru 2011; Ivutu 2011; Oringano 2011). Smaller raids on the other hand require a shorter organization period and attract less attention. The second

reason is likely to be related to the recent improvement to Kenyan's phone reception through the highly ambitious networks companies such as Safaricom. This new development has really transformed remote pockets of Kenya that have been forgotten and even abandoned for decades. And to combat the challenge of charging one's cellular device for example in the dusty towns of Turkana which have no electricity, Safaricom invented small solar panels that are affordable which would then allow cellphone owners to recharge their cellular devices using the free and abundant desert sun. Consequently, Turkana and Pokot communities are then able to easily communicate to the authorities in case they hear of a raid, or in case the Kenyan police are running late as usual, the communities can at least hide their cattle in the forest. This new technology is therefore discouraging communities from engaging in the big raid parties. Thus the young men ("warriors") are now organizing small raids that require less planning and fewer raiders, and the loot is sold right away for cash to minimize the risk of being found.

The International Committee of the Red Cross report (ICRC), Livestock Study on the Greater Horn of Africa (2004) echoes the findings of most of other researchers such as Eaton, by stating that raiding has always been practiced by pastoralists groups in the horn of Africa against other groups that they disliked. However the Red Cross report adds that the raiding conflict of the old days was termed "redistributive raiding" and it was thus subjected to strict rules and regulations. One of the keenly observed rules was protection of women, children and the elderly. "Redistributive raiding" was also predictable because the intent of it was for communities to restock their herds after a devastating drought. Since droughts were not as frequent or severe as today, raiding then was rare.

"There was a degree of ritualization involved with raiding, challenges were issued, weapons were prepared, tactics were planned, and elders would supervise or mediate the conflict. Recently, redistributive raiding has changed to "predatory" raiding, orchestrated

by individuals external to the system with criminal, political or commercial intent” (ICRC,2004).

Today’s raiding has turned into a bloody slaughter of people given that it’s mainly now exclusively planned and executed by small independent groups of young men—community elders who traditionally were the chief decision makers are sidelined, and are no longer part of the mediation and planning of raids. Warriors, therefore, have turned into gangsters, and now they can just cross the border to the neighboring community without their community’s permission— raid, rape and kill whomever stands in their way, immediately sell the loot to the nearby markets, and use the cash for personal gains. In the old days, especially in the Maasai culture, (my tribe) the most honorable thing to do as a warrior was to bring the stolen cattle to one’s village so the milk could be shared by all villagers, and the warriors mothers would get the prestigious honor of naming the new cows and sing to them while milking.

CHAPTER II

Pokot –Turkana Raiding 1969-1984 case study (Michael Bollig, 1990)

Michael Bollig’s work indicates how long raiding has been notorious in north-western Kenya. In precolonial and early colonial times Turkana and Pokot raided each other, but periods of open warfare changed with times of peace. Between 1910 and 1918 the Turkana attained superiority due to guns they had obtained from Ethiopia (Bollig, 1987). British disarming patrols and later on an administration looking especially into interethnic conflict resolution brought an end to raiding. But after about fifty years of peace resulting in numerous inter-ethnic marriages and friendships cutting across ethnic borders, warfare resumed again. Raiding parties consisted of several young men setting out after weeks of careful preparation.

He adds that several times well-armed Turkana raided Pokot homesteads near boundary to Turkana District in the late 60's. Each time they killed several Pokot and made away with considerable herds. Finally an army had to be stationed at Kapedo, on the border between the two tribes. This brought peace for a short time as warriors from both sides feared army reprisal. In 1974, Turkana resumed raiding. Their raids reached deep (30 to 50 km) into Pokot territory. All raids then resulted in many deaths and the loss of considerable numbers of livestock. For five years raid followed raid and large areas were evacuated by the Pokot (up to one third of their territory). Many Turkana raiders had acquired automatic guns and did not shy away from administrative police or whoever stood on their way.

From at least 1976 onwards Pokot had attained enough guns to stage successful counter-attacks. Between 1976 and 1979 they organized 11 large raids of several hundred men each. In 1979, the Kenyan army reinforced by the specialized Anti Stock Theft Unit staged a disarming operation. Though they did not succeed in seizing many weapons from either side, their presence obviously intimidated both groups to such an extent that an insecure peace resulted. In 1982 another inter-ethnic conflict started again. Another more even energetic disarming operation was launched during the drought of 1984. Many more guns than in 1979 were seized and it consequently created negative peace between the groups. The Turkana had ease access to powerful weaponry than their southern neighbors, the Pokot, and also the Turkana land is much dryer and it therefore, experiences intense droughts.

The argument that warfare is likely to result from or is intensified by completion over scarce resources is frequently voiced in reports of aggression between East African herders. Dietz (1987: 187) says that Pokot-Karamojong, Pokot-Sebei and Pokot-Turkana raiding in the last century always intensified after droughts and livestock epidemics. Fukui and Turton

(1979:2) in their volume about warfare about East African herders state that "...during the late sixties and early seventies...intertribal fighting, exacerbated by some of the worse drought and famine conditions in living memory, was at high level." It seems that drought has something to do with inter-pastoralists' conflict.

Grazing becomes a scarce resource when the numbers of livestock exceeds the carrying capacity of a given area. This may be due to an increase in herds or a decline of biomass production because of drought or overgrazing. Grazing scarcity occurs mainly during the dry season or during droughts (Bollig, 1990). During the course of fighting, Pokot had to evacuate about a third of their territory. Important dry season grazing areas were not used anymore by Pokot herders because they feared Turkana attacks. A zone of about 15-30 km on both sides of the district boundary became virtually no-man's land. In only five years the plant cover within those broad stretches of no-man's land changed considerably. Data from LandsAT photographs show that acacia thorn-bush communities increased by ca.30% and grassland community decreased by the same percentage (Conant 1982). The resource, grazing land, became increasingly scarce as a result of protracted warfare, resulting in a negative effect for both communities.

Theory: Environment, Scarcity and Conflict (Homer-Dixon, 1999)

Homer-Dixon (1999) developed a theoretical framework of environmental scarcity, which distinguishes supply-induced scarcity (resource degradation), demand-induced scarcity (population growth), and structural scarcity (inequitable distribution of resources). He argues that:

"A simple pie metaphor illustrates these three kinds of scarcity. Supply-induced scarcity gets worse when the resource pie shrinks because it has been depleted in quantity or degraded in

quality. Demand-induced scarcity rises when, for example, a growing population divides a static resource pie into smaller slices for each individual. Structural scarcity is aggravated when some groups get disproportionately large slices of the pie while other groups get slices that are too small.” p. 28.

He adds that these three kinds of scarcity can operate singly or in combination and can then produce a variety of negative social effects, including increased migration, sharper social segmentation and so forth. These social effects can then accumulate and interlink and under certain circumstances, generate violent conflict.

Furthermore, severe environmental scarcity can aggravate division or segmentation among ethnic, religious, and linguistic groups (p. 96) Scarcity sharpens distinction between winners and losers—between groups that profit from scarcity and those harmed by scarcity. Environmental Scarcity encourages competition among groups for control of resources critical to survival and prosperity, and it encourages resource-dependent groups to turn inward and to focus on narrow survival strategies. It reduces the interaction among these groups and between them and the state. (p. 96.) The need to survive under scarce resources leads competing groups to assume zero-sum strategies and, thus, prevents cooperation and innovation as ways to combat scarcity.

Although Homer-Dixon does not use a simple deterministic scarcity =conflict equation, he suggests that environmental scarcity and its role as a trigger for political violence cannot be separated from contextual factors, such as the role of state elites and resource-allocating institutions. To explain why violence occurs in some cases and not in others, he suggests an “ingenuity/ adaptability hypothesis“ which suggests “that market failure, distributional inequalities, and a lack of capital increases the prosperity for violence”— He doesn’t, however, think that this hypothesis can work with poor societies “... While I acknowledge the

extraordinary potential of human resourcefulness and enterprise, I nonetheless argue that some societies—especially poor societies—will not be able to supply the unprecedented amounts of ingenuity they will need to solve their emerging scarcity problems.” (p.114) While this theory holds water on empirical grounds, Homer-Dixon’s work has been criticized from various vantage points mainly for overgeneralizing his findings (Peluso and Watts 2001), and for relying the “... the conceptual fuzziness of the ‘ingenuity hypothesis’”. The Homer-Dixon’s theory and its critique need closer analysis from cases studies.

To Share or not to share? (non-) Violence, Scarcity and resource access in Somali Region, Ethiopia (Ayaleh Bogale & Benedkt Korf 2007)

Homer-Dixon and others have studied cases where environmental scarcities lead to conflict. But to evaluate the theory, researchers and scholars should study both cases of non-violent, cooperative interactions as well as zero- sum, competitive, violent responses to scarcity. The researchers, Boyale and Korf, set off to do exactly that. Their study gives researchers a better understanding of the complex interactions between natural resources and human behavior as manifest in the struggle for resource access as they study a case of non-violent interaction between resource users of different social groups facing environmental scarcity.

Bogale and Korf study the Ethiopia- Somali region at the horn of Africa—a region prone to inter-clan violence, contraband trade and political instability. The characteristics of this study area by most counts should favor Homer-Dixon’s theory—that violent conflict arises as a result of scarce resources and especially when groups have easy access to illegal firearms and live beyond government control. Yet, the study found that even under these “favorable” conditions for supporting Homer-Dixon theory, agro-pastoralists in Yerer and Daketa valley formed

cooperative arrangements through negotiations with outsider pastoralists for sharing grazing land in times of droughts and resource scarcity. In other places of the region, however, frequent violent clashes occur between agro-pastoralists and pastoralists over grazing resources in times of drought.

This study found that in times of drought, an agreement between the community leaders of agro-pastoralists and outsider pastoralists enabled the pastoralists to move towards the territories of the agro-pastoralists and seek sharing arrangements with specific agro-pastoralist households in exchange for receiving entitlements to the grazing resources. The study shows that 87.6 % of households who consider themselves 'lower than average' in terms of personal wealth accommodated pastoralists in return for either the right to use milk or sharing calves, whereas 57.10 % of the wealthier groups looked for reciprocal arrangements. Unlike the poor who get immediate and direct benefits for sharing the grazing resource, wealthier households invest more in long-term reciprocal obligations.

“The reciprocal arrangement is found to be largely a risk-management strategy by relatively wealthier community members. Wealthier members of the agro-pastoral communities accommodate pastoralists and extend their resources particularly the rangelands and water points for the major reason that they expect the same treatment from pastoralists in case members of the agro-pastoral communities face drought and are forced to migrate to areas under control of pastoralists.” (Bogale and Korf, 2007)

The above researchers hypothesized that agro-pastoralists households will accommodate pastoralists on their common grazing land if the private benefits from accommodating the pastoralists exceed the costs they are supposed to incur, that is, the net benefit (NB) is positive. Hosting visiting pastoralists have also enabled the relatively wealthier and poor agro-pastoralists residents of both valleys to work collaboratively in excluding potential entrants, a strategy that

benefits all members as it reduces overstocking on common rangeland, which then prevents overgrazing.

In the 1990s, Thomas Malthus' (1798) demographic theory has a powerful reawakening. According to Malthus, war is one of the 'positive constraints' through which people and resources are brought back into balance after a period of population growth (Malthus, T.R 1993, as quoted by Bogale and Korf.) The Malthusian trap is a theory originally devised by Robert Malthus in *An Essay on the Principles of Populations* in 1798. The theory states that as population grows ahead of agricultural growth, there must be a stage (trap), at which the food supply is inadequate for feeding the population. This study urges that the probability of a 'Malthusian trap' can be mediated if local institutions and economic incentives are favorable towards cooperative relations. The study also suggests that the Homer-Dixon theory is neither universal nor in any way inevitable or deterministic. Even very poor communities, and perhaps especially very poor communities based on the evidence in this case study can choose to cooperate and negotiate peacefully even when they live in war-torn regions.

Although considered poor and lack government control, The Yarer and Daketa valley residents did produce the "unprecedented amount of ingenuity" and innovative means that bring mutual survival and prosperity. The above researchers noted that the agro-pastoralists in Daketa and Yerer valley are largely governed by customary a land tenure system. Legally, it belongs to the state .Various government offices collaborated with peasant associations in this case to allocate cultivation rights to individual households, though the pasture land remained under management of the community. Abandoned by their respective states, traditional social structures remained intact "In terms of social status, the village leader (aba genda) is the most powerful personality in the community. These traditional leaders become more influential as the

state has only weak enforcement power in these outskirts of the state's territories". The researchers add that when droughts hit, leaders of the pastoralist communities seeking refuge in the more fertile lands of the Yerer and Daketa valley enter into negotiations with community leaders of the agro-pastoralist communities who have customary endowments to pasture resources. So what then is preventing the Pokot and Turkana from doing the same as the residents of Yarer and Daketa valley?

Parenti, Christian in his book *Tropic of Chaos* ask, "A central question in understanding climate change and conflict is whether violence is a response primarily to scarcity or to opportunity. Do the Turkana raid because they lack cattle or because their neighbors have cattle to steal?" P.63. Two anthropologists who studied Marsabit District in north-central Kenya found that drought and scarcity were associated with a decline in raiding. The authors, Adanoo Roba and Karen Witsenburg, found "no evidence that violence is increasing in relative terms, nor that ethnic violence is related to environmental scarcity" P.63. Roba and Witsenburg stated, "Instead of scarcity causing conflict among the Samburu pastoralists, it led to greater cooperation, as communities came together both physically, congregating at the boreholes for water, and politically, in the organizations demanded by formal water management". (Adoo, R, & Witsenburg, K. 2008 as cited by Parenti, C. 2011, p.63.) Being a member of a pastoralists ethnic group, I believe that the poor pastoralist communities are the ones with the potential of producing the "unprecedented amount of ingenuity" than can then foster innovative means to bring forth cooperation through sharing especially when resources are scarce.

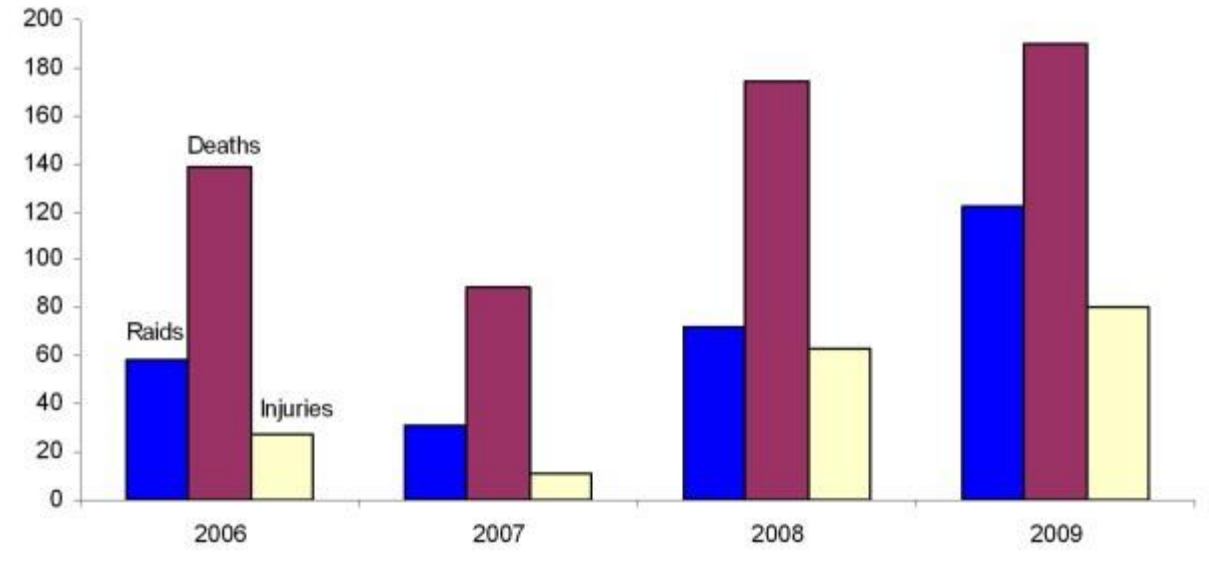
The key factors enabling the Yarer and Daketa valley residents to cooperate and share resources with visiting pastoralists include having a strong social structure. Given the fact that the valley is on the periphery of two unstable countries, Ethiopia and Somalia, the residents have

relied on their traditional social structure for law and order. Villages have well respected leaders and it's these leaders called aga genda, that visiting pastoralists groups who are seeking refuge in the valley in the hope of escaping a calamity such as a drought, need permission from before moving in. They, therefore, negotiate with visiting pastoralists and reach deals that enable both groups to escape devastating droughts peacefully and cooperatively. Another factor could be religion. Although the residents of Yerer and Daketa valley are from various clans, they do have ties to Somaliland and Somalia which are predominantly Muslim. Given the fact that Islam does denounce violence, especially to fellow Muslims, sharing a common religion might help explain why we don't see violence conflict among the clans in this valley.

CHAPTER III

Does the availability of illegal firearms cause conflict?

The Ethiopia- Somali region is much similar to that of the Pokot-Turkana, in the sense that both communities have access to illegal firearms obtained from the civil wars in the surrounding countries: Sudan, Uganda, Ethiopia and Somali. Why then are pastoralists and agro-pastoralists in Yerer and Daketa valley finding peaceful means of sharing the scarce resource (grazing land), during times of droughts, while the Turkana-Pokot keep raiding and killing each other? The problem cannot just be the ease access to semi-automatic guns such as Ak-47s; otherwise the Ethiopia- Somali region would also be in the same turmoil. It has to be something else or a combination of things.

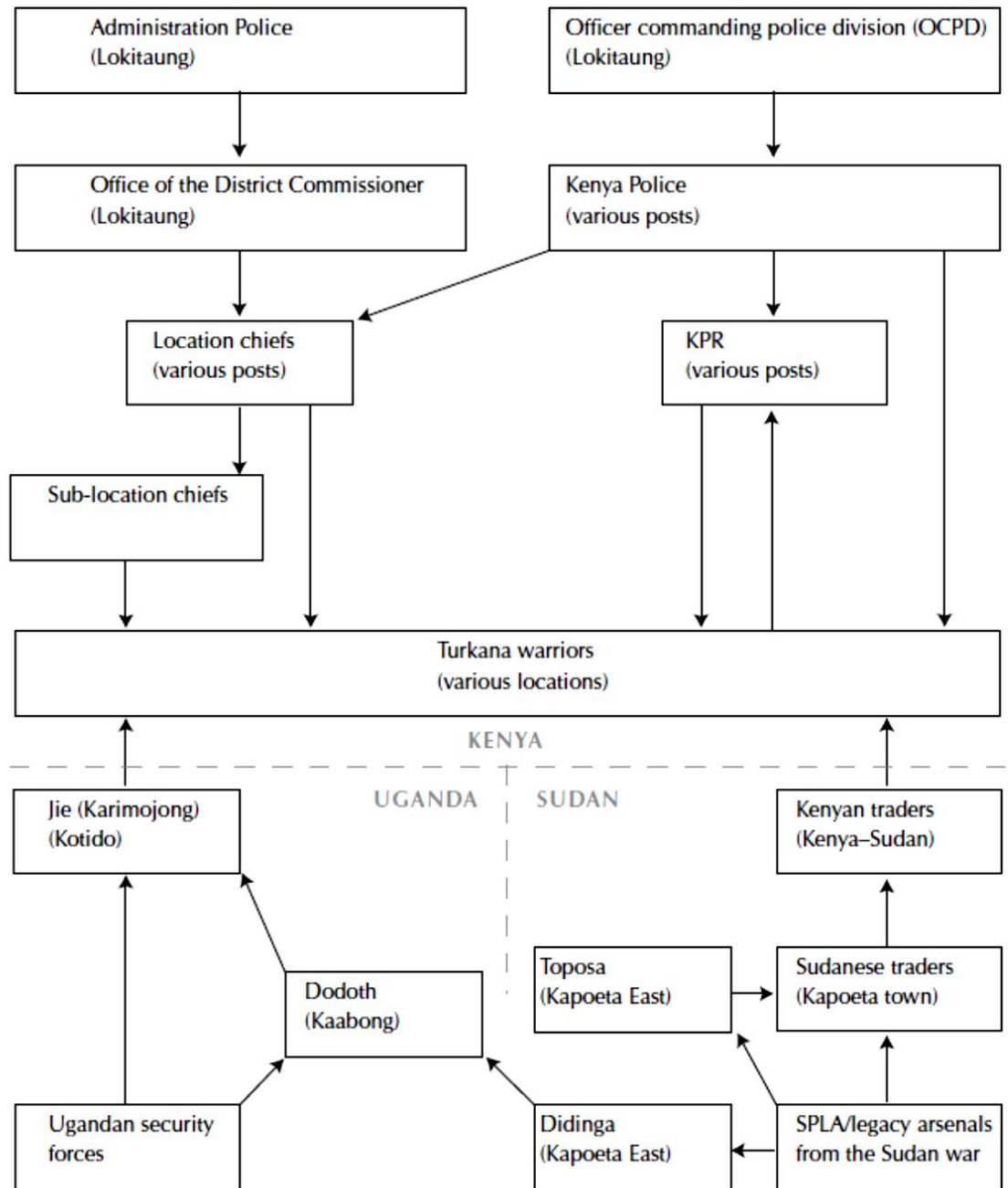


Number of raids, deaths and injuries during raids in Turkana between 2006 and 2009. Based on TUPADO (2011).

As the above figure shows, the conflict in the Pokot-Turkana region is rising to new heights and escalating rapidly in terms of deaths and injuries. One explanation is access to illegal firearms with advanced technology. In his book *Guns and Governance*, Kennedy Agade Mkutu argues, “When drought and famine and disease reduce the herds, the people must get more through raiding.” Without a doubt, powerful guns act as a catalyst of this conflict, yet as previously stated, do not explain why one region with the same level of access to powerful guns avoids violence.

Given the Turkana northern geographical location, bordering South Sudan, Uganda and Ethiopia, gives them an added advantage in terms of more markets for acquiring illegal firearms and ammunitions.

Figure 5.3
The flow of ammunition to the Turkana



(Source: Blowback: Kenya's Illicit Ammunition Problem in Turkana North District. Bevan, James 2008)

As the above figure shows, the Turkana warriors have ammunition flowing to their territory from all corners, both locally and internationally, including from the Kenyan police themselves who should be protecting them. The involvement of the Kenyan government in the supply of ammunitions sends a clear message to the Turkana community: their government is dysfunctional, weak and corrupt; therefore, it cannot guarantee their security, so they need to protect themselves against hostile neighbors.

Do Age-sets of aggressive interest groups cause conflict?

Older literatures on age-sets organization stress the aggressive character of corporate age-sets groups. Colonial literature connected age-sets organization and raiding (Low,1963), but recent anthropological literature has concentrated on describing age-groups as a way of organizing relations and as a cognitive frame to structure time (Almagor & Baxter 1977). Pokot have six generations sets which circle in time. In all promotion ceremonies speakers will make allusions to their sets success in raiding and blame other sets for cowardly staying at home. Speakers evoke the image of their age-sets acting as a corporate group when raiding Turkana (Bollig 1990). The age-sets, therefore, act as a channel of disseminating information about an impending raid and thus make it easy to mobilize fellow comrades to go to a raid.

Age-sets relationships bond men of a particular age (cohort) together as brothers and it sure help in asserting peer pressure to those unwilling to go to a raid. Raiding is preached as an honorable thing to do as a warrior and it is only cowards that stay at home. Since decision-making within an age-set is highly informal (Bollig ,1990), young men can easily rush into a decision to go raid the Turkana without getting other advice or permission from the older age-sets who might prevent them from the operation. This lack of “checks and balances” especially from the local institutions i.e., elders and other sets, may be a contributing cause for raiding.

Does population growth cause conflict?

According to Homer-Dixon, most of the population growth in the world is happening in developing countries and primarily in sub-Saharan Africa. According to the Kenya Bureau of Statics, the current population of Kenya is 44 million, and is experiencing an annual growth of 2.7% (World Bank, 2013). The United Nations world population prospects estimate that in 2020 Kenya's population will move to 52 million, and in 2050 it will jump to 95 million people. (U.N-WWP, 2015). Although there is no specific credible data on the growth specifically among the Turkana and Pokot, the Kenya census of 2009 reports that the population of Turkana country is 855,399 while Pokot country is 512, 690. A vast majority of the two ethnic groups are young, under the age of 30. Homer-Dixon argues that population growth (demand-induced), increases a demand of a resource "...Growing populations and greater per capita resource demand can thus simultaneously boost demand-induced and supply-induced scarcity." In simple economics, a high demand of a product or service leads to short supply and it consequently raises the price of a particular product or service. Assuming the population growth of the Turkana and Pokot is growing with the average rate of Kenya, it might therefore lead us to explore the avenue that perhaps this conflict is a result of population growth which in return causes severe competition.

Does resource degradation cause conflict?

Homer-Dixon theory argues that a resource shrinks when it has been degraded in quality. Due to this conflict, a zone of about 15-30 kilometers on both sides of the district boundary became virtually no-man's land. With only five years the plant cover within those broad stretches of no-man's land changed considerably. Data from LandsAT photographs show that acacia thornbush communities increased by ca.30% and grassland community decreased by the

same percentage (Conant, 1982). This key grazing area cannot be used by both communities due to conflict, and it thus further shrinks the limited resource due to encroachment. According to (Schilling et. al. pastoralism) research, 25% of Pokot identified 'loss of territory' as a motive for raiding the Turkana. They cannot access their key grazing land especially in times of droughts because they fear the Turkana raiders.

In addition, the underutilization of pasture bares the risk of encroachment of certain species which deplete the pasture or make it inaccessible (Opiyo et al. 2011; Bollig 1990; Huhio et al. 2009). Furthermore, unused boreholes can become a source of livestock poisoning (Mbaria et al. 2005). Degradation of a key resource can certainly speed up scarcity which in return might act as a catalyst to a bloody conflict given that the actors have advanced weapons and lack government constraints. So, the Homer-Dixon theory is partly correct, as a contributing factor, but not in any deterministic or reductive way.

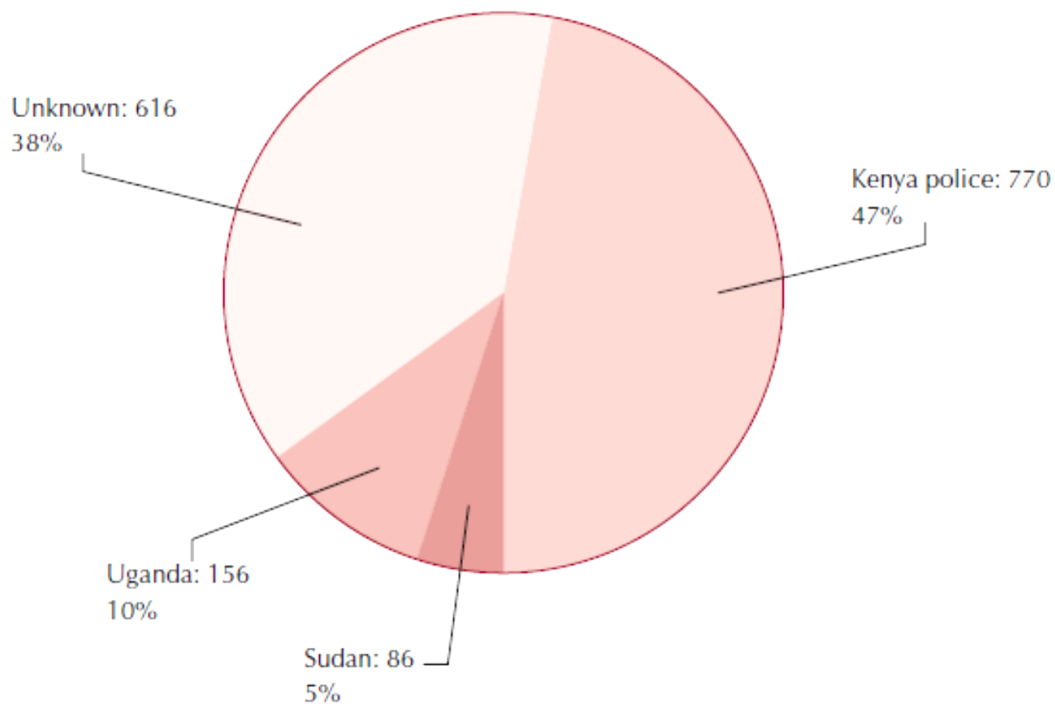
Does poor governance cause conflict?

In the aforementioned Pokot-Turkana 1969-1984 case study, the British performed a massive disarmament program in Turkana and Pokot with the intention of promoting peace between the two neighbors. In collaboration with an administration focused primarily on inter-ethnic conflict resolution, peace resulted in the region for about fifty years. As Bollig noted, there were intermarriages and friendships across borders. When raids and violence started again in the 60s, an army base was stationed in the town of Kapedo which is the boundary between the two communities. As a result both groups refrained from raiding for fear of army reprisal. Later on when raids became notorious again, a specialized Anti Stock Theft Unit tried to disarm both

groups, and although it wasn't very successful compared to the previous times, the presence of the unit intimidated both groups.

The figure below indicates how the Kenyan government, knowingly or by ignorance, exacerbates the Turkana-Pokot conflict by providing them with ammunition so that they can protect themselves from intruders.

Figure 5.4
Origins of 7.62 x 39 mm and 7.62 x 51 mm ammunition on the illicit market in Turkana North (n = 1,628)



(Source: Blowback: Kenya's Illicit Ammunition Problem in Turkana North District. Bevan, James 2008)

According to the Small Arms Survey, Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies, Geneva 2008, Kenya has an ammunition problem. The Government of Kenya is fully aware of the symptoms, but it is not acknowledging that it plays a large role in nurturing them. Turkana North District is afflicted by some of the most intense violence in the

region. The bloody conflicts that rage between the pastoralist communities in the district and neighboring regions of Sudan and Uganda are fueled by a steady supply of small arms ammunition:

It finds that the Kenya Police supplies almost 50 per cent of the ammunition that circulates illegally in Turkana north; ostensibly to provide the Turkana with some defense against rival groups in Sudan and Uganda. This practice has notably ill effects. The cartridges leave government control and become available for use in a variety of crimes, ranging from roadside banditry to targeted assassination (Blowback report, 2008).

This study which involved questionnaires and interviews of both Pokot and Turkana warriors, concluded that ammunition from at least 25 countries, and 51 different factories, circulates in the region, drawn to the area by the many conflicts that have raged there over the past decades. Blowback reports, “There are greater similarities between ammunition circulating within countries than there are between the countries, suggesting that, once in the region, the transfer of ammunition is relatively localized.” This study also found that the Kenya state forces’ ammunition are strongly correlated with those of Turkana Pastoralists and likewise for the Uganda state forces’ ammunition which also correlates with those of Dodoth and Jie pastoralist groups based in Uganda. The same apply to the neighbors, South Sudan. Also the researchers through interviewing eyewitness and residents of these regions confirmed the fact that their respective national forces and police supplied them with ammunition so that they can protect themselves from raiders and other cross-border bandits.

This data shows that if the Kenyan government was effective enough, it would have performed a series of rigorous disarming programs in this part of Kenya, and alongside build infrastructure, schools, hospitals and enacted a budget that focused solely in inter-ethnic conflict resolution programs. Under the laws of Kenya, Firearms act (Cap. 114) it’s illegal to own any type of firearm without valid gun ownership license. The fact that the Turkana and Pokot own

illegally obtained semi-automatic guns proves that the Kenya government has no control of what goes on within its borders. The Kenyan government should therefore take a generous slice of the blame for the continuity and even the exacerbation of this barbaric act.

Due to a new constitution recently adapted by Kenya, north-western Kenya is finally enjoying political representation. The Constitution divided the former huge districts into small ones that are easily manageable and thus serve the people more effectively and it's already bearing fruits. Current Improvements of technology is helping to reshape the future of this chronic conflict and other inter-pastoralist conflicts across Africa: Improved infrastructure is reducing the attractiveness of mid—and larger sized raids since the police and army could be transported easily to the scene. Additionally, the improved coverage of phone networks in the area, especially on the Pokot side, significantly increases the chances of targeted community and administrative authorities to notice and prepare for the planned raid. This in turn decreases the motivation of raiders to participate in a raid as the risk of getting shot by the targeted community or arrested by the administrative authorities is increased (TUPADO, 2011). Simple technologies such as phone reception, roads and proper policing can easily bring peace to this conflict- torn corner of Kenya.

Does extreme poverty cause conflict?

The following table describes the motives for raiding by each ethnic group: The study below was conducted in southern rangelands of Turkana and northern West Pokot County where the two counties meet (see area of study map). Data for this study was collected through interviews and discussions with a total of 376 persons consisting of leaders (chiefs, elders) and other community members: women, youth, and raiders.

Table 1

Motives for raiding as stated by Turkana and Pokot raiders

Motive		Hunger	Wealth	Dowry	Land	Drought
Primary	Turkana	78%	22%			
	Pokot		25%	50%	25%	
Secondary	Turkana		33%	22%		44%
	Pokot	25%	75%			

Schilling *et al. Pastoralism: Research, Policy and Practice* 2012 2:25 doi: 10.1186/2041-7136-2-25

As the above table shows, In Turkana, the majority of raiders indicated hunger and drought as their primary and secondary motives for engaging in livestock raiding. In Pokot, payment of dowry and accumulation of wealth were the strongest motives, while the expansion of territory summarized as ‘land’ in the above Table was still given by 25% of the Pokot raiders as a primary motive. Something noteworthy to mention is the fact that the Pokot side is rich in pasture, water and animals, while the communities in the Turkana side relied almost entirely on food aid as they had lost most of their livestock during the extended dry period. Hence for the Turkana, raiding is mainly for survival purposes, rather than prestige and acquiring cows for dowry, like the majority of Pokot indicated.

In the Pokot-Turkana (1969-1984) case study, the notorious raiders who often instigated the raids were the Turkana. One explanation might be the fact that Turkana had superiority due

to guns they obtained from Ethiopia (Bollig, 1987), but it could also be the fact that they are in dire poverty in relation to the Pokot, and to a relatively rich Kenya. As the above research indicate, the primarily reason why Turkana raid is because of hunger –fear of starvation can make one do despicable acts. Pokot community members reported that the Turkana not only target livestock but have also started to steal maize and even beehives (Apiding 2011; Hapio 2011; Raider P1 2011). As exemplified by the Yarer and Daketa valley residents, yes poor communities are capable of producing ‘unprecedented amount of ingenuity’ when resources are scarce. This adaptation, therefore, enables creative resources sharing through peaceful, collaborative agreements, but I also think poverty has a threshold; when one’s options are narrowed down to, steal or starve, most people would choose to steal. And I think that is what is why the Turkana not only raid the Pokot for livestock but also for anything that they can eat—maize, honey and so forth. The Pokot, who are not as poor as the Turkana, were mainly engaging in raids with the Turkana as counter-attacks and for revenge. Homer-Dixon’s theory blindly overgeneralizes all poor societies and therefore, blanket all of them incapable of producing the right kinds of ingenuity at the right times and places, to keep environmental scarcity from leading to conflict. Homer-Dixon and other researchers of environmental scarcity need to consider the depth of poverty before making their claims.

Does tribalism cause conflict?

Kenya boasts a diverse ethnic profile; it is home to more than forty tribes. On the one hand this diversity is beneficial because it enriches the cultural experience of the residents. Unfortunately on the other hand, it makes conflicts more probable. Since the inception of Kenya as a sovereign state, its politics have always been defined along tribal lines. Our first president, Jomo Kenyatta who was a Kikuyu (the largest tribe), made sure that a vast majority of the

resources, jobs and other amenities went to his “people” and his central Kenya region. When he passed away unexpectedly, Daniel Arap Moi took over. Mr. Moi was of the Kalenjin tribe (also another large tribe) and he too did exactly the same as his predecessor, but topped it all up with sticky layers of chronic corruption and mastered the art of tampering with elections results which therefore allowed him to stay in power for twenty four years. When Mwai Kibaki (Kikuyu) took over from Moi, he worked tirelessly to fight the tribalism and nepotism; vices that have defined Kenyan politics since independence, but he got criticized numerously for appointing “Hyenas” to his cabinets. Consequently, he never succeeded.

Our Current president, Uhuru Kenyatta, the son of our first president is currently struggling to combat nepotism, tribalism and chronic corruption. As a Kenyan, I can attest that tribalism is lingering openly in Kenyan businesses, politics and in other arenas of life. A vast majority of Kenyans especially those who reside in rural areas would identify first with their tribe then secondly as Kenyan citizens. For example in southern Kenya where I live, we refer to ourselves as Maasai and young people are admonished and reminded constantly that they have an obligation to look out for “their own people”. Given the fact that we are a minority indigenous group with a high illiteracy rate, we don’t count politically. Thus we are proud of our ethnic group than being a part of a larger Kenyan society that overlooks and even ignores our challenges because we are a small tribe whose place in politics and even in the Kenyan mainstream is not welcomed or even needed.

Other minority ethnic groups in Kenya such as Turkana, Pokot, Samburu and so forth have a similar feeling about the Kenyan government and the corrupt officials in it. Knowing the power of dividing people along tribal lines, Kenyan politicians have been looting public funds and then scapegoating certain politicians from other different tribes for it. In 2007 after a very

controversial election results, the *New York Times* reported that “In several cities across Kenya, witnesses said, gangs went house to house, dragging out people of certain tribes and clubbing them to death. *The New York Times* also reported, “In Mathare, a slum in Nairobi, Luo gangs burned more than 100 Kikuyu homes. In Kibera (another slum in Nairobi), Kikuyu packed their belongings in cars and fled”. To show the height and extent of tribalism politics in Kenya, the current Kenyan president, Uhuru Kenyatta and his deputy president, Samuel Ruto, were both defendants on the international Criminal Court (ICC) for charges on crimes against humanity during the disputed 2007 elections. According to the New York Times (Dec, 2014), Mr. Kenyatta became the first Kenyan sitting president to appear before the ICC, for the accusation of helping orchestrate and fund gangs and youth groups after the mentioned elections of which 1,200 people were brutally killed and over 600,000 fled their homes.

Homer-Dixon urges that Environmental scarcity acts as catalysts to tribal violence because it deepens the social cleavage between groups which leads to “Group-Identity Conflict”, which then could lead to insurgencies, ethnic clashes and urban unrest. Given the chronic tribalism that has befallen Kenya for decades; a good portion of the blame for the raiding between the Pokot and Turkana can be directed to the divisive, dangerous tribal politics that is often preached by individual seeking public office. Unfortunately, the hopes and dreams of Pokot and Turkana communities are in the corrupt hands of Kenyan politicians, who are quick to use the tribe card and in doing so, they jeopardize the lives of the citizens. So, tribalism is potentially more of a causal factor than environmental scarcity.

Do hostile neighbors cause conflict? Blowback: Kenya's Illicit Ammunition Problem in Turkana North District (Small Arms Survey) By James Bevan

This conflict between the Turkana and Pokot can also be attributed to their location; both groups are on the periphery of the country, a place that borders arguably the most unstable and violent countries in Africa: Southern Sudan, Ethiopia, Uganda and Somalia. For decades, these countries have been battling genocides, mass killings, insurgencies, coups, assassinations and other atrocities. The lawlessness of this region where these East African neighbors meet has therefore become a conducive environment for raiding. Researchers of East-African pastoralists refers this region as the “raiding corridor” (See Parenti, TUPADO and Schilling). According to a small arms survey (Blowback) “The Turkana of Turkana North District are in the unenviable position of residing between, on the one hand, largely uninhabitable terrain to the east and south and, on the other, hostile neighbors to the north and west. The population is squeezed into a relatively small (in pastoralist terms) area, in which it needs to maximize the available pasture at its disposal.” Unlike the Ugandan Dodoth, who have some leeway to the west, or the Toposa, who have some latitude for northerly movement, the Turkana have very little strategic depth. Here are some reports culled from just one month in late summer 2008: (Bii and Masibo, 2008)

August 5th: seventy –four people are dead in a weekend of attacks on three villages in Lokori Division, Turkana South District. More than twenty-two hundred cattle are stolen.

August 12th: Pokot raiders gun down more than thirty Turkana herdsmen at Lokori Division, in Turkana South District. Scores of others are believed wounded; seven hundred heads of cattle are stolen

August 20th: Turkana raiders attack herders at Galasa water point, stealing more than twenty thousand animals. Security forces give chase; eight local police reservists and raiders are killed.

August 22nd: The Ugandan military kill ten and wound four Turkana pastoralists who cross the border in search of water and pasture. Uganda soldiers steal four hundred animals.

August 24-30: A raiding party of more than one thousand Sudanese Toposa tribesmen crosses into Kenya; over the next week, they attack two villages, kill eight people, abduct three children, and steal an estimated five thousand animals in Lokichoggio, northwestern Turkana.

September 2nd: Two police reservists are killed repelling other Toposa raiders who have crossed in from southern Sudan.

September 4th: Pokot raiders kill two people in Kotaruk and steal more than six hundred animals. (Bii, B, Masibo K. 2008 as cited by Parenti .C. 2011 p. 52, 53) Why is this not regarded as war?

This snapshot of one month violence in this ‘raiding corridor’ is terrifying given the magnitude and frequency of the violence. The Kenya government to categorize this as war, this is not the traditional raiding anymore; these are two groups trying to exterminate one another.

Almost sixty percent of all raids in Turkana County between 2006 and 2009 were conducted by the Pokot of Kenya and Uganda, followed by the Toposa of Sudan (11%) and the Dasenach of Ethiopia (9%) (TUPADO, 2011). Pokot and Turkana territories are sounded by their enemies, and while the Pokot and Turkana raid each other, the situation is made worse by other pastoralists across the border from South Sudan, Uganda and Ethiopia, who come in to take advantage of the power vacuum. Most southern Turkana respondents (96 %) interviewed by Schilling et.al. felt insecure or highly insecure and when asked the source of their insecurity, they mentioned raids and being surrounded by enemies. Living in fear is a bottleneck to prosperity, “Insecurity and the perception of it have three major effects, which in turn reduce human well-being: first, inefficient resource utilization, second, closing of markets and schools and third, posing an obstacle for investments.” (Schilling et al. Pastoralism). Rapacious neighbors can therefore, prevents groups from finding creative ways to resources sharing.

**Does climate change cause conflict? Tropic of Chaos: Climate Change and the New
Geography of Violence, Parenti, Christian, 2011**

Scientific evidence for warming of the climate system is unequivocal

—Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change

The scientific community seems to agree that climate change is happening faster than initially predicted that its impacts are already in effect in the form of extreme weather events such as desertification, flooding, rising sea levels and so forth. Parenti argues that the more rapidly the climate changes, the more resources shrink and degrade, the more it acts to bring groups of people to live closely together—communities who won't otherwise be living in such close proximity with each other. He adds that this encounter could lead to violence due to competition. He refers to this as “catastrophic Convergence”—the confluence of poverty, violence and climate change. He adds that the climate change is affecting regional rainfall pattern and consequently the agro-pastoralists of Pokot can no longer depend solely on growing crops for survival, they now have to acquire guns and raid their neighbors, the Turkana, for their cattle. On the other hand, the Turkana are experiencing severe frequent droughts that kill most of their herds and they too have to raid the Pokot to restock their herds for their own survival. This Climate war is therefore creating a vicious circle of death; as a result of this phenomenon, the Turkana -Pokot conflict has rose to new heights. Parenti's theory converges with Homer-Dixon's three kinds of scarcity: Supply-induced, demand-induced and structural scarcity. Parenti echoes Homer-Dixon by stating that resources do get scarce when it gets depleted in quality, gets degraded in quality and also due to population growth.

According to a study by the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), Livestock Study in The Greater Horn of Africa concluded that Conflict and drought have aggravated

poverty among the Turkana (in the north and south of the District). This study also corroborated previous studies that droughts in the horn of Africa are indeed becoming more frequent and more severe; 1992-93, 1996-97 and 1999-2001 (ICRC, 2004)

Climatic change, demographic growth and increased pressure on resources due to a multitude of reasons appear to be resulting in a greater frequency of shocks. Sandford and Habtu predict that if a household has lost 50%, or only possessed 50% of the TLU required to maintain their independence from food aid (i.e. 3 TLU/AAME), it will take 10 years after the end of the “shock” to achieve self-sufficiency if they only owned cows, 6 years if they owned only smallstock and 12 years if they owned only camels. Herd recovery rates are no longer sufficient to sustain the human population between shock cycles; this development suggests a terminal decline in the viability of pastoralism in its present form, and an urgent need for diversification. (ICRC 2004)

American Meteorology Society Journal also echoes the rest of the scientific community by warning of how climate change is detrimental especially to developing states, “Drought is one of the leading impediments to development in Africa. Much of the continent is dependent on rain-fed agriculture, which makes it particularly susceptible to climate variability”: Volume 95, Issue 6 (June 2014). While conducting his research in the raiding corridor, Parenti observed “The group of Turkana I was visiting had been pushed south by severe drought and were now grazing their herds at the edge of their traditional range, very close to their enemies, the Pokot” P. 4. He adds that in this inhospitable region of East Africa, when a drought hits, water and pasture become scarce, the herds fall ill and many ends up dying. To restock their herds and thus ensure the survival of their community, young men raid their neighbors.

The Pastoralist corridor (a region of mountains, savannas, Marshes, and deserts straddling the borderlands of Kenya, Uganda, Sudan, Ethiopia and Somalia), however, is now suffering from increasingly extreme weather by drought and sudden flooding, and that it’s on the front lines of the catastrophic convergence where poverty, violence, and climate change combine and collide. Here, the process has resulted in partial state failure and paramilitary

violence. P.46. Although Climate Change is far from being one of the root causes of this conflict; it's however evident that it's creating Parenti's "Catastrophic Convergence". And when communities that have regarded each other as enemies for generations are brought together to the same borehole with limited water supply, it creates a zero-sum game scenario which in return makes negotiations almost impossible. The zero-sum mentality then encourages each group to arm themselves with the best available weaponry so they can raid the other and if they succeed they will then have full access to more grazing land and more water wells. In his book, Tropic of Chaos, Parenti noted "The Extreme weather is pushing northern Kenya toward desertification, and that means pastoralists must compete for grazing and water. The situation is so bad in some areas that people are now killing each other for water—shooting it out for control of wells and pasture" P. 40 . There is no doubt that climate change is fueling the already volatile raiding corridor and the more this phenomenon intensifies, the more this conflict turns bloody and become intractable.

In 2006, Christian Aid commissioned livestock specialist Dr. David Kimeye research on how pastoralists in northern Kenya were coping with climate change. He talked to pastoralists in five areas across the Mandera District, in northern Kenya (due east of the Turkana) and home to 1.5 million people. He found that:

- Incidence of drought has increased fourfold in the Mandera region in the past twenty-five years
- Adverse climatic conditions have already forced one-third of herders living there—around half a million people—to abandon their pastoral way of life.
- During the last drought, so many cattle, camels, and goats were lost that 60 percent of the families who remain as pastoralists need outside assistance to recover. Their surviving herds are too small to support them. (Kimenye, D. 2006 as cited by Parenti, C. 2011, P .47)

Droughts are becoming more frequent and more deadly because they are now prolonged that usual, which according to researcher leads to more raids as communities struggle to survive. I think this argument does explain one key cause of this conflict.

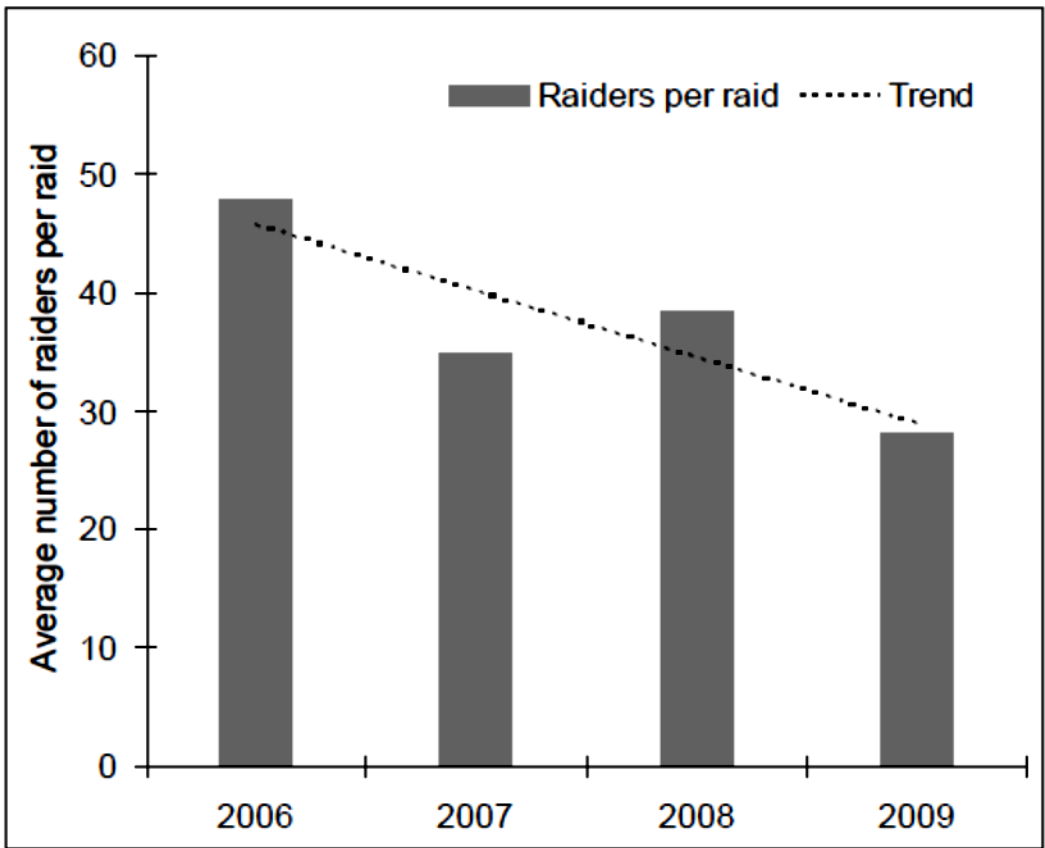
Does lack of elders control cause conflict?

In the pastoralist communities, elders play a huge role in almost every aspect; be it settling a divorce, excommunicating a disobedient member or making peace with a neighboring tribe. And In any decision, a consensus is always required since most of these communities have a council of elders instead of one supreme leader who make the final decision. The councils of elders are powerful in the sense that there is no appeal from their decisions. In the Maasai people for example, those who disobey the words of the elders are doomed for destruction. And for a tribe that believes in taboos like these, the community respects the elders recommendations— elders are the eyes of the community and their eyes can foresee the future. Young Maasai men and women are taught from tender age to obey and respect the elders. This is what the researchers have found out regarding the elders of Turkana and Pokot:

On the one hand the majority of Turkana and Pokot raiders report that the elders encourage or even assist their raids with blessings and information (for example where to find the enemy's livestock). Further, the raiders state that the elders receive a share of the livestock, sometimes even "the biggest bull" (Raider P3 2011). On the other hand, most elders claim to discourage the raiding. Yet, some acknowledged that they occasionally benefit from the raids or "they [the raiders] just go one their own" (Lokuwam 2011a). One focus group discussion with both raiders and elder in Lokiriama was instrumental to match these seemingly opposing views. During times of peace with the Pokot the elder discourage the youth to raid the Pokot while during times of conflict the elder hardly ever refuse a pre raid blessing. The interviews further suggest that the elder on the Turkana side have lost influence over the youth.

The success of a community or a country can be attributed to, among other things, the structure of its government and especially who makes what decisions. If a small group of warriors can independently choose to attack another group without permission of the governing body, means the governing body is not operational. And is it possible to have a civilized society

without some sort of form of a government structure? I don't think so. Being a Maasai, it is very alarming that the elders in the Turkana are losing grip of the power invested in them by the community. The crumbling of this social structure has already proven to be detrimental among the Turkana and Pokot communities and if nothing is done to fix the problem; it will soon bring these communities to their knees and even down the line make them disappear. The so called warriors have turned into a group of bandits who raid the neighboring tribes for their own individual commercial and political purposes, and leave their community to bear the retaliation their action caused.



Average number of raiders per raid in Turkana between 2006 and 2009 (Own representation based on TUPADO 2011)

The study of the Yarer and Daketa valley agro-pastoralists residents' cooperation in resource sharing in time of droughts showed that leaders of both groups come together and seek sharing arrangements which then makes each group better off. This approach which the study indicates is done by elders is very successful in pastoralist's communities because they are trusted and obeyed, and they always seek a deal that is of interest of the whole society and not their own gains. This study of non-violence interaction (Ayahneh Boyale & Benedkt Korf, 2007), speaks volume about the significant of having respected elders and leaders in the community—elders who are longsighted in their interaction with neighbors and who truly know their role in their society as responsible for peace and prosperity of their members.

Women also need to be included in the fight against raiding. On both sides, women are found to have an influence on the raiding activities of their men. They both encourage their men and prepare meals after a successful raid (for example Lokomar 2011) or they play a discouraging role for example by expressing their fear to lose their man (for example Lokuwam 2011b).

CHAPTER IV

Statement on limitations and future research

It is perplexing that pastoralists and agro-pastoralists in Ethiopia-Somali region find cooperation in times of droughts, when resources are scarce, while the Pokot and Turkana of north-western Kenya keep raiding and killing each other. So far we are only dependent on careful speculations, educated guesses and a lot of 'maybes'. One main explanation might be that unlike the Yarer and Daketa valley residents, extensive research has been done on the Pokot-Turkana conflict. Another school of thought might be that the Pokot and Turkana are much

poorer than the residents of Yarer and Daketa Valley; so far we don't know that exactly. Therefore, to fully and articulately compare and contrast the two case studies, there is a need for more studies on the cultural, governance, economic, religion etc. on the pastoralists and agro-pastoralists residents of the Ethiopia-Somali region. Whether or not Homer-Dixon's theory truly holds water in the case of the Pokot-Turkana Conflict, the jury is still out.

Discussions

As the testament of the Yarer and Daketa valley residents shows, inter-pastoralists conflict can be mediated if the elders have the power grip in their respective communities. Lack of this important social structure can then turn young adult males into a bunch of racketeers and gangsters with unrestrained power who can then do anything they wish no matter the repercussions of their actions to the community as a whole. After researching the Pokot-Turkana conflict, I can conclude with a fair amount of certainty that the main cause of this conflict is the broken social structure among the Turkana and Pokot communities. Young men are now armed with semi-automatic guns such as AK47s and consequently, see themselves as powerful and above the law—hence their bullets don't shy away from children, women and the elderly or whomever stand in their way. If elders regain their community given power, young men can therefore be restrained and even punished severely if they disobey the elders verdicts and decisions. It doesn't matter that these communities reside in the periphery of the country, far from the police authority, the elders would make sure the community thrives, the way they have done for centuries—the way my tribe, the Maasai, still cooperates peacefully with its neighbors given the fact that we too reside in the remote southern tip of Kenya, and don't have police stations.

Possible suggestions that could aid resolve this conflict

Kenyan Government role:

The government of Kenya should consider adding more police stations and even army bases in norther western Kenya. These police or army stations could then defend these communities from across border bandits, as well as prevent the two neighboring tribes from raiding each other. As Michael Bollig work shows, when the British colonial administration had an army base in Kapedo, (an area between the Pokot and Turkana) raiding stopped.

The Kenyan government should conduct a rigorous disarmament program; both Pokot and Turkana should be disarmed equally and at the same time. As a long-term goal, the government should work with local authorities to improve the literacy rates in this two counties; educating Pokot and Turkana children would open more opportunities for youth, instead of having to rely on raiding in order to combat starvation and provide for their families

The Kenyan government should also provide Veterinary medicine services to these communities so that the cattle that do survive droughts don't die as a result of diseases that are easily curable. In addition, there is a dire need to improve infrastructure in the region so that security personnel can travel easily in case of attack as well for use by humanitarians sectors.

Pokot and Turkana Communities Role:

The best way to foster Sustainable change is when change comes from the bottom up and not from the top down— Pokot and Turkana themselves, with the help of external mediators need to come together and negotiate ways that they could both live

next to each other in peace and prosperity. In order to enact an agreement that serves all of their members, these communities need to include all of their members in decision making processes especially women and young adults. Mothers especially, should be empowered and encouraged to caution their sons about the danger of raiding. The Pokot and Turkana communities need to rekindle the fading social structure that has glued them for generations.

Non-Governmental Organizations role:

Non-governmental organizations like The Red Cross International, Oxford Committee for Famine Relief (Oxfam) and others can assist in building a pastoralist's dialogue center between the Pokot and Turkana territories—this center would be a place where both leaders of both communities come and discuss matters affecting them. It can also be a mediation center as well as a location where people can drop off their firearms willingly and receive the compensation for doing so. Given the fact that Pokot and Turkana spend many cattle in exchange for semi-automatic weapons, there is need for some sort of compensation that could entice the gun owners to surrender their weapon. The N.GOs could help pay this fee. Also, World Health Organization and other hunger relieve programs can also assist by providing food aid especially to the Turkana during prolonged droughts.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

Once the cattle are gone, they will take with them the dignity, pride, prestige, wealth and everything else that is the core of a pastoralist's life— without a cow, pastoralists will become refugees in their own ancestral land. There is so much pride in providing your own traditional food, raising healthy and colorful livestock the way your grandparents did, while protecting and nurturing the environment for your grandchildren and teaching them to do the same for the next generation. Unfortunately this lifestyle is under serious threat all over Kenyan but its more severe especially in northern Kenya where the Pokot and Turkana are gunning each other down

for the few cattle left. I refer to this conflict as ‘The Silent War’ because of its scale and magnitude of it. I think continuing to refer this conflict as the old traditional raiding of warriors is a dangerous understatement, and it could be one the explanation of why the Kenyan government and media outlets have not been paying attention to this conflict.

The Kenyan government is often just watching from a distance without intervening. The only “help” they seem to offering is giving them (Turkana and Pokot) ammunition ostensibly so that they can provide their own security against the cross border bandits. Unfortunately those bullets are now the ones being used against each other. Given the high illiteracy levels of these communities, migrating to cities to seek employment is not a wise option; they lack the skills, language and education to qualify for most jobs. Besides, if a mass rural-urban migration takes place, the new migrants would have to reside in Kenya’s already big and inhumane slums, which would rapidly grow in size in order to accommodate a new wave of new economic “refugees”.

There is a big cleavage between the Pokot and the Turkana of north-western Kenya and it widens during drought seasons. Livestock raiding has brought insecurity to this remote corridor of Kenya. This chronic violent conflict which has been normalized does not only interrupts education and commerce, causes wanton destruction of property; it also cost hundreds of lives annually. Consequently, Turkana and Pokot are the poorest and most marginalized counties in relatively rich Kenya. There is a strong sense of hatred and distrust between these two communities—each sees each other as an enemy—and each scenario is viewed as a zero-sum.

Homer Dixon’s theory which argues that scarcity of resources can interlink with other factors such as poor governance, and lack of social institutions, to cause violent conflict seems to hold water in the Pokot-Turkana conflict. These two communities live in extreme poverty in a

relatively rich Kenya, and have been on the conflicting path for decades. As the theory of Homer-Dixon predicts, the very poor communities wouldn't be able to supply the "unprecedented amount of the ingenuity" and adaptability needed to prevent conflict. It has proven to be true between these two communities, since the "we-they" cleavage has successfully managed to hinder them from innovating routes of efficiently managing limited resources.

The inability of the Kenyan government to provide security for its people plus the easy access for semi-automatic guns by young men of both ethnic groups, have contributed to the crumbling of these communities social structures. Droughts and other calamities that shrink resources such as grazing land and water, just contribute to this conflict but not the root cause of the problem. A combination of the above scenarios, have therefore transformed the traditional age-sets systems into gang-like groups. These sets have derailed from the original approach of organizing relations and order within a tribe into mini-militaries who have unlimited power, freedom and discretion. Given the scale and magnitude of this war, it is now attracting militias, bandits and even terrorists from the neighboring countries who are coming to take advantage of the power vacuum, a move that researchers warn would add firewood to the fire.

A Middle Eastern proverb admonishes that in the desert of life, the wise person travels with a caravan, while a fool prefers to travel alone. In this dry, inhospitable rugged terrain of north western Kenya that have been neglected by the Kenyan government elites , the Pokot and Turkana need to learn from the Yarer and Daketa Valley residents –that cooperation especially when resources are limited is key to their survival given that droughts are becoming more frequent and more severe.

To other pastoralists groups around the continent of Africa, it's advisable you start preparing for the negative impacts caused by climate change, and initiate ways of combating, adapting or mitigating the impacts that this phenomenon may bring. As the testament of the residents of Yarer and Daketa valley shows, a strong social structure is half the battle. If climate change is not already affecting your lifestyle as of yet, be on the lookout because according to climate science, it will soon be knocking on your doors, given the manner our planet is warming up and how much greenhouse gases are still being emitted to the atmosphere. Cooperating with one's neighbors especially when resources shrink is a necessity for the mutual survival and prosperity for pastoralists of today.

Endnotes:

'Thomas trap'; Thomas Malthus (1798: War is one of the 'positive constraints' through which people and resources are brought back into balance after a period of population growth.

Anti-Stock Theft Unit (ASTU). It was originally established as a colonial police force in the early 1900's. Its current purpose is to help in retrieving stolen livestock through raiding in Kenya.

CEWARN - IGAD's Conflict Early Warning and Response Mechanism - was established in 2002 on the basis of a protocol signed by IGAD Member States. IGAD Member States in establishing CEWARN made a major strategic decision to utilize early warning and early response to prevent violent conflict so as to serve the aspirations of their people for shared prosperity and a sustained just peace. IGAD member states: Sudan, South Sudan, Eritrea, Djibouti, Ethiopia, Somalia, Kenya and Uganda. (www.cewarn.org)

The "Noble" Quran 49: 10: "The believers are nothing else than brothers (in Islamic religion). So make reconciliation between your brothers, and fear Allah, that you may receive mercy".

ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

ASAL	Arid and semi-arid lands
GDP.....	Gross Domestic Product
USD	United States Dollar
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
ICRC.....	International Committee of the Red Cross
GoK.....	Government of Kenya
TUPADO.....	Turkana Pastoralist Development Organization
KES	Kenyan Shilling
KPR Kenya.....	Police Reserves
SPLA.....	Sudan People’s Liberation Army
UPDF.....	Ugandan People’s Defense Forces
UNOCHA.....	United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
U.N.....	United Nations
HDI.....	Human Development Index
KM.....	Kilometers
TLU.....	Total Livestock Units

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